



HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

May 10, 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, May 10, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. in the Housing and Community Development Conference Room, 1 Public Square, Suite 201, Clarksville, Tennessee.

ATTENDANCE

The following members were present at the meeting:

Council Members Wanda Smith, Wanda Allen, Trisha Butler, Jason Knight, and Travis Holleman, Housing and Community Development Staff members Dennis Newburn, Brittney Cates, Deborah Johnson, Martias Kendrick and Tammy Kilgore, and Internal Auditor Jennifer Osteen

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chairperson Smith asked for any questions or concerns regarding the minutes of the April 12, 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 April 12, 2021 meeting as printed. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Butler and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1) FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan Presentation

Chairperson Smith turned the floor over to the Housing and Community Development staff members for the FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan Presentation, Approval of the FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan and Application Process update, Discussion of Redevelopment Projects – Dixon Park Neighborhood and Beech Street, Tennessee Housing Development Agency Emergency Solutions Grant Annual Application and discussion of the Ward 2 meeting.

Brittney Cates stated she had emailed all committee members a draft copy of the 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan. Ms. Cates gave a summary on the Annual Action Plan process. Every year, the City of Clarksville is required to submit an Annual Action Plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Annual Action Plan identifies how the CDBG, HOME, and ESG program funds will be utilized to provide programs and projects that benefit low- and moderate-income households and neighborhoods. The Annual Action Plan serves as the City's official grant application to HUD and will be submitted by June 7, 2021. The Annual Action Plan reflects specifically how the City of Clarksville will allocate CDBG and HOME funds for the upcoming fiscal year. The FY 2021-2022 Action Plan serves as an annual update to the City's proposed five-year Consolidated Plan which runs from FY 2020-2024.

The 2021-2022 application timeline which includes past and future dates was presented as follows: The Pre-Application Workshops were held on February 5 & 8, 2021. The Application process opened on February 9, 2021. The application process was closed on March 2, 2021. The Housing and Community Development Council Committee met on March 22, 2021 to discuss the scoring process for applications and then submitted their scores later that week. On April 12, 2021, the Housing and Community Development Council Committee met to review the Mayor's funding recommendations. Today's meeting, May 10, 2021, is to review the Annual Action Plan recommendations. The Annual Action Plan public hearings are to be held on May 10 and May 13, 2021. The City Council Executive session will be held on May 27, 2021 to discuss the FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan and will also be the close of the public comment/review period. The City Council Regular session will be held on June 3, 2021 for approval of the resolution authorizing the Mayor to submit the application to HUD for the FY 2021-2022 CDBG and HOME allocations. June 7, 2021 will be the submission of the approved FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan to HUD.

Mrs. Cates then briefly explained the HOME, ESG, and CDBG programs. This fiscal year, the City of Clarksville will receive \$519,309 in HOME funds. The objectives of the HOME program include: Expanding the supply of decent and affordable housing, particularly for low and very low income residents; Strengthening the abilities of State and local governments to design and implement strategies for achieving adequate supplies of decent affordable housing; Providing financial and technical assistance to participating jurisdictions, including the development of model programs for affordable housing; and

Extending and strengthening partnerships among all levels of government and the private sector, including for-profit and non-profit organizations, in the production and operation of affordable housing.

This fiscal year, the City of Clarksville expects to receive \$161,250 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds. The City of Clarksville does not receive ESG funding directly from HUD. The Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) provides the City's ESG funding. The objectives of the ESG program are to assist, protect, and improve living conditions for the homeless. This program provides funding to: Engage homeless individuals and families living on the street; Improve the number and quality of emergency shelters for homeless individuals and families; Help operate these shelters; Provide essential services to shelter residents; Provide rapid re-housing assistance to homeless individuals and families; and Prevent families/individuals from becoming homeless.

