



**COMMUNITY HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT and
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Committee Members: Golden, Ewing, Alexander and Williams

Chaired by Council Member Golden

MARCH 7, 2017 – 10:00 A.M.

3RD FLOOR LOBBY CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Present:

Chairman Jeff Golden and Committee Members Chris Williams and Jason Ewing

Absent:

Committee Member Latimer Alexander

Also Present:

Council Member Cynthia Davis

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Mike McNair, Director of Community Development; Brent Cole, Assistant City Attorney; Richard Fuqua, Affordable Housing Manager; Thanena Wilson, CD Administrator; Lori Loosemore, Supervisor- Code Enforcement; Michelle McNair, Community Resource Manager; Fanta Dorley, Human Relations Manager; Maria Smith, Deputy City Clerk and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

Others Present:

Jim Bronnert and Jerry Mingo

News Media:

No News Media Present

Note: The following hand-outs were distributed during the meeting and will be attached as a permanent part of these proceedings:

- *Overview of 2017-2018 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, CDBG/HOME Programs July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018*

Chairman Golden called the Community Housing & Neighborhood Development and Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Presentation and Discussion of Community Development and Housing Department's Annual Action Plan

Mike McNair, Director of Community Housing & Development, explained that staff is bringing the 2017-2018 Annual Action Plan in a little earlier this year due to some schedule changes and cancellation of the second City Council Meeting in April. He shared that there is quite a bit of uncertainty as to funding, but he understands there is a continuing resolution that may be modified although no official word has been received yet.

He reviewed the department's organizational chart. The department is now fully staffed with eighteen (18) positions. There are two major Federal funding sources: CDBG and HOME, with CDBG being the most flexible and allows them to do a variety of activities. The HOME program funding is used solely for housing. Mr. McNair pointed out they continue to use the income guidelines as determined by HUD, which is adjusted by family size. This is Year 3 of the 5-Year Consolidated Plan, which must be consistent with the Annual Action Plan. Mr. McNair explained that all activities must be identified and mentioned in both the Consolidated Plan as well as the Annual Action Plan so any activities added during the year would require an amendment to the Annual Action Plan.

Regarding the funding, staff assumes that there will be a 10% cut in federal allocations although there is uncertainty because no official word has yet been received. He advised that this has been an unusual year for CDBG and HOME funding because staff generally receives a letter from HUD for guidance as to funding amounts sometime in December, but the letter has not yet been sent out. He explained that the Annual Action Plan must be submitted to HUD by May 15th, and there may be a need to amend the plan. The assumptions in the plan are that Operation InAsMuch will continue to help with Core City redevelopment activities.

He proceeded to briefly review the proposed budget totaling approximately \$4.3 million, noting that the amounts specified in the CDBG and HOME Program incomes are inclusive of the 10% reduction in funding. Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin asked if the remaining capacity for the Section 108 funds is \$694,000. Mr. McNair explained that amount is actually for Hartley Drive, a project that has already been approved, and these funds are obligated, but won't be drawn down until closing. Committee Member Ewing inquired as to when the Section 108 funding would go away or expire. Mr. McNair explained that the threshold for these funds is five times the annual obligation and noted it would be conceivable halfway through for the city to get additional Section 108 funding as long as it is paid down.

Mr. McNair advised that staff is heavily involved in a lot of effective community building activities that are designed to increase community cohesion, communication, develop relationships, etc....(i.e. computer lab, GED program site, partner with homeless service providers, assist neighborhood associations, volunteer income tax assistance, assist with community gardens, public service grants). The Housing Services include Urgent Home Repair, construction partnership training program CHDO housing construction, homebuyer education, lease purchase program, homebuyer assistance. Mr. McNair shared a picture of the Kirkwood Crossing development, which is scheduled to open by the summer and construction of Hartley Ridge is anticipated to be underway in the summer.

The timeline for the Action Plan was reviewed as follows:

February 16	1 st Citizen Participation Meeting (YWCA) (This meeting has already been held)
March 14	2 nd Citizen Participation Meeting (Macedonia Resource Center)
March 20 -April 19	Public Review and Comment Period
March 23	CAC Public Hearing
April 3	City Council Public Hearing
May 1	Council Approval
May 15	Annual Action Plan due to HUD

At this time, Mr. McNair solicited questions from the Committee.

Chairman Golden asked for clarity regarding the qualifications for the Urgent Repair Program. Mr. McNair explained there are several different programs and staff tries to make this transparent to the applicant. The applicant generally shares their specific needs with staff and staff puts them in the program that better suits their needs.

Mr. McNair reported that OIAM has partnered with some local churches or other groups to do some additional repairs “off cycle” instead of having them wait until the next OIAM event rolls around. Some of the redevelopment funds are being used for this. Chairman Golden asked how much of the \$1 million that the city has set aside for redevelopment that is being used towards these efforts. Mr. McNair advised there are a couple of issues they have to deal with. One, the needs far exceed the city’s capacity and being able to successfully market the program and get the word out. He noted the budget for emergency repairs is \$200,000, which has an impact of being \$400,000-\$500,000 and the additional funding mechanisms in place brings the total to about \$600,000.00.

