HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 22, 2021

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Clarksville Housing and Community Development Committee was called to order by Chairperson Wanda Smith on Monday, March 22, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. in the Housing and Community Development Conference Room, 1 Public Square, Suite 201, Clarksville, Tennessee. This meeting was conducted via Zoom.

ATTENDANCE

The following members were connected to the meet:

PARTICIPATING VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM:

Council Members Wanda Allen, Trisha Butler, and Travis Holleman, Housing and Community Development Staff members Lisa Walker and Deborah Johnson, Internal Audit Director Stephanie Fox, and Chief of Staff James Halford

PHYSICALLY PRESENT:

Council Members Wanda Smith and Jason Knight, Housing and Community Development Staff members Dennis Newburn, Brittney Cates, Martias Kendrick and Tammy Kilgore

APPROVAL OF ELECTRONIC MEETING

Chairperson Smith read the notice for the approval of the electronic meeting due to current COVID-19 concerns.

Chairperson Smith then made a motion to approve meeting electronically. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Knight and passed unanimously.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chairperson Smith asked for any questions or concerns regarding the minutes of the February 8, 2021 committee meeting. Hearing none, Chairperson Smith entertained a motion and second to adopt the minutes. Councilperson Knight made a motion to adopt the minutes of the February 8, 2021 meeting as read. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Holleman and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

2021-2022 CDBG Application (Public Evaluations of Applications)

Chairperson Smith stated the purpose of the committee meeting was to review Community Development Block Grant proposals from applicants that are 501(C)(3) organizations. Chairperson Smith explained the procedures on how the meeting would operate. Housing and Community Development would show a 3-minute proposal video. After the video presentation, the applicant's proposal review would begin. The committee members would have the opportunity to ask questions to each applicant and the applicant must clearly respond to the question asked. Brittney Cates, the timekeeper, would allow each applicant 3-minutes to answer the question. Responses needed to be specific to save time. The total conversation of the question and answer period between the applicant and committee member would be 3-minutes. Applicants would not allowed to present videos or presentations at this committee meeting. During the review meeting, committee members may use their evaluation sheets to score each applicants proposal or it could be completed after the review meeting. However, the completed CDBG evaluation sheets would be due on March 23, 2021 and must be submitted to Brittney Cates. The Mayor and City Council reserve the right to modify or reject all proposals received. Chairperson Smith asked for any questions. There being no questions, the Housing and Community Development staff proceeded with the review process.

Brittney Cates presented a Power Point presentation to show the application review process and the next steps. All proposals were reviewed for eligibility compliance with the City of Clarksville's Consolidated Plan, ability of the applicant to undertake proposed activities, and applicant's ability to complete proposed activities on or before June 30, 2022. There were two phases in this process. Phase 1 was eligibility determinations and phase 2 is currently in the process which is the Housing and Community Development Committee review. Ms. Cates stated that as Chairperson Smith explained earlier, six minutes had been allotted for each proposal, 3-minutes for the project video and 3-minutes for questions. The next steps in the process will be Housing and Community Development will begin the process of preparing funding recommendations to the Mayor and Chief of Staff based on Housing and Community Development Council Committee recommendations, Consolidated Plan priorities, anticipated funding, carryover funds, and program income. Funding recommendations will be provided to the Housing and Community Development Council Committee for their review and comment on April 12, 2021. Recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration. The City of Clarksville reserves the right to accept the recommendations of this Committee, Housing and Community Development or modify, reject, or create our own proposals.

Chairperson Smith stated to let the record show that Councilperson Wanda Allen had joined the meeting via Zoom.

Brittney Cates started the proposal review with Community Action Agency. Their project is for the Old Firehouse Day Shelter and they requested $25,000. The Old Firehouse Day Shelter is a full-service center that serves as the entry point for the homeless and/or at-risk individuals and families in Clarksville Montgomery County. The agency is requesting CDBG funds to help homeless clients move into affordable housing. Community Action Agency's application video with Leslie Chiodini, Executive Director, was then showed to the Committee.

