



HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

July 12, 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, July 12, 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, Trisha Butler, Jason Knight, and Travis Holleman, Council Member Ashlee Evans, Housing and Community Development Staff members Dennis Newburn, Brittney Cates, Deborah Johnson, Martias Kendrick, Crystal Griffith, and Tammy Kilgore, and Internal Auditor Jennifer Osteen

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chairperson Smith asked for any questions or concerns regarding the minutes of the May 10, 2021 committee meeting. Hearing none, Chairperson Smith entertained a motion and second to adopt the minutes. Councilperson Holleman made a motion to adopt the minutes of the May 10, 2021 meeting as printed. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Butler and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Overview and discussion of Burt-Cobb – Dixon Park land acquisition

Chairperson Smith turned the floor over to the Housing and Community Development staff members for new business.

Mr. Dennis Newburn stated there were two discussions that required input from the committee. At the last meeting, the Burt-Cobb area, which was one of two areas discussed, as areas of potential redevelopment. The discussion involved the acquisition of parcels around Dixon Park for the purpose of expansion. Since that time the processes have been started that would need to be used. This meeting was to discuss thoughts and ideas of what the committee would like to see and culminating with community meetings that would be called by the committee chairperson on the hopes of receiving ideas from the community before discussing funding for possible ideas.

Mrs. Brittney Cates stated discussion would now be held on the redevelopment of the Burt-Cobb/Dixon Park area. Mr. Martias Kendrick explained the purpose of this project is to preserve and create affordable housing and create an area-wide benefit to the businesses in the area. Mrs. Cates showed the committee and aerial photo of the Burt-Cobb/Dixon Park area which included the Burt-Cobb Community Center, Dixon Park, the L&N Train Station, the Clarksville Street Department, and other surrounding businesses and housing.

Mrs. Cates explained the City of Clarksville currently owns several parcels in this area. The City is interested in acquiring additional parcels to improve the surrounding area. Mrs. Cates presented a map to the committee showing the parcels currently owned by the City of Clarksville and the parcels the City would be interested in acquiring. She explained that ideas were currently being discussed for this area and the committee's input was needed. Some of the current ideas were to improve and expand Dixon Park, a rental rehabilitation program, a business façade program, signage, and a neighborhood clean-up.

Mrs. Cates stated Dixon Park is a fairly nice park that is well lit. The park could use some upgrades such as ADA playground equipment or an improved splashpad. If the surrounding parcels could be acquired, there is the potential for a tennis court, a pool or other amenities.

Mrs. Cates then showed the committee a few pictures of houses within the area. She explained that the Housing and Community Development office currently administers an owner/occupied housing rehabilitation program. She also presented data showing that this area is primarily renter-occupied housing. Out of 755 occupied housing units, 584 are renter-occupied housing units. The current housing rehabilitation program would not be able to assist these families. The City would like to see a rental rehabilitation program implemented which would be for the landlords. A low-interest loan would be made available to the landlords so the units could be rehabilitated. In turn, the landlord would agree to rent to a low-income individual or family for a minimum of 10 years. Mrs. Cates then showed a picture of a house under construction in this area. Although the idea of new

construction is fine for the area, the house shown in the picture does not align with the goal of keeping the housing in the area affordable.

Mr. Kendrick discussed the Business Façade Program. He stated there are at least 20 businesses identified within the area. A Business Façade Program would help existing businesses by upgrading their façade and making their business more attractive. The goal is to keep existing businesses in the area while attracting new businesses to the area. A business façade program would be a public/private partnership with the City investing funds and the business owner or tenant investing as well. Mr. Kendrick stated there is a vacant building on Tenth Street that once was known as Law's Market. An idea for that building could be to find an investor that could have the building rehabilitated and open up a new neighborhood market.

Mrs. Cates stated there has also been an idea for a neighborhood clean-up day which could get the community involved along with other volunteers to plant flowers, paint, and pick-up trash.

Mrs. Cates then explained the next steps in the process. Community meetings should be held to receive input from the residents of the area. HUD requires the City to follow the Citizen Participation Plan. Since this project would be above \$50,000, the City would be required to complete a substantial amendment to its current Annual Action Plan. This would require a public meeting, a 30-day comment period, and approval from the Housing and Community Development Committee, the Mayor, and the City Council. Mrs. Cates then presented a draft timeline of the substantial amendment process. After a second reading from the City Council, the substantial amendment would be submitted to HUD.

Mr. Newburn stated the most important issue right now is the acquisition of property in support of Dixon Park. Negotiations would need to be discussed with the current property owners. The Parks and Recreation Department would have oversight on how Dixon Park would be expanded. Much of the park had been improved with CDBG funds a few years ago. Mr. Newburn stated at the end of the discussion, he would be asking the committee to approve proceeding with land acquisition.

Mr. Newburn then explained that this is an area that if something is not done, will experience gentrification. There have been several developments in the area that if these types of developments continue to happen, it makes the area more prime for commercial development and market-rate housing. The new construction going on now are without Community Development assistance. They are being financed and rented from the private market. There needs to be a balance in the area of private sector investment and public sector investment to make certain that affordable housing exists.

Mr. Newburn stated that as an effort to better understand the community's needs and wants, there will be community meetings held that will be spearheaded by the Housing and Community Development committee and in particular the Chairperson since this redevelopment area is located in her ward. The input from these meetings will be taken into consideration to develop a long-range action plan. It is recognized that a rental

rehabilitation program will have a significant impact, the building of new affordable housing needs to be considered, and the area should not be limited to just housing but include community development. The presentation was made to ask for ideas from the committee on what could be done in the area or ways to reach out to the residents of the area.

Councilperson Ashlee Evans stated the revitalization of downtown is bringing more amplified interest to the surrounding areas. She stated if ADA playground equipment is being considered for Dixon Park, she would also like to consider adding ADA or adult changing tables into the restrooms.

Councilperson Holleman said he liked the idea of a basketball court instead of a tennis court since it could be utilized by more people at the same time. Mr. Kendrick stated the idea behind the tennis court was to offer and give exposure to something the community did not currently have. Dixon Park currently has a basketball court that would remain. Chairperson Smith stated she liked the idea of having a tennis court located at Dixon Park for the residents of the area to utilize. She also stated that Dixon Park is often used for birthday parties, graduations, and other celebrations. Chairperson Smith then stated she did not know if there would be enough room, but she had an idea of some type of waterpark similar to the Tie Breaker in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. She would also like to see swings and canopies with chairs and tables installed in Dixon Park. Some other suggestions for the park included a soccer field, volleyball court, tether ball, outdoor exercise equipment, a fit path, and stormwater garden.

Chairperson Smith asked why apartments were usually built among single-family housing units. She stated she felt that apartments disrupt the dynamic of an established residential area. In a low-income area, there does not need to be a lot of apartments because it disrupts the atmosphere of unity in the community. Mr. Newburn stated that is one of the benefits of the proposed rental rehabilitation program. It would help in the preservation of existing housing.

Mr. Newburn explained the need for community meetings. They need to be held in August for the purpose of the residents telling what they would like to see and what they would like done differently in the community.

Councilperson Trisha