This fiscal year, the City of Clarksville will receive \$1,024,758 in CDBG funds. The primary objective of the CDBG program is to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. The CDBG objective is to be achieved in two ways. First, a grantee can only use funds to assist eligible activities that meet one of three national objectives of the program which are: 1) Benefit low- and moderate-income persons, 2) Aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight, or 3) Meet community development needs having a particular urgency. Second, at least 70 percent of CDBG funds must be spent for activities that address the national objective of benefiting low- and moderate-income persons.

Ms. Cates then briefly reviewed the FY 2021-2022 draft Annual Action Plan. Before reviewing the plan, Chairperson Smith asked if there were any questions. She stated that she had a question. She explained there are several homes in her ward that are really in need of repairs. She didn't know if these homeowners knew how to apply for the rehabilitation program. She asked if any of the Housing and Community Development staff contact or go into the neighborhood and approach these homeowners about applying for rehabilitation of their homes. Mr. Dennis Newburn stated that Chairperson Smith brought up a good point. The Housing and Community Development office has not done as good of a job as perhaps we should in terms of going out and letting people know about the programs and services. That is going to be changed and will be discussed later on in the meeting and hope to get the committee's support. There are a lot of people in this community who have obviously suffered due to COVID this year and even prior to that who had no idea that our office does housing rehabilitation. He stated we are actually in the process of putting billboards around town in the next couple of weeks. He also stated that he was interested in hearing from the committee on ways we can do better. COVID has shut down our staff being able to go into churches and other organizations and talking to people about the programs. Now that things have opened back up, we should be able to start talking and meeting with people. He looks forward to hearing recommendations from the committee on how to do better.

Ms. Cates then began the review of the draft FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan. The AP-05 Executive Summary explains objectives and outcomes, the CAPER, the Citizen Participation process and also identifies priorities and needs which are affordable housing, addressing homelessness, community development and economic development. The PR-05 list City of Clarksville information. AP-10 lists who has been consulted about the Annual Action Plan which includes citizens, non-profit organizations, the Clarksville Housing Authority and governmental agencies that were associated in developing this plan. AP-12 Participation describes the Citizen Participation process and how we engage with the citizens of Clarksville. AP-15 shows the amount of funding that will be received for each of our programs. The annual goals and objectives are to revitalize targeted neighborhoods, build community infrastructure and service capacity, expand and preserve affordable housing, assist homes and at-risk of homelessness, and administration and planning. For the projects, every project has to support one of the goals that was listed above. The Mayor's recommendations were discussed at the committee meeting on April 12, 2021. The committee is aware of most of these projects but a few new ones have been added. Ms. Cates reviewed the new projects as follows: The United Way Homeless Support Program for \$10,000. This is a street outreach program that will provide emergency housing and support services including medical and legal. This activity is for persons who are homeless. Dixon Park Redevelopment for \$80,000. This activity will include acquisition, rehabilitation, and construction. This includes street improvements and neighborhood park improvements. Frosty Morn Redevelopment for \$80,000. This activity will include architectural and engineering services in support of a business incubator and mixed-use housing. AP-50 is the geographic distribution which provides geographical information about Clarksville. AP-55 Affordable Housing is Housing and Community Development's goals for the number of houses that will be supported. This section also describes the affordable housing activities that will take place. Public Housing information came from the Clarksville Housing Authority. Homeless and Other Special Needs addresses any goals with the homeless and special needs population. Barriers to Affordable Housing explains what type of barriers there are to finding affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households. Other Actions include actions the City will undertake during the FY 2021-2022 program year to address residents housing and community development needs. AP-90 lists any CDBG and HOME program specific requirements.

As a recap, the Annual Action Plan is important because it provides a summary of the actions, activities and resources that will be used to address the priority needs that were listed in the Five-year Consolidated Plan. Ms. Cates stated the staff recommends that the committee approve the draft of the FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan.

2) Approval of FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan

Councilperson Wanda Allen asked if the committee received this plan in a read form ahead of time. Ms. Cates stated she sent it to each committee member on Thursday, May 6, 2021. Chairperson Smith asked for a motion to approve the FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan. Councilperson Allen made a motion to approve the FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan and the motion was seconded by Councilperson Jason Knight and passed unanimously.