Chairperson Smith thanked Ms. Chiodini for the good information. Chairperson Smith asked how many households had the Old Firehouse Day Shelter assisted as of today? Ms. Chiodini stated they have assisted approximately 15 households as of today. This is due to the fact that the contract wasn't received until December, 2020 so the current funding had only been actively used for a few months. Chairperson Smith then asked if the funding was given to the client or the landlord? Ms. Chiodini stated there is a contract with the landlord. No assistance is ever given directly to the clients. The funding is paid directly to the landlord or the utility providers. Chairperson Smith asked if the shelter was still cooking and providing meals? Ms. Chiodini stated that meals are not being cooked this year due to Covid-19, but prepackaged to go meals are given to the clients. Chairperson Smith asked how many months' rent is paid? Ms. Chiodini stated rent is paid for 4 months. Chairperson Smith asked how does the client sustain after the 4th month? Ms. Chiodini explained that after evaluating the program outcomes each year, 4 months of assistance seemed to be a good timeframe to spend with clients to make sure they are maintaining their housing. Chairperson Smith asked if the client does not have a job, how were they informed that the rental benefits were about to end and how are clients motivated to move forward? Ms. Chiodini explained that a client must have income to be eligible to participate in the program. At the end of each month, the client would return to meet with a social worker to give monthly income updates to show they have adequate income to maintain the rent for the next few months. There is a follow-up every month to ensure that the client is maintaining either employment or are still receiving the income they presented when they signed up for the program. Ms. Cates stated that was the end of the 3-minutes for questions.

Brittney Cates stated the next proposal review would be Going Global. Going Global submitted a proposal for Kiana's House and requested $250,000 for new construction of a residential home to provide transitional housing for the on-going needs of abused and homeless children and youth currently in foster care, those at risk of coming into foster care, and those aging out of the system. Going Global owns the lot for the project located at 1246 Paradise Hill Road. Going Global's application video with Anthony Daley, Vision Team Lead, was then showed to the Committee.

Chairperson Smith stated that she noticed that Going Global had several partnerships within the community and that they expect to serve 100 abused children. She asked if it was correct that the funding would be used for the construction of the building? Mr. Daley stated that was correct. Chairperson Smith then asked if the house was going to have only three bedrooms and how would Going Global establish taking care of 100 abused children per month? Mr. Daley stated as a point of clarity, 100% of the foster care kids would be able to utilize the facility. It is a transition facility and not so much a housing facility. The children that are picked up by Department of Children Services (DCS) would be brought to the facility and which would also house office space for DCS. DCS would work in providing placement while the children would be given care. 23 hours would be about the longest stay for any one child. Chairperson Smith asked why would Going Global need the use of a house if the children are not going to stay there? Why not use the church building? Mr. Daley stated they wanted the facility to be used for multi purposes such as a place of transition with a home like atmosphere where the children could feel safe and will be well resourced. The facility would be less of a professional atmosphere like the church or an office space. Going Global also hopes to also use the facility as a restorative program to connect parents back to foster children which would provide a home like atmosphere for that reconnection as well. Chairperson Smith asked why the church could not be used as a transition facility? Mr. Daley stated that one thing that made the church not beneficial, it is not located on a bus route and it is not in close proximity to the DCS office. Those things were very critical on why the property was purchased and where it was purchased. Councilperson Knight asked since Going Global would be working with DCS employees, did they plan to set-up State IT infrastructure in the facility for DCS workers to be able to connect their tablets. Mr. Daley stated they plan to have this set-up so employees can communicate and function as if they were in the office. Councilperson Butler asked if the $250,000 would be for the entire home or would other funding sources be provided as well? Mr. Daley stated that Going Global planned to invest as well but it would be more for the support and administration, volunteer base, and maintenance. The large majority of the CDBG funds would go toward the direct build of this house.

Brittney Cates stated the next proposal review would be Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center. They submitted a proposal for Improving Health Through Employment and are requesting $176,660 to provide 40 low-moderate and low-income individuals with health care front line training in patient services, electronic health record, and administrative services. Matthew Walker intends to serve as a contributor to improving access to employment and improving employable skills with the expectation this would lead to individuals (families) growing out of poverty and therefore, improve access to health care and improved health. Matthew Walker's application video with Katina Beard, Chief Executive Officer, was then showed to the Committee.

Chairperson Smith asked for any questions from the committee. Chairperson Smith thanked Ms. Beard for the historical information provided. Chairperson Smith then asked how much a low-income person is charged per visit, how is the charge calculated, and what is the cost of the visit? Chief Halford, who is a member of the Matthew Walker Board, stated federal law requires charges to be provided as a sliding scale figure. The charged is dependent on the income level of the patient so an exact amount cannot be determined. It is applied on a sliding scale that is submitted to the federal level every year and is recalculated each year. Chairperson Smith asked for a hypothetical situation, for example, if a person receives $20,000 per year, what would be the percentage that is charged. Chief Halford explained that it wasn't that simple. The amount also takes into consideration how many members are in the household and what the actual procedure would be. It is calculated each time a patient visits the clinic. Chief Halford stated there is a very detailed sliding scale fee and he could provide a copy to Mr. Dennis Newburn, Director, Housing and Community Development. Chairperson Smith stated she knew someone who received a bill way above what they expected to be charged for the medical attention they received. There was a complaint issued and she was concerned about the way patients were charged. Chief Halford stated he would like to know the exact individual that had the complaint since he would like to address this issue individually. Chairperson Smith stated she would like to have a copy of the sliding fee schedule. Chief Halford stated he would provide a copy to Mr. Newburn. Chairperson Smith stated most of the funds requested would be to hire individuals but how much of a percentage would be used to directly help patients if at all? Chief Halford stated he could not answer any questions concerning the proposal since he did not have it before him but if Mr. Newburn could send him that question he would get a direct answer. Chairperson Smith asked what was meant by 21% fringe benefits. Mr. Newburn stated as clarification, Matthew Walker had applied for funding for a job training program for persons who are interested in going into the health care profession. It is an activity that is very much in line with the Community Development Block Grant Program. Matthew Walker is asking for 40 participants in this program. They have outlined a basic hourly rate for those persons along with the applicable fringe benefits that would be paid for employees. The other part of the proposal sets forth a salary for a coordinator so the two combined together represent the salaries as well as the fringe benefits.