Committee Member Williams asked if they had a projected schedule of the “in between” OIAM projects. Mr. McNair replied they are just starting it, so a schedule has not yet been set, but they have agreed to take on some projects that just could not wait until May. Committee Member Ewing expressed concerns about the property owners that could not maintain their property and could not pay the taxes on their property and asked if there might be something they could take advantage of that would possibly encourage them to do repairs if the city was able to assist them with it. Mr. McNair replied that was a possibility and agreed that the city could write the property owners to make them aware of the opportunities available. He pointed out the Code Enforcement folks could also make referrals as they are out in the field making inspections. Council Member C. Davis suggested putting a notice identifying a list of programs in the utility bill insert because people are just not aware what is available.

Chairman Golden mentioned the demolition case that came before Council at the last meeting for 1900 East Green Drive and questioned the value that the county placed on the property. Mr. McCaslin explained that per State Statute, the County is responsible for assessing property values and conducting property revaluations and the City does not have any authority or control over that. He also reminded the Committee that all the property inside the City of High Point is also in the County, so they have just as much at stake as the City does. Recognizing the interest from churches, Committee Member Ewing asked if staff has reached out to any of the civic organizations (i.e. Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions). Mr. McNair stated that they had made some contacts, and admitted they could do better because there were probably a good number of people that still are not aware of it, but staff would make an effort to reach out to them.

City Awarded Second Technical Assistance Grant from the Center for Community Progress

Mr. McNair shared that staff just received an announcement from the Center for Community Progress last week that the City of High Point was successful in its application and was awarded a 2nd Technical Assistance Scholarship that would consist of 75 hours. This also includes registration and travel support

for two stakeholders to attend their upcoming training academy. Staff has asked if there is available space to possibly send more, but have not yet heard a reply. Mr. McNair asked them to please hold the dates of May 31st and June 1st for the training academy.

Update on Tasks Assigned to the Legal Department

Committee Member Ewing asked for a status update on the ordinances/revisions that the Legal Department has been working on over the past six months. He mentioned the junked car ordinance and the complaints that were received regarding a couple of residential properties that were being used as “car lots” with junked cars everywhere. He noted staff was supposed to be looking into making some changes to these ordinances to be proactive in addressing these issues and asked if it was still active. Assistant City Attorney Brent Cole advised they are currently working on two such ordinances. Committee Member Ewing asked about a timeframe in which Council would see the results of these revisions. Mr. Cole advised they could put it on the front burner if the Committee is pushing to move it forward and he would have a discussion with City Attorney JoAnne Carlyle to that effect.

Council Member C. Davis advised that she did have a conversation with Ms. Carlyle regarding methods of securing houses differently than putting plywood on the outside. She suggested putting plywood on the inside and painting the front black so it would not have the appearance of plywood. Mr. McNair replied that staff has looked into requirements and alternative materials that could be used noting the City of Durham has started doing this. Council Member C. Davis added that she had talked with Ms. Carlyle previously and Ms. Carlyle had expressed concerns to her that there may be some that could not afford the alternative material, but could afford the plywood and could paint it black at a lesser cost. Mr. McNair replied that he would opt for the impact on the community and staff would recommend using the ClearView or other alternative material.

Mr. McCaslin asked about the cost difference; the ClearView would cost about three times as much as plywood. It was noted that the ClearView is not only reusable, but also impenetrable. Council Member C. Davis noted that was a matter of opinion and shared an instance where a property owner might have to go out of town to take care of a loved one and this might lead to them having to board up their residence because they might be gone for an extended period of time. Council Member C. Davis felt it would create a “hairy” situation as well as a financial hardship because of the price difference. Committee Member Ewing agreed there should be a set standard and pointed out the objective is to fix/repair the houses, not to just board them up. Council Member C. Davis disagreed and noted that when an ordinance or policy is passed, it impacts everyone across-the-board and it was not just about the blight.

Lori Loosemore, Local Codes Supervisor, felt the issue at hand was whether or not the city orders the securing, vacating/closing of a structure. She explained that a property owner boarding up their home could do so and would not necessarily have to follow the guidelines that the city puts in place. Council Member C. Davis argued the point and pointed out most people that find themselves in that situation would not know how to secure it, so they would automatically reach out to the city for instructions to do it properly. Ms. Loosemore emphasized that if the city is forced to put up plywood, it would be screwed in (not nailed) and it would have to be a certain thickness, etc.... She pointed out the ClearView is a brand name, but there are other polycarbonate panels that don’t cost as much that could also be used.

Mr. McCaslin advised that if the Committee wants to consider requiring the use of the polycarbonate panels, direction should be given to the Legal Department so it could be worked into the proposed ordinance.

Committee Member Ewing reiterated that the Legal Department has been tasked with revising/updating a lot of different things and felt it might be helpful in a future meeting (probably a Manager’s Briefing) to get a list of all the things that are currently in the works, so priorities can be assigned.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria A. Smith
Deputy City Clerk

Jeff Golden, Chairman