

**HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
ACT COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2008
EVANSTON CIVIC CENTER
7:00 P.M. - CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER**

ALDERMAN PRESENT: Ald. Steve Bernstein, Sarah Breen, Coleen Burrus, Ald. Anjana Hansen, Ald. Lionel Jean-Baptiste, Ald. Ann Rainey, Crawford Richmond

STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Flax, Raye Janousek, Jackie Brownlee

PRESIDING OFFICIAL: Alderman Rainey

I. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Rainey called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m. She welcomed all in attendance. She explained that all the allocations listed are based on all the proposals submitted. The total estimated available funds for the 2009/10 fiscal year is \$2,053,046.00 and the applications total \$3,530,472.00. Therefore the Committee has the responsibility of eliminating \$1,477,426 from the funding requested. She further pointed out that spending in the Administration category is capped at 20% of the grant and Public Services is capped at 15%.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS

Ms. Burrus moved approval of the September 16, 2008 meeting minutes, seconded by Ald. Bernstein. The vote was 7-0 in favor of the motion.

Ald. Bernstein moved approval of the October 14, 2008 meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. Burrus. The vote was 7-0 in favor of the motion.

III. 2009/10 CDBG PROGRAM

Administration

The Committee members asked staff to identify last years grant entitlement amount. Ms. Flax responded that last year the grant amount was approximately \$1,900,000 and the Committee had just over \$2 million to allocate with the reallocations. She noted that this year HUD has recommended estimating the 2009/10 grant at 3% less than their current year grant, which was done. Ms. Flax clarified that this number is not final because HUD's budget has not been approved yet. Chair Rainey stated that in light of past experience, it appears that the projected funding is in the ball park. She noted we can be more optimistic for next year's funding.

Chair Rainey opened recommendations for funding with a motion to allocate \$370,000 to CDBG Administration, seconded by Ms. Burrus. Ald. Jean-Baptiste noted that the total

allocation for Administration is significantly less than the total amount the Committee is being asked to consider. If the Committee allocated the total amount available in Administration to CDBG Administration, this would result in no allocation to M/W/EBE. He referred to last year's allocated amount to this program which was vastly reduced from the amount requested. **Ald Jean-Baptiste proposed an alternative allocation of \$322,400 to CDBG Administration and \$52,000 to M/W/EBE** because otherwise it could jeopardize the latter program as funding it strictly through the General Fund is questionable, as the money may not be available to cover the entire program. He elaborated on the importance of this program and the responsibilities of the Coordinator, noting that it is especially important to the CDBG Target Areas for employment and involvement in construction projects throughout the City of Evanston. Chair Rainey responded that many of the Coordinator's duties could become the responsibility of all the City Departments involved in contract negotiations for work within the City of Evanston. Ms. Burrus agreed and questioned what outcomes the M/W/EBE Program Coordinator is responsible for and whether the same goals and accomplishments be met by other City Staff involved in the actual contract negotiations. Mr. Richmond expressed his support for Ald. Jean-Baptiste's recommended amendment to allocate fund to the M/W/EBE Program and would for some funds to be allocated to the Human Relations Commission's Alternative Dispute Resolution & Advocacy Services. Ald. Jean-Baptiste further noted that the M/W/EBE deals with specific compliance issues and assures that special stipulations are met in City Contracts that would not otherwise be met. He expressed concern that this program could be abandoned without CDBG funding. Chair Rainey maintained her support for allocating \$370,000 to CDBG Administration, pointing out that these funds support City staff such as 80% of the Neighborhood Planner position, 10% of the Director's position, 50% of the General Planner's position, and 40% of the Housing Planner position, all of which have done significant work in the CDBG Target Areas and continue to do so. She reiterated that the CDBG Administration is invaluable and benefits all of the citizens and entire City of Evanston. After all discussion, Chair Rainey's motion resulted in a vote of **4 ayes and 3 nays**.

Public Services

Chair Rainey moved to allocate \$8,750 to Meal at Home, \$2,000 to Music Institute of Chicago, \$24,000 to North Shore Senior Center, \$2,000 to Brummel Park Neighbors, and \$40,000 to Evanston Community Defender Office, Inc. Ald. Jean-Baptiste seconded the motion. The vote was 3 in favor of the motion and 4 voting nay. Motion failed.

Ald. Hansen moved to allocate \$9,000 to Meals at Home, \$2,000 to Music Institute of Chicago, \$25,000 to North Shore Senior Center, \$2,000 to Brummel Park Neighbors, \$45,000 to the Evanston Community Defender Office, Inc., \$0 to the Evanston Youth Initiative, \$10,000 to the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metro. Chicago, \$5,000 to Girl Scouts, \$3,000 to Open Studio Project, \$10,000 to Youth Action Ministry, \$45,000 to Summer Youth Employment Program, \$30,550 to YWCA, \$2,000 to Interfaith Action of Evanston, \$49,000 to The Youth Job Center, \$4,000 to Connections for the Homeless, \$14,000 to Interfaith Housing Center, \$4,000 to Adopt A Fancy Can Program, \$35,000 to the Graffiti Removal Program, \$5,000 to the Neighborhood Initiatives Fund. Chair Rainey seconded the motion. Ald. Jean-Baptiste recommended a small modification to allocate \$2,000 to the Evanston Youth Initiative because it has been a program that has been on the scene for some time now and has volunteered their services in many ways. He recommended reducing the

Youth Job Center by \$1,000 and the CD Neighborhood Initiative Fund by \$1,000 in exchange. **This recommendation by Ald. Jean-Baptiste was accepted as an amendment to the original motion, seconded by Mr. Richmond. The vote on the amended motion was 4 in favor and 3 voting nay. Motion passed.**

Chair Rainey stated that the resulting allocation for Public Services totaled \$299,550 which complies with the 15% cap. She explained that if when the City receives its allocation the grant is larger than estimated, this would increase the Public Service Cap. She noted that if the Committee so chooses, it can reconvene to address any change in funding. Ms. Flax confirmed that to be correct and noted that all funding included in the One Year Action Plan to HUD is provisional at this time. She said that if the allocation changes, then the capped categories change and the City can reconsider and revise allocations based on the final grant.

Rehabilitation - Housing & Commercial

Ms. Burrus moved to allocate \$122,000 to CEDA Neighbors at Work, Inc., \$11,700 to City-Handyman Program, No funds to Over the Rainbow Association, as that project is being recommended for HOME Funds, \$25,000 to the Neighborhood Façade Improvement Program, \$124,998 to the CD Revolving Loan Fund, and \$320,000 to Housing Rehab Administration. Ald. Bernstein seconded the motion. Chair Rainey informed the Committee of her discussions and involvement with the City's Housing Rehab staff, stressed the importance of the work that they do in the CDBG Target Area and voiced her support for the work and efforts made by this division that benefit all the citizens of Evanston. **Chair Rainey moved to amend the recommended allocation for Housing Rehab Administration from \$320,000 to \$325,000, this was seconded by Ald. Bernstein. The vote was 7-0 in favor of the amended motion.** Chair Rainey noted that this would bring the resulting total allocation for Rehabilitation - Housing & Commercial to \$608,698.

Code Enforcement

Ald. Jean-Baptiste proposed a single motion for remaining requests under the last three categories. **Under Code Enforcement, he moved to allocate \$375,000 for Property Standards Code Compliance and \$30,000 for Code Compliance-Board Up & Clean Up.**

Public Facilities & Improvements

Ald. Jean-Baptiste moved to allocate \$40,000 for the Foster Field Renovation-Phase 1A, \$50,000 for the Fleetwood-Jourdain Roof Replacement, \$100,000 for the Alley Paving Program, \$40,000 for the Alley Special Assessment Assistance Program, \$50,000 for the ADA Curb Ramp Replacement Program, \$50,000 for the Block Curb and Sidewalk Program, no funds for the SNAP Pilot Program which was withdrawn, \$14,000 for the YMCA Residence Improvement Air Conditioning project, \$3,000 for the Shade Trees for the shared playground of Washington School and Robert Crown Center, \$36,000 for the Family Focus Elevator Installation project.

Economic Development

Ald. Jean-Baptiste moved that \$46,098 be allocated to the ECDC Business Development & Economic Opportunity Program and \$15,000 to the Evanston Business Ownership Initiative. Ald. Bernstein seconded the all the motions made for discussion purposes.

DISCUSSION AND FINAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Richmond expressed his concern that the Family Focus Elevator Installation project may not go forward due to the lack of funding. He felt they have made a good faith effort to go forward with this project and have provided costs based on information from a contractor and presented a proposed work schedule. **He requested to amend the motion to increase Family Focus' funding to \$100,000 from \$36,000. Ald. Jean-Baptiste seconded the motion if the funds are available.** Chair Rainey asked for the total application request amount is at this point. Ms. Flax informed them that with Mr. Richmond's amendment, the current grant total is \$2,191,346 which is \$138,300 above the estimated allocation amount.

Ald. Hansen spoke on behalf of the Washington Elementary School PTA and commended their organization and the amount of work and time they have put into this project. She would like to award them the total amount request, however she would at least like to see them awarded half of what they requested. **She amended the motion to raise the amount to \$4,340 from \$3,000, seconded by Chair Rainey.** Ald. Bernstein agreed and also commended their persistence with this project. He noted that they also worked the number down to the minimum amount with their requested funding and he recalls the Committee encouraging this group to apply for CDBG funds. Ms. Burrus also agrees with Ald. Hansen and further commends this group for all their volunteer efforts as well. Chair Rainey pointed out that the efforts made by this group and what they are contributing will last in the community for 50-60 years to come resulting in a very long term benefit. **The vote was 6 in favor of the motion and 1 voting nay. Motion passed.**

Ms. Flax informed the Committee that they are now \$139,640 above the estimated allocation amount.

Chair Rainey asked for staff status of the elevator issue with Family Focus. Ms. Flax responded that they can fund the installation of the elevator in to because that removes the issue of inaccessibility. She noted that funding could be split over multiple years if this is the choice of the Committee. Chair Rainey explained that she did not make an allocation for this project because she does not have the confidence that the balance of the money needed could be raised. Ald. Bernstein concurred because he too is concerned with raising the amount of funds indicated by Family Focus staff due to the economic climate and the financial stress on institutions at this time. He pointed out that even if the allocation were increased from \$36,000 to \$100,000, this would still leave Family Focus with an additional amount of \$43,000 to raise that year. Ald. Bernstein also noted that the parent group has not come forward to support this project; that there seems to be a lack of participation at that level. He too does not support any allocations for this organization at this time, but noted it was a possibility for next year if more outside funding could be obtained. Ald. Jean-Baptiste explained he only allocated \$36,000 because Family Focus requested \$36,000 the previous year and the Committee voted to take those funds away. Ms. Flax pointed out that the elevator would bring them the building into ADA Compliance and remove the restriction on using federal funds. It was also noted that Family Focus indicated that they are willing to borrow money if necessary to make up the difference to go forward with the elevator installation. Julie Hamos' office has pledged to try and help secure additional funding for Family Focus toward this effort. Ald. Jean-Baptiste said that his main concern is for Family Focus to move forward on becoming ADA compliant and meeting HUD requirements; the

concern of the organization sitting on the money is secondary in his mind. Chair Rainey expressed her reservations on Family Focus' ability to obtain a loan for the additional amount needed unless they are supported by private funding. Ald. Hansen noted that in her opinion, Family Focus had not shown much effort or commitment towards their fundraising needs in view of the amount needed for this project. Mr. Richmond said that he can understand all the concerns stated regarding obtaining the remaining funds, however he was very excited for Family Focus when he received the additional information the Committee requested of them and believes they have shown a good faith effort to move forward at this point. **The vote on the amended motion from \$36,000 to \$100,000 was 2 in favor and 5 opposed. Motion failed.** Ald. Jean-Baptiste suggested that maybe a compromise could be made since Family Focus is in need of compliance with ADA regulations. Chair Rainey clarified that she feels this request is unreasonable due to the cost of this project and the lack of having secured the remaining funding for the project. Ald. Bernstein agreed; noting that more needed to be done sooner in the way of securing outside funding. Ald. Hansen referred to the letter from Family Focus which states that in October 2009 they propose that 50% of the work will be completed and at that time they expect to have the additional funding to finish the work. She pointed out that from this statement it seems more like a hope and a prayer that they will have that additional funding a year from now. She noted that Ridgeville Park District came before the Committee last year and presented architects drawings as well as a full cost estimate for the entire project and a schedule. Ald. Hansen said that had not been done with this proposed project; it appears that the entire project is still a big question mark. Ald. Bernstein noted in response to Ald. Jean-Baptiste's statement that the Committee took their past funding back that the funds were lapsed because Family Focus could not use them. Mr. Richmond reiterated that he was pleased when he received all the additional information asked for by the Committee from Family Focus and now the committee was sending a different message. He said if the Committee had requested drawings and a fundraising strategy, Family Focus would have provided this information as well. He is very disappointed that funding allocations are not being considered for this building which is such an important edifice in that neighborhood and community. The motion for funding remained at \$36,000.

Ms. Flax informed the Committee they are \$75,640 over the estimated total available.

Chair Rainey spoke in support of the Code Compliance Program and the importance of the inspectors' work to ensuring safe rental housing and exterior maintenance of property. She noted that the application requested \$504,137. There has been an increase in foreclosures and boarded up homes, which one inspector has been monitoring. Chair Rainey also reminded the Committee that these funds cover associated costs such as a percentage of the clerical staff's salary that support the inspectors. She estimated that if the minimum that could be allocated for this need is \$425,000. Chair Rainey noted that Property Standards Inspectors are paid less than a majority of the positions within the City of Evanston and strongly believes that they do more work than many other positions within the City. In many instances, inspectors are working overtime without pay; one inspector was called out three times in one weekend. She noted that City officials and citizens need to recognize this and that the work they do is for the betterment of every resident of the City of Evanston. She noted that most inspections are in the CDBG Target Area, and that the purpose of receiving CDBG funds is to improve the living conditions in

those neighborhoods. **Chair Rainey moved to amend the motion from \$375,000 to \$425,000 for the Property Standards Code Compliance, the motion was seconded by Ald. Bernstein.**

Ald. Jean-Baptiste questioned the different responsibilities of Property Standards, Code Compliance and Housing Rehab. He noted that close to \$1 million dollars are allocated for these programs. He noted that he is not suggesting that we don't have the needs within our community to justify what these inspectors do. However the needs that many of these Target Area neighborhoods experience should also be the responsibility of the volunteer groups that live within those areas and he feels that these grants should be spread out more to volunteer groups that do very good work and can participate in the efforts to rehab homes, maintain properties up to code, assist with board-ups, etc. He suggested that more money from the General Fund should cover inspectors' salaries and support staff for this program. Allocating the considerable amount of money towards these City Programs takes away money from some of the neighborhood groups that have little chance of receiving outside funding. Ald. Jean-Baptiste expressed his opposition to an additional \$50,000. Chair Rainey stated that the only reason the City gets CDBG Funds is because Evanston has Target Areas and the City is responsible for improving the quality of living in those specific areas, which is a major responsibility of the Code Compliance/Property Standards/Housing Rehab Programs. Ald. Bernstein said that he agrees that other organizations are worthy of funding, however he has been informed that most other communities do not allocate any CDBG funds to organizations outside the City. Reason being is because there are only so many dollars and the purpose of these CDBG Funds are for the Target Areas to cover services that address the greater good for all citizens. He noted that most outside organizations are requesting funds under the Public Services category not Code Compliance, Public Facilities & Improvements or Economic Development; these are programs that are done primarily by the City. Chair Rainey said that Code Compliance cannot be done by a not-for-profit organization, neighborhood group or volunteers; experienced City staff who are able to go in and enforce the City's Housing Codes are responsible and they need sufficient funds to pay those inspectors. She added that she does not see a better or more important way to spend CDBG funds over supporting this program. **The vote was 4 in favor and 3 against; the motion passed.**

Ms. Flax informed the Committee that with Ald. Rainey's amendment to Code Compliance, they are now \$125,640 over the total estimated available funding.

Chair Rainey asked for a vote on Ald. Jean-Baptiste's motion including all the amendments made thus far. The vote was 6 in favor and 1 against.

At this point, Chair Rainey asked the Committee for recommendations for line item cuts.

Ms. Burrus moved to reduce the Foster Field Renovation from \$40,000 to \$25,000. She suggests this reduction based on an earlier discussion that this project can be completed in phases over several years. She wanted to make it clear that she thinks this is a great project, however she believes more outside funds could be obtained and, because the project can be done in stages, there is less immediate need since it is not related to housing or feeding any citizens. **Ms. Breen seconded the motion and the vote was 4 in favor and 3 voting against. Motion passed.**

Ms. Breen moved to remove the \$36,000 allocation for the elevator installation at Family Focus; Ald. Bernstein seconded the motion. Ms. Breen encouraged the representatives of Family Focus to raise the additional funds needed and then come back to the Committee for CDBG funds. **The vote was 5 in favor and 2 voting nay. Motion passed.**

With the last two reductions, the amount to be cut is \$74,640.

Ms. Burrus moved to reduce ECDC from \$46,098 to \$25,000. She made this motion because ECDC is getting more than half of their request, which is more than the majority of outside applications were receiving. **Chair Rainey seconded the motion.** Ald. Jean-Baptiste stated that this is another example of where the Committee needs to look at allocations in the context of available funds. He reiterated that the committee needs to find a way to continue to support initiatives such as Evanston Community Development Corporation. Economic development within the Target Area is the main function of this group which has made a significant difference in the heart of the Church- Dodge neighborhood. ECDC has worked in many ways to assist the development of small businesses within that community. Ald. Jean-Baptiste stressed they need to invest more in economic development of Target Areas and in merchant associations. He said to reduce the allocation by the proposed amount would probably create a problem for this program. Therefore, **Ald. Jean-Baptiste made a counter motion to allocate \$35,000 to ECDC, seconded by Ald. Bernstein. The vote was 3 in favor of the motion and 4 against. Motion failed.**

The vote on the amendment to reduce ECDC's funding to \$25,000 was passed with 4 voting in favor of the motion and 3 voting nay.

Ms. Flax informed the Committee that they are now only \$53,542 over the estimated funding amount.

Ald. Hansen moved to reduce Code Compliance-Board Up & Clean Up from \$30,000 to \$20,000. She explained that this program received only \$7,000 last year and is now asking for \$30,000; \$20,000 will be more than double what they received the previous year. Chair Rainey called on Jeff Murphy, Asst. Director of Property Standards & Housing Rehab and reminded Ald. Hansen of the constant bills that come before A&PW for board ups. Mr. Murphy informed the Committee that they have paid over \$17,500 in board up fees so far this year. There are currently over 80 vacant properties in Evanston and he estimated there would be 27-30 more properties boarded by the end of the fiscal year, bringing the total cost to around \$27,000 for the fiscal year. Staff is requesting \$30,000 for next year because he estimated at least this same number if not more next year; the program also covers the cost of grounds maintenance of vacant properties when the City has to cut the grass, remove weeds and debris, etc. Ald. Hansen asked if the City puts liens on these properties. Mr. Murphy responded that they do, however it takes forever to collect this money; the City usually does not get repaid until the property is sold or transfers ownership. The majority of total board ups, 90%, are in the CDBG Target Area. Ald. Jean-Baptiste asked if funds from Housing Rehab can be used for this program. Ms. Flax responded that Housing Rehab Administration covers primarily the salaries of the people who deliver that program. She also noted that HUD dollars are used for board ups only if the property is in the CDBG Target Area. Mr. Murphy said that they are receiving many referrals

from the Police Department to board vacant properties to deter squatters, break-ins and similar activities. He said that this is becoming a big responsibility for the Property Standards Division. Ald. Jean-Baptiste asked if other Housing Rehab or demolition funds can be used for this program. Mr. Murphy responded that they cannot use funds from other accounts for board-ups. Ms. Flax noted that these costs had previously been under Demolition, however HUD will not allow use of those funds for board-up or clean-up, so a separate program and account is needed. Ald. Jean-Baptiste maintained that the cost of board-ups should come out of the General Fund. **The motion was approved with 4 voting in favor and 3 voting against.**

Ald. Hansen moved to reduce CEDA/Neighbors At Work from \$122,000 to \$100,000; Ms. Burrus seconded the motion. Ald. Hanses noted that this organization has not used all their funds in the past and the reduction seems reasonable if they still have funds to roll over from last year. Ms. Flax informed the Committee that CEDA/Neighbors At Work had approximately \$38,000 from last year at the start of this fiscal year. **The motion was passed with 7 voting in favor.**

Ms. Flax noted that they are still over budget by \$21,542.

Ms. Breen proposed a motion to cut the Foster Field renovation funding altogether this year, seconded by Chair Rainey. With no discussion, the vote was 2 in favor of the motion and 5 against. Motion Failed.

Ald. Hansen moved to reduce the Alley Paving Program from \$100,000 to \$89,279, seconded by Ms. Breen. She noted that this would this reduction would be half of the \$21,542 overage. Sat Nagar, City Senior Engineer, commented that staff would be able to work with that level of funding. **The vote was 7-0 in favor of the motion.**

Ms. Flax informed the Committee that they are \$10,771 over budget.

Ald. Hansen suggested taking the remaining \$10,771 from Code Compliance, seconded by Ms. Breen. This would bring the allocation for Code Compliance to \$414,229. **The vote was 7-0 in favor of the motion.**

Ms. Flax stated that the Committee's allocations matched the estimated available funding.

Ald. Jean-Baptiste spoke on behalf of the M/W/EBE Program and asked that the committee reconsider allocating funds for this program. He stressed the importance of the program and how the City needs to send a message of support to the minority contractors and acknowledge that their issues are being addressed. He noted that many of the larger construction contractors do not always comply with requirements and that expecting other staff to be responsible for ensuring that M/W/EBE requirements are met is not the best use of staff resources. Ald. Hansen contended that the M/W/EBE and Local Employment Initiative should not be the sole responsibility of one individual, that it should be the responsibility of all City staff involved in the bidding process and who follow the projects through completion. **Ald. Jean-Baptiste moved to allocate \$40,000 to the M/W/EBE Program and reduce the CDBG Administration**

allocation by this amount. After more debate, the vote was 5 in favor of the motion and 2 against.

Final Motion and Vote on the CDBG Program Allocations

Ms. Flax read each CDBG funding allocation for all the applications. **Ald. Jean-Baptiste moved approval of the final CDBG Program Allocations, Ald. Bernstein seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

IV. CITIZEN/STAFF COMMENT

Ms. Joan Raisner addressed the Committee and asked them to reconsider funding the mediation portion of the Alternative Dispute Resolution & Advocacy Services under the Human Relations Commission. She pointed out the importance of mediation services and that it would assist clients primarily within the CDBG Target Area. She feels this is much more important than paving an alley or than many other public facilities and improvements since it directly assists the citizens of our community. Chair Rainey responded that the Human Services Department should propose this position in their budget to be covered from the General Fund; CDBG funds should not be used to cover the cost of re-opening a job vacancy. Ms. Raisner noted that their application is the only 'new' application that received absolutely no funding.

V. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline E. Brownlee