

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Time and Place: The Community Development Citizens Advisory Committee met on Thursday, September 12, 2013 at 5:00 pm, 2nd Floor Board Room at City Hall

Members Present: Chairman Bohlken, D. Ackerman, Freiberg, S. Ackerman, Brezinski, Thao, Campbell,

Members Excused: Reif, Gumness, Olafsson

Others Present: Ann Saris, YWCA; Linda Koepke, Big Brothers Big Sisters; Becky Kopp, WATEA Wheels to Work; Orlando Alfonso and Bonnie Lemke, St. Vincent De Paul; Mary Schultz, Children's Hospital Community Services; Bill Hebert, Inspections and Zoning Administrator; and Ann Werth, Tammy Stratz and Travis Lepinski, Community Development Staff

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and received by the Daily Herald in the proper manner.

1. Call to order

Chairman Bohlken called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM. Stratz distributed two additional Summary Pages that were received after the previous public hearing.

2. Introduction of Committee's New Members

Introductions of all committee members and staff were made for the benefit of both the new and seasoned members.

3. Public Hearing Item (to receive comments on program performance and the 2014 Annual Plan for Community Development Block Grant and Public Housing).

Bohlken opened up the public hearing for the 2013 Community Development Block Grant Program.

Linda Koepke, Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters, is requesting \$7,800 to assist in promoting and enhancing their "Workplace Volunteer Recruitment Program" for their school based mentors. This program consists of "Bigs" meeting their assigned "Littles" either at their schools or at the Boys & Girls Club. The program is targeting local businesses

located close to the elementary schools to attract additional "Bigs" that would be willing to be matched with a "Little" until they turn 18. Currently there are 177 "Littles" on the waiting list with 370 matches already. Their goal is to have over 500 matches by the end of the year.

Ann Sears, Executive Director of the YWCA, is requesting \$15,000 to assist with their Child Development Centers – located downtown and at Northcentral Technical College. Their clients consist largely of extremely low income and minority families. Of the current 200 children they serve, 82% meet the subsidy limits. The Northcentral Technical College site is utilized primarily for students with children. Both facilities are open until 10:00 at night which assists shift work parents and parents taking night classes. They have a new contract with Workforce Development for drop-off care for just how long the new students need the daycare for. The YWCA also works with Wausau School District and Headstart for the 4K program. When asked how many kids they typically have after 5:00, Sears answered they average between 1- 2 dozen kids each night. Their success story is that on average 50 kids' families better themselves by having the ability to go back to school or finding a job due to the ability to pay as they need the daycare.

Becky Kopp, Wheels to Work, is requesting \$20,000 to be used towards assisting clients who need transportation to either school or work. In order to qualify the family has to be under 200% of poverty level and have a job or going to school so they can become employable. Assistance is in the form of a loan to assist with repairs on a vehicle or providing a vehicle to a family. Clients are required to go through a budgeting class and show that they can afford monthly payments for the car along with paying for insurance, registration fees, maintenance and gas for the car, as well as saving for unforeseen repairs down the road. Currently they have an 8% default rate and have assisted with 170 loans to date with 24 of them paid in full as agreed. The best clients they have come from the referrals through the Project Step Up Program. They were hoping to become self-sufficient within 3 – 5 years from starting their program but they are not there yet. They were just notified that they are losing a large state funding source due to their lending out money and not giving it away. As of this next year Wheels to Work will receive zero dollars from the State – which is a huge hit to their program.

Orlando Alfonso, St. Vincent de Paul, is requesting \$20,000 for startup operational funds for their new Thrift Store. They are purchasing the old Rose Gardens building. Their organization typically gets referrals from other agencies – i.e. Catholic Charities, Neighbor's Place, and United Way. These clients are looking for emergency funding such as rent payments to avoid eviction, utility payments, transportation, etc. The average amount of assistance per client is \$250. In order to get assistance a member of their agency will perform a home visit to find out what their actual needs are. They will determine what the need is and then work with them so they can better their situation. Bonnie Lemke added that the organization started locally about five years ago. They found very quickly that the home visit assists with finding the cause of the situation and can develop a plan with anonymity and with no judgments towards the client. They want to empower clients not enable. The funds that are made through the thrift store stay local to continue to assist local families.

