



Planning & Development Division
Planning & Economic Development Department

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Community Development Committee Meeting Summary

Tuesday, November 16, 2021, 5:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting- Web- EX

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Hamilton Smith called the meeting to order at 5:39 pm

Attending: Pat Sterner, Hamilton Smith, Theresa O'Halloran-Johnson, Steve Wick, Mike Mayou

Absent: Mark Osthus, Valerie Joeckel

Staff Present: Ben VanTassel, Suzanne Kelley, Phillis Webb

2. Approval of Meeting Summaries

October 26, 2021 Meeting

MOTION/Second: O'Halloran-Johnson/Smith moved to approve the meeting summaries. Motion approved 5:0.

3. Overview of Public Comment Period and Public Hearing

Manager Ben VanTassel described the Public Comment process. He stated the time limit for each agency to speak, and suggested for each agency to say how it affects them overall.

4. Public Hearing on FY 2022 Annual Action Plan & Funding Recommendations

(All attendees will have 3 minutes to address the committee.)

Chair Sterner opened up the public hearing at 5:45.

Kira Kallberg from Center City spoke about how they were grateful for the opportunity and support from the city. They said that their budget is coming in at around \$16 million.

Justin Markon spoke on behalf of the Entrepreneur Fund, and how grateful the agency was in receiving the CDBG funds. He also stated the impact that the fund ultimately have on the new entrepreneurs coming to their agency. They are also focusing on LMI entrepreneurs with gaining critical skills to increase business performance. This is a six week class series, along with advising services, online

resources, and technical assistance. Over the past seven years, the agency has been able to reach 100 entrepreneurs, increase the businesses' revenue by at least twenty-five percent which is their program goal. The outcome is creating and maintaining jobs within the community.

Jordan Johnson provided an update on the Life House programs, including the Futures Program- the Economic Development job training, and the Public Service and ESG applications. He explained the Life House has been able to give continuous support to the community through giving out food, hygiene products, and shelter by serving the ages of 14 to 24. The agency appreciates the support with The Loft located within the Duluth that help house ages 15-19 years old.

John Otis, The Deputy-Chief of Life Safety for the Duluth Fire Department talked about the Blight mitigation specialist pilot program. Duluth has had an increase of blighted homes. They are a concern with the safety of the public and firefighters. Over seventy percent of the properties exist in LMI neighborhoods. They would like to come up with a solution where it helps rehabilitate individuals homes, rather than address the properties from an enforcement standpoint. The main goal is to direct individuals to the resources available. The funds for this application would be used entirely to support this program and the individual would work in the Life Safety Office to research the root causes, and redirect to resources. Chair Sterner asked the question on how the funds would be distributed and how the locations would be selected. Also, there was concern on how landlords, who already have the resources, should be rehabbing their rental properties in the first place on their own. John Otis stated that the priority would be owner occupied structures, since one of the first main concerns is when individuals receive a correction order, their own finances are usually the first main problem. Rather than writing citations and correction orders, the safety officer would help get resources and/or financial assistance. Commissioner O'Halloran-Johnson reiterated that there is an additional step to help landlords who are struggling to meet the cities standards. She questioned the income requirement for the program, and how individuals will be referred. John Otis stated that the intent of the program is to get individuals into programs like One Roof and/or the HRA. The individual who would be hired to work this program would direct to resources, finances, and ultimately prevent the ongoing issue of vacancies. There would also be an identification process of vacancies within the city, and how to assist the landlords with rehabilitation of these structures. Also, he stated that the referral process will mainly be complaint based, but the fire department will still be doing their housing checks, and responding to citizen complaints. He stated that without the funding, they have to be on the same traditional track of reacting, versus having an individual prioritized for this issue. John stated that he can send over the job description to give more understanding of the program and the position.

Jodi Slick from Ecolibrium3. Wanted to thank committee for funding. They have been working with St. Louis County under CDC funding to assist with the health disparities that are experienced in Lincoln Park. Additional data for the site shows that the residence are in the lowest half percent of life expectancy for all Minnesotans. In order to deal with this, they are figuring out how to connect the community to better health care, and the social regulation of health. One of the main factors they are working on is social consecutiveness. Forty percent of the residence feel like they have no social interaction. They will also be able to double purpose the warming shelter. By having accessibility into the second building, it will allow them to staff the building, and being able to meet the need for different organizations.

Jim Philbin from One Roof explained their programs rehab-resale and new construction serve different purposes, but still have a long lasting effect in the community. They are excited to move forward.

Jason Beckman from SOAR provided information on a new program, which would assist people with recruiting people who want to be up-trained for better wages. They are proposing a training to get low-income people into a job that starts at \$17-\$19 an hour, and is projected to earn \$50-\$60 thousand dollar range in the next four years. Commissioner Smith asked if they are working with the trade unions within Duluth. Jason stated that they are.

Beth Elstad from Recovery Alliance Duluth expressed gratitude for the funding from the city, and also gave some background on the organization. They are seeking to provide more resources to people who in the community to sustain their recovery, which leads to more positive outcomes. They are the first recovery community organization within their region. They have trained over 150 people to date to assist people with their recovery. They provide services regardless of insurance, and meet people where they are at to be more accessible.

Chair Sterner thanked everyone for their input and closed the public hearing at 6:20.

5. Next Steps

Ben VanTassel explained that the recommendations for the 2022 Action Plan will be reviewed and voted upon at the December 7, 2021 meeting. Afterwards, the recommendations would be presented by the CD Committee to City Council. Date to come.

6. Adjourn

MOTION/Second: O'Halloran-Johnson/Wick moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30. Motion approved 5:0.

Next Meeting: December 7th, 2021