3) Discussion - Redevelopment Projects – Dixon Park Neighborhood and Beech Street

Mr. Newburn stated one of the things that is important about the document that Ms. Cates just presented is how HUD and this committee will prepare what we are doing throughout the year. Once the Council approves this plan, any changes would go back through this committee and council again. You would be able to see the upcoming activities that have been planned thus far. It gives the committee an understanding of what we do through the course of a program year. The Mayor's initiative with respect to redevelopment is the identification and targeting of certain areas in the community whereupon we are able to see and the community is able to experience a rebirth or renaissance based upon the activities we are engaged in either directly or help to coordinate through other city departments or private dollars. This particular area and the Burt-Cobb area is a historic area in the community. It is a high rental concentrated area and there is high land vacancy in the area. It is our department's thought to continue the quest to preserve and inform the community about the historical significance of the area and to create more investment opportunities. There are several areas where contractors and property owners have bought properties and have done some redevelopment of single-family housing. There are opportunities to do more and there are many homeowners that still live in the area. The very idea that these homeowners become aware of the products that we have to offer and target those resources to that particular area along with addressing some of the most pressing community needs. For instance, Dixon Park is a wonderful place but there are still more things that are needed in order to do that. Property acquisition is necessary to compliment the houses next door, to compliment the houses on the other side of the street as well as other land that is either vacant, weeds have grown over it or houses are in such condition that some require a coat of paint or some require a much more comprehensive approach. The idea is to take an area and figure out within the community, meaning the community tells us what they're interested in seeing, based on the amount of money that is available. Our department would listen to the community and figure out on a short-term and long-range basis what would be necessary to help transform the neighborhood. Our past practices have involved going into a community and performing housing rehabilitation. We may have spent anywhere from \$30,000 to \$80,000 or may have done a reconstruction project on the exact same site, but we were not strategic in our efforts to try and figure out about all of the other situations that were a part of that community in an attempt to try to repair and rehabilitate the entire community. The focus now is a more strategic planning effort so you don't end up in the same situation where you have spent \$50,000 or more on one property, and that one property looks good, but everything around it does not. The focus is on a much more long-range basis as opposed to going in and making an immediate impact for one family and not addressing the entire community.

Chairperson Smith stated there is a vacant lot close to the Burt-Cobb Community Center where a church used to be. She asked if apartments could be built on that lot? Mr. Newburn stated that we are interested in anything that the community tells us. In past redevelopment efforts, our department has basically decided. We now want the input of the community. Chairperson Smith stated she felt it would be a good idea to install sidewalks on at least one side of the street. Mr. Newburn stated he would like to acquire land close to Dixon Park and build more housing. We would like to have a coordinated effort so at the end of

the day, it looks like a community that has been transformed as opposed to a nice house here and there and six or seven vacant lots overgrown with weeds.

Mr. Newburn stated this process would involve a lot of community outreach and from there we would write-out what the community is telling us. Our office will be bringing a plan back to the committee that will be based upon the interest of the community, the amount of funds that are going to be available to do the work, and other considerations related thereto. Councilperson Allen asked if we were wanting to install a splash park at Dixon Park or revitalize what is already there? Ms. Cates stated the splash park is already there. The area is currently very small and the hope is to enlarge it. Mr. Newburn stated depending on the committee recommendation, Dixon Park would be priority one. Chairperson Smith stated she would like to see some swings installed at the park. Councilperson Allen asked about the funding for this area and the entire idea in general. Mr. Newburn stated there is not a lot of funding available this year. There is plenty of funding to do housing. The concept is one that not only includes housing, it has to address topical infrastructure. It has to address the ugly stuff below that no one looks at also that has been there for several years. Other city departments that have a vested interest, we would all need to work together to make this vision happen. The most important thing is we need to hear from the community. What is it the community would like to see. Our theme is Housing and Community Development. Our focus has been housing and we are now shifting and are now doing community development first and housing second. It's a major change from how we have operated in the past. The bottom line is that if we do things the way we are hoping to, you will no longer see our department involved in projects where \$100,000 is spent on a house and the rest of the neighborhood looks bad. There is funding available but there is not enough to do everything we would like to do. But over a period of time and where the committee is involved also by supporting the effort, a significant difference can be made.