Mary Schultz, Children's Hospital Community Services/Children's Service Society, is requesting \$27,390 to continue their Start Right Program. This program provides Public Health Nurses to high risk families during and after pregnancy. They assess the family situation and may require Home Visits (in the case of domestic violence, poverty, alcohol and/or drug use, mental health, etc). This program would like to focus on minority families and may require more intense case management due to language barriers. These families receive weekly or bi-weekly home visits until the child is of school age or until there is another child care service involved. The goal is to have these children school ready. The Start Right Program has received Block Grant funding in the past – one of the first funders to get the program started. Since then they have received funding from several other organizations. This past year they received notification that a major funder may not be there anymore that is why they are applying for block grant funds to address the funding gap. A success story – 100% of the infants in the Start Right Program have received their necessary immunizations, by the age of 2 the percentage drops to 93% - which is still excellent.

Tammy Stratz, Community Development Department, is requesting \$150,000 towards the continuation of the Homeowner Rehabilitation Loan Program. This is a low interest loan that assists income qualified homeowner's located within the City of Wausau limit's with deferred home maintenance. The program does receive program income which is then expended towards new projects before the new money is drawn down.

However, in the past years, the amount of program income that is received by the department has decreased significantly due to homeowners not selling their houses to upgrade. These funds could also assist the Inspections Department to hire another inspector for a temporary basis. The City of Wausau has been working towards Landlord Licensing and the Inspections Department could not perform these necessary inspections with their current staffing levels. These funds would assist to get the program up and running. The inspections performed with the block grant funding would have to be designated to low income areas.

Ann Werth, Executive Director of Community Development, is requesting \$75,000 to be used towards Neighborhood Revitalization. Of the previous allocated block grant funds, \$36,000 has been committed to assist the Park's Department with the creation of the new park next to Athletic Park. In addition, staff has been working with the Longfellow Neighborhood to create a tot lot in their neighborhood for several years. The neighborhood association was told that it needs to get it done this coming year or the funding will be reallocated to a different project. Werth would also like the funding to go to some decorative crosswalks that identify neighborhoods. These neighborhoods would have to fall into low income neighborhoods.

Werth continued to request \$30,000 to continue their Blight Elimination Program which purchases and demolishes blighted properties. In many cases, Community Development staff has been able to rebuild a single family house in partnership with Northcentral Technical College. This house is then sold to an income qualifying household. To date, we have built 13 houses through this partnership.

Werth requested \$25,000 to continue with the Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund program. The City has received three E.P.A. grants through the Federal Government to clean up the riverfront properties. This fall Stenchfield Creek will be day lighted. There has been a lot of interest in redeveloping this area and the City needs to get the land cleaned up before development can happen. Block grant funds will help in this area and will provide the match funds necessary for the E.P.A. grants.

Werth indicated that staff is in the hiring process for a new Economic Development Director and is requesting \$50,000 to be used towards economic development type activities. Most of the funding will be utilized by McDevco, who operates the City's small business loans, micro loans and women and minority business loans. Some of the funding may be

used towards this new position but cannot be funded in large by block grant funds.

Werth also discussed our recent monitoring by H.U.D. Through this monitoring, staff was informed that they could request funds for a Delivery of Service activity. This will assist with offsetting staff time for different projects throughout the year. Staff is researching this possibility and may submit another application with such activity.

Ann Werth, Executive Director for the Community Development Authority, discussed the \$40 million renovation at Riverview Towers in which they are over half way completed. Staff is activity marketing the building so they can get 100% occupied after the renovations are complete. The project is turning out beautifully and any committee member that is interested in a tour, please let staff know and it can be set up.

With no other comments to be made to the committee, Bohlken closed the public hearing.

3. Review procedures for upcoming working session.

Stratz indicated that staff will spend Friday and Monday putting the binders together. Committee members will be notified when they are completed with hopes they can pick them up. If they are unable, staff will make arrangements to get a binder to them. The binders will include a new breakdown sheet and instructions and to please have their recommendations completed by that date. Committee members will then discuss all the recommendations and will need to come up with a group decision as to their recommendations that will be forwarded to the City's Finance Committee.

4. Adjourn

With no other business to be brought to the committee and with a motion by S. Ackerman and seconded by D. Ackerman, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Bohlen
Chair