

**EVANSTON HOUSING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**April 16, 2009**

**Present:** Eric Beauchamp, Chair, Tim Angell, Carol Balkcom, Yolanda Bender, Brooks Harding, Richard Mosley, Susan Munro, Bruce Nelson and Joanne Zolomij  
**Staff:** Donna Spicuzza, Housing Planner, Susan Guderley, Interim Community Development Asst. Director/Planning, Sarah Flax, CDBG Grants Administrator

**I. Call to Order, Approve Minutes of February 19 and March 19, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 with a quorum present. Tim Angell moved to approve the minutes of February 19 with minor corrections, seconded by Richard Moseley. Susan Munro moved to approve the minutes of March 19 with minor corrections, seconded by Brooks Harding. Both motions **passed 9-0**.

**II. Communications**

Members reviewed the Affordable Housing Fund Report and recommended some additions to the list of developer contributions, and requested that they be given a report on federal HOME funds.

Donna Spicuzza updated members on housing related funding requests:

- The City Council approved funding of \$3,000 for three condominium workshops to be provided by Lakeside Community Development Corporation.
- The Council approved the substitution of \$60,000 in Affordable Housing Funds for the HOME funds already disbursed for Econ Development Corporations project at 241 Callan. The modification will allow the developer to rent unsold units for up to two years with only one unit at a below-market, affordable rent. Substitution of the funds is conditioned on the developer paying all property taxes that are due on this property. The total project funding will remain \$250,000, with \$60,000 from Affordable Housing Funds and \$190,000 from HOME funds.
- The City Council approved Commission's recommendation for \$366,254 HOME funds approved for Hill Arboretum application at its March 23 meeting.

Susan Munro and Richard Mosley reported on the Affordable Housing Task Force Report meetings. Members requested that they receive copies of the Task Force minutes.

Tim Angell noted that there was an excellent article on the foreclosure crisis in the Round Table and thanked staff for getting the information out.

Ms. Spicuzza reported that Open Houses were scheduled for April 18 and 19 and ads will be placed in local papers, for the properties at 736 Dobson, 602 Mulford and 2212 Washington. She said that the Citizens' Lighthouse Community Land Trust was working with a potential buyer whose attorney is currently reviewing the ground lease.

**III. Discussion of application to the State of Illinois for Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds**

Staff presented information on the City's planned submittal of an application to the State of Illinois for approximately \$3 million in NSP funds. Donna Spicuzza explained that the program was authorized by the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA) to revitalize and stabilize communities negatively impacted by foreclosures, high risk mortgages, and high rates of

abandoned or vacant properties. The state expects to make over \$47 million in program funds available, and applications are due May 4.

Sarah Flax explained the State's requirements for NSP proposals and the City's draft submittal. She said although the State's priority is that 40% of the funds target very low income households under 50% of Area Median Income, as opposed to the federal guidelines of 25%, the staff felt that the City's application would meet other priorities in order to be considered.

She said that the City would apply for acquisition funds for property for rental and ownership housing as well as demolition funds and land bank funds. Suitable properties were identified in the Fifth and Eighth Wards, areas of greatest need in Evanston, but the actual properties will depend on availability if and when funds are awarded and the ability to purchase at the required discounted price. The federal guidelines require that properties be purchased at 85% of the appraised value, although the State is encouraging 80% of value. Ms. Flax said that staff would determine whether properties should be demolished or rehabbed for rental or ownership. Some properties earmarked for ownership may be held in a land bank and maintained by the City until market conditions are more favorable for sales. The City will put out a Request for Qualifications and or Proposals to for-profit and non-profit developers to obtain the properties from the City and create affordable housing opportunities.

Members asked whether the City could get funds for administration funds and Ms. Flax said that the administration funds were for the grantee but program delivery costs can be included in sub-grantees' funding requests. Members also asked about how decisions would be made on properties and rehab, with some advocating for larger public involvement in the process. Ms. Flax said that acquisition negotiations were sensitive but that once properties were purchased by the City information on development opportunities would be made public. Members agreed that the City did not want to tip their hand regarding purchases so as not to drive up prices.

A motion was made by Tim Angell for the Housing Commission to support the City's application to the State of Illinois for \$3 million in NSP funds, seconded by Joanne Zolomij. The **motion passed 8-0**, with one abstention.

#### **IV. Report on Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP)**

Ms. Flax presented information on the City's plans to used approximately \$800,000 in HPRP funds awarded to Evanston, as authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The Plan for how funds will be used must be submitted to HUD. She explained that the funds will assist persons who are homeless or have a high risk for becoming homeless due to the economic crisis. Funds can provide rent and utility assistance but not assistance with mortgage payments. She is working on the Plan with the Health and Human Services Department, which will post information on how the City will use the funds. The plan for how the City will use the new funds requires a substantial amendment to the City's Consolidated Plan, and will go to the Human Services Committee on 5/4 and to City Council in May.

Tim Angel moved that the Housing Commission support the substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan regarding the use of HPRP funds, and it was seconded by Eric Beauchamp. The **motion passed 9-0**.

#### **V. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, May 21, 2009.