Councilperson Knight stated that the stipulation had just come out today in regard to the CARES Act funding the City and County will be receiving. He asked if any of the CARES Act funding could be used toward these redevelopment projects? Mr. Newburn stated that now that the rules for this funding has come out, we can now see what it can be used for. HUD has also given the City of Clarksville \$1.8 million in CARES Act funding for new housing. In answer to Council Person Knight's question, funding is available for housing. Concerning the \$24.5 million that the City is getting, it is our hope that some of this funding can be used for this very subject. Mr. Newburn asked the committee to remember there are two pots of CARES Act funding. The \$24.5 million that the City is receiving, our department has nothing to do with that particular funding. The pot our department has is the \$1.8 million. We are expecting that Congress will pass another bill and that focus will be on infrastructure. If that happens, we expect that Community Development will be a very large player in that process as well.

Mr. Newburn stated the second area to discuss is north in New Providence located on Beech Street. Beech Street was included in this year's CDBG budget. The parcel at 408 Beech Street is owned by Community Development. Our department has worked with Parks and Recreation and it is our plan to build a neighborhood park at this location. There is also a

trailer park located in this area and it is our desire to come up with another redevelopment plan that works with the trailer park and the broader community in that area. We will do the exact same things that we will do in the Burt-Cobb area. The park becomes the catalyst in the beginning but the end will hopefully involve new construction of housing and new housing opportunities as well for that area. It would be the same concept and plan as the other area. Mr. Newburn stated that Rob Selkow from Habitat for Humanity is present at the meeting because we expect that Habitat for Humanity will be a major player during this process and at the end of the day they will be involved in in both areas of the community we are discussing.

Mr. Newburn asked for a show of support from the committee on these two redevelopment projects and asked if there were any questions or concerns. Councilperson Allen asked what are the plans for the outreach in the communities? Mr. Newburn stated we are absolutely wide open to anything that the committee knows of that is tried and true and anything experimental to get the word out to the community. Chairperson Smith stated we could set-up community meetings to get input from the citizens. Mr. Newburn stated we would proceed and the process would start by acquiring some property especially in the Burt-Cobb area since we want to expand that park and then this summer we will be out on the street spreading the word. Councilperson Trisha Butler stated she and Councilperson Knight could share the information on social media. Mr. Selkow from Habitat for Humanity stated he could help get the word out since he has found there are still a lot of people who do not use social media or read the newspaper. Councilperson Butler then asked if either one of these parks was the one that was tabled during the last funding round? It was determined that the park in question was Burchett Park. Council Person Allen stated she would like to be involved in the community meetings or going out to into the community. Mr. Newburn stated he would like the entire committee's involvement.

4) Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Annual Application

Ms. Tammy Kilgore stated that our department applies every year for the Emergency Solutions Grant. Like Ms. Cates explained earlier, we do not receive a direct allocation from HUD for ESG funds. We receive ESG funds through the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA). We are known as a City Set-Aside. We are not required to compete for ESG funding each year. THDA allocates funding to several cities in Tennessee that do not receive a direct allocation from HUD. We are still required to complete an ESG Set-Aside application. The City's ESG funds are awarded to subrecipients which are non-profit organizations who spend these funds for homeless services. This year, the application is due May 27, 2021. There are five categories of ESG funds. They are Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Homeless Prevention, Rapid Re-housing, and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS is the system used to track the individuals and families that are assisted through the ESG program. We have two organizations receiving ESG funds this year. The Clarksville-Montgomery County Community Action Agency will receive \$85,000. They have been an ESG subrecipient for several years and normally apply for Emergency Shelter funding. They use these funds for motel vouchers when the shelters are full and for staff salaries. The

other subrecipient is new to ESG this year. We will be working with the United Way and they will be receiving \$65,000. They are using their funding for actual Street Outreach. Street Outreach funds are used to assist the homeless out on the street. United Way has an employee that will be providing these street outreach services. We also receive \$11,250 in administrative funds to administer the program. We receive a total of \$161,250.