Brittney Cates stated that Urban Ministries had submitted four projects and would start with the SafeHouse Facility. Mr. Newburn addressed this proposal on behalf of Urban Ministries as well as the City. A few months ago, Mayor Pitts held a meeting with representatives of Urban Ministries and Mr. Newburn. Domestic violence is a terrible issue in cities across the country and unfortunately Clarksville is not exempt. The Mayor felt very strongly about the need to create or enhance programs that currently exist to help eradicate domestic violence. Urban Ministries happened to be one of the long-standing community programs that addresses the domestic violence issue along with the homeless. The Mayor provided a challenge to this organization. This organization was offered $200,000 in CDBG funds provided they could come up with a match equal to the $200,000 that could be used for acquisition of a new facility, rehabilitation of the existing facility, or construction of a new facility. This was included in the Community Development Block Grant proposal process to make it know what the challenge was. Mr. Newburn has met with Urban Ministries several times and the Vice Chair of the Board, Sandra Simms, was on the call to answer any questions. The purpose of the challenge was to figure out a way for the City to do more as it relates to this subject. Chairperson Smith asked if Urban Ministries would match the $200,000? Mr. Newburn stated Urban Ministries has been challenged to match and should be on track for more than just match the dollars. Chairperson Smith then asked if was correct that the $200,000 would be matched before Urban Ministries would be awarded this funding. Mr. Newburn stated that was correct.

Urban Ministries' application video with CC Carmack-Wheeler, Executive Director, was then showed to the committee. Mr. Newburn stated in the last few months, the City had tried to engage the faith-based community even more so than in the past. Housing and Community Development does not have the ability to address all the needs in the community. The faith-based community is the ideal community to partner with moving forward. Councilperson Butler asked if this facility would be short-term, long-term or a little bit of both? Mr. Newburn stated it would be a long-term facility. The present facility is only able to house approximately 16 individuals safely and now with Covid-19, the need to expand services is much greater. It will be a permanent facility. Councilperson Butler stated she was actually speaking about the clients serviced. Would their stay be short-term, for example 1-month, or long-term, for example 2 to 3 months? Would the facility have the capacity to house clients for a longer period of time? Ms. Carmack-Wheeler stated SafeHouse is a 30-day program but works with each client to determine their individual needs and determines extensions and time periods based on those needs. Mr. Newburn stated there would be a greater emphasis placed on Rapid Re-Housing programs to prevent clients from becoming homeless or going back to their abusive situation. Chairperson Smith thanked Ms. Carmack-Wheeler for the information on the facility. Chairperson Smith asked where will the project be located? Ms. Carmack-Wheeler stated that land had not been purchased as this time and Urban Ministries is accessing all the options. However, when the plans are finalized, the location cannot be disclosed publicly because Urban Ministries relies on the shelter being a confidential location. The board is still looking at locations which is one of the challenges due to zoning and safety issues.

Brittney Cates stated the next proposal review would also be from Urban Ministries. Urban Ministries' application video with CC Carmack-Wheeler, Executive Director, was then showed to the Committee. They submitted a proposal for the operation of the SafeHouse Domestic Violence Facility and are requesting $35,000. The SafeHouse Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Shelter is a 24-hour emergency program offering shelter and services to adults and children who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. 16 adults and children can be housed at one time in the shelter facility for up to thirty days and extensions may be given to ensure additional safety. CDBG funds would be used to cover daily operational costs like utilities, insurance, repair and maintenance, and supplies to directly benefit residents in the program.

