

**HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING**

Tuesday, December 16, 2008

EVANSTON CIVIC CENTER  
7:30 P.M. – Room 2404

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ald. Jean-Baptiste, Ald. Hansen  
**PRESIDING OFFICIAL:** Ald. Jean-Baptiste, Acting Chair  
**STAFF PRESENT:** Sarah Flax

**I. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Ald Jean-Baptiste called the meeting to order at 7:45pm.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 21 & 28 MEETINGS**

There was not a quorum, so minutes were not approved.

**III. PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2009/10 ONE YEAR ACTION PLAN  
AND 2009/10 CDBG BUDGET**

Two people were present and provided input on the One Year Action Plan:

Paul Selden, Executive Director, Connections for the Homeless, raised concern that the focus for affordable housing in the Action Plan is on households with incomes near 80% of area median and that lower income households were not receiving enough attention or help. He noted that Families In Transition is the only program that addresses needs of households at or below 40% AMI and that programs focused on home ownership do not address the needs of very low income households. Mr. Selden also referenced the Chicago 2020 housing study that identified issues that impact the availability of affordable housing, including housing density, and noted that Evanston's policies should be considered.

Mr. Selden noted that rent subsidy programs can be one of the most effective ways of addressing housing needs of very low income HHs. He would like to see Connections get other sources of funding for homeless services so that more HUD funds could be used for rent subsidies. He also noted that the number of Housing Choice vouchers used in Evanston has declined steadily in recent years due to conversions of rental properties to condos, HUD not offering vouchers to new HHs to replace those lost through attrition and the perception that housing is more affordable in other communities, including Skokie. Mr. Selden also talked about the importance of Connections' Prevention Program that provides funds to families at risk of losing their housing because of inability to pay mortgage/rent or utilities.

Ald. Hansen and Ald Jean-Baptiste both noted that the City Council and staff are concerned that affordable units the City has helped fund are not selling and acknowledged that additional strategies need to be developed. Affordable housing is one of the topics on the Council agenda at its January 2009 meeting and they invited Mr. Selden to address the City Council. The

recently formed Affordable Housing Task Force, created to address housing issues, resulted from the need to develop additional strategies to address market and economic changes.

Ald Jean-Baptiste asked for more information on how people find out about Connections' Prevention Program. Mr. Selden described their many links with non-profits, religious organizations and City staff. Staff will get information from Connections to put in the City e-newsletter, etc., to help publicize the program to Evanston residents.

Elizabeth Gordon, Director of Evanston Skokie Valley Senior Services, part of the North Shore Senior Center, voiced agreement with Mr. Selden's comments. She noted that many Evanston seniors that they serve are very low income and live on fixed incomes. ESVSS works to keep seniors age in place and also with transition planning, such as getting on wait lists for facilities with supportive services, as their needs change. Rising rents and utilities are becoming a bigger challenge for them and their program can offer financial help for those items on a one-time basis only. She noted that some clients may be eligible for help through Connections Prevention Program and would work with that agency.

Ald Jean-Baptiste thanked Mr. Selden and Ms. Gordon for their input and closed public comment on the Action Plan.

#### **IV. 2008/09 CDBG PROGRAM UPDATES**

**Façade Improvement** Staff presented an application for Façade Improvement funds from William Holloway for the building at 1800 Dempster St. and reviewed photos of the facility and drawings of planned improvements to the façade. Staff noted that Mr. Holloway has been meeting with neighbors and been responsive to their input. He will be at Site Plan and Appearance Committee on 12/17. Staff recommends allocating \$30,000 in Façade funds for the project and will forward information to members of the committee who were not at the meeting with a strong recommendation from Aids. Jean-Baptiste and Hansen and staff and request their approval.

**Emergency Needs** Staff presented emergency roof repair needs of two Evanston child care providers that serve primarily LMI families, Reba Early Learning Center and Toddler Town Daycare, conditions that did not exist when applications for CDBG funds were due, and requested that they be considered for funding because of their emergency nature. Staff noted that Ald. Rainey is aware of the need by Toddler Town and referred that organization to staff to determine if/how CDBG can help. Staff recommended granting CDBG funds for up to 80% of the emergency project cost, but no more than \$7,000 for Reba and \$12,000 for Toddler Town (based on the organizations' preliminary cost estimates). 80% was arrived at based on % of CDBG funds allocated to other child care providers recently, so consistent with prior funding decisions. Although all anticipated 2009/10 entitlement funds were allocated in the 11/11/08 meeting, these projects can be funded by using program income (the estimate used for 2009/10 has already been achieved) and unspent funds from projects being closed out that normally would be reallocated in the upcoming fiscal year. (Over \$50,000 has been reallocated in each of the last two years.)

Aids. Jean-Baptiste and Hansen agreed that these projects should be funded as proposed,

pending committee approval. Staff will forward information to members of the committee who were not at the meeting for their consideration; the requests will be on the next CD Committee meeting agenda.

**Alley Special Assessment Assistance** Staff provided information on four property owners who have made one or more payments on their alley special assessment but contacted the City about their inability to make the current payment due to changed financial circumstances. Staff proposed that the remaining principal on their assessments be paid from the Alley Special Assessment Assistance fund pending updated documentation of financial eligibility for each household. Property owners would be responsible for paying the interest, as CDBG funds cannot be used to pay interest or penalties. Alds. Jean-Baptiste and Hansen agreed that these needs were consistent with hardship cases funded in the past and that the remaining principal on the assessments should be paid from the Alley Special Assessment Assistance program pending documentation of eligibility.

**V. CITIZEN/STAFF COMMENT**

There was no additional citizen or staff comment.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah K. Flax, CDBG Administrator