Councilperson Allen asked if this was the program that sets up shelter at the churches? Ms. Kilgore stated that program is Room in the Inn. The Community Action Agency acts as the hub for Room in the Inn but does not use any ESG funds for that program. The City has never funded Room in the Inn.

Councilperson Butler asked how we choose who to partner with for the ESG funds. With the other grants, there is an application process so how were Community Action Agency and United Way chosen? Mr. Newburn stated he provided a recommendation to the Mayor. This is following past procedures since the grantee organization is the State of Tennessee. Mr. Newburn explained that he would be open to doing this differently but with respect to the nature of the program, he tried to pick the organizations that best would meet the State requirements. Community Action Agency historically does this due to their homeless services. With United Way, he wanted to do something a little different this year. There is a very large homeless population in downtown Clarksville and is continuing to grow. There has never been anyone to serve as an advocate for the homeless in the legal system, the healthcare system and the educational system. The idea of having a point person to help people navigate through all the processes is something that is a brand-new idea. We are hopeful that this experiment will result in an advocate on behalf of the homeless people to those agencies where they are most effective. Councilperson Butler stated the reason she asked was there are currently a couple of organizations downtown that work with the homeless. If United Way has to hire someone, why not use an organization that is already doing this. Mr. Newburn stated one of the biggest challenges with those organizations, for example YAIPaks, is the requirements for the administration of federal funds is very difficult. Even though the City of Clarksville is not the grantee, we still have to follow the exact same rules. YAIPaks is now in the process of changing some of their systems to be able to comply with these rules. Mr. Newburn explained that he feels by the time the application process starts next year, YAIPaks should be in a position to apply for those funds.

The United Way's role is a dual role. The City has never had a comprehensive city-wide homeless plan. It is now time to have that discussion. As more and more people become homeless either because of illness or lack of employment, there needs to be a very forward-thinking plan that will drive this department and the city with respect to new housing be it for rapid re-housing services or for persons who are victims of domestic violence and find themselves homeless. These individuals could now be in upright position and are looking to buy a home and cannot because they don't have a down payment or they have had a challenge with credit in the past. Also, no one anticipated COVID and shelter capacity is down significantly from a year ago. Having a plan in place that will help us deal with catastrophes when they do happen and a plan that will allow how we are going to arrange for temporary short-term housing for people who have been adversely affected is

something we have not done. The United Way's function in conjunction with our department will be to work on this as well. Mr. Newburn stated he hopes before the end of the year, we can bring a comprehensive plan to the City Council that will allow the City to go in a forward direction in regard to the tragedy of people being homeless. Chairperson Smith added that the United Way is currently used as the hub to distribute funds to other organizations to help the homeless. Councilperson Butler stated this made sense since United Way is set-up to receive the funds. Mr. Newburn stated if any of the committee members know of any new organization, we are completely open to working with start-ups. Also, we have not spoken about teen homelessness and it too is a major problem in this community, but there is no one who specializes in it.

Ms. Deborah Johnson stated the City has applied for and received the fully executed contract for the ESG-CV Part 2 funding. This needs to go before the City Council to get the budget ordinance approved to actually start spending this money. We wanted to inform this committee that process is complete and will be sending it to the Finance Committee. This grant is for \$250,000. \$12,500 is for administration and \$237,500 is going to Urban Ministries to use the funding for homeless prevention to pay back rents and utilities for people who were affected by COVID.

5) Ward 2 Meeting

Mr. Newburn stated on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, Councilperson Vondell Richmond will be hosting a Ward 2 townhall meeting from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. and invited the committee members to attend.

PUBLIC COMENTS *(five minutes each)*

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Smith entertained a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Councilperson Holleman to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Allen and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.