Councilperson Smith asked for any questions or concerns. Councilperson Butler asked if she was correct in understanding that the last proposal was for the building and this proposal was for the services? Ms. Carmack-Wheeler stated that was correct. Councilperson Butler asked if these two proposals would have completely separate budgets? Ms. Carmack-Wheeler stated that they would be two completely different budgets. Councilperson Smith asked if the total budget was $417,000? Ms. Carmack-Wheeler explained the entire SafeHouse operational budget was $417.,000. Councilperson Smith then asked what are the main funding sources? Ms. Carmack-Wheeler stated SafeHouse receives funding from OCJP, United Way, the Emergency Solutions Grant, and the Emergency Food and Shelter Grant. Funds are leveraged from different areas to cover all the responsibilities.

Brittney Cates stated the next proposal review would also be from Urban Ministries. They submitted a proposal for the operation of the SafePlace Family Transitional Center and are requesting $35,000. SafePlace Family Transitional Center is a 90-day transitional living program for homeless families with children. SafePlace is capable of housing up to four families at once. The facility could potentially serve 16 households in a one-year period. CDBG funds would be used to cover daily operational costs like utilities, insurance, repair and maintenance, and supplies to directly benefit residents in the program. Urban Ministries' application video with CC Carmack-Wheeler, Executive Director, was then showed to the Committee.

Councilperson Smith asked for any questions or concerns. Councilperson Smith then asked how many employees or volunteers work at the SafePlace Family Transitional Center? Ms. Carmack-Wheeler stated that currently there is a full-time program director, four part-time caseworkers, and anywhere from five to nine volunteers to support those efforts. Councilperson Smith then asked about the average pay for the program director and caseworkers? Ms. Carmack-Wheeler stated the pay for the program director is just over $35,000 per year and caseworkers, depending on experience is anywhere from $10 to $12 per hour.

Brittney Cates stated the last proposal from Urban Ministries is the Grace Assistance Program. They are requesting $35,000. The Grace Assistance Program assists clients with utility bills. CDBG funds would be used to help clients who are eligible to receive utility bill assistance once per fiscal year. Funds will be used to assist persons with their utility bills to prevent termination of services. This would allow families to remain in their homes, thereby reducing the potential number of homeless persons in the community. Once determined eligible for services, the Grace Assistance program provides immediate funds through a voucher system to vendors for utilities assistance. Urban Ministries' application video with CC Carmack-Wheeler, Executive Director, was then showed to the Committee.

Councilperson Smith asked if there were any questions or concerns and there were none.

Brittney Cates explained that was a total of seven eligible proposals that were received. There was one ineligible proposal from the City of Clarksville Parks and Recreation Department. Their proposal was for the Ewing Burchett Park Expansion and this project would be considered an area benefit activity which must be made available to all the residents of the area where at least 51% of the residents are low and moderate income. When information was pulled from the HUD low-moderate income summary data, the area of the park only reflected 45.30% of the residents as being low and moderate income. This data made the proposal ineligible.

Councilperson Smith asked if there were any additional statements from the staff or any questions or concerns from the committee members. Council Person Butler stated she was concerned that the requests were higher than the funding available, however, with the larger request being ineligible how is the disbursement of the remaining amount handled? Mr. Newburn stated starting tomorrow, he would begin re-reviewing what the team had looked at and coming up with his own recommendations. Part of the recommendation process would be to look at other sources of money from other years of projects that have not been completed. He would look at utilizing those funds along with what is expected to be received to come up with an actual budget. This would then be presented to the Mayor and Chief of Staff next week and his recommendations provided with regard to what he thinks should be funded based upon eligibility, the Consolidated Plan requirements, and everything else Ms. Cates had spoken about Housing and Community Development does have a relationship with Parks and Recreation and while the proposal submitted would not be funded due to being ineligible, it is the aim to work with Parks and Recreation to determine some type of proposal that can be funded but probably not for the dollar amount requested.

Mr. Newburn then explained that most of the proposals received fall under the category of public services. There is a statutory cap of 15% of the allocation received that can be used for those type of activities. The three proposals from Urban Ministries are examples of public services. Activities presented such as Kiana's House are from a different category known as Public Facilities and Improvements and there are no limitations except for the amount of money available. After meeting with the Mayor, the Mayor will come back to the committee, through Mr. Newburn, on the activities that should be funded and will be discussed at the next meeting on April 12th.

Councilperson Smith thanked the Housing and Community Development Staff for providing a good layout and making it plain and simple so the committee could understand the process. She also thanked everyone who attended from each organization who provided a synopsis of the data from each organization. She then reminded each committee member that the CDBG evaluation sheets are due tomorrow, March 23rd at 9:00 a.m. and should be submitted to Brittney Cates. Mr. Newburn stated that the Housing and Community Development office will tabulate every question from the scores then provide that information so that every person will know how each committee member scored each question.

PUBLIC COMENTS *(five minutes each)*

In accordance with the Alternative Public Comments procedure, requests must be made no less than 48 hours prior to the meeting.

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Smith entertained a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Chairperson Smith and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 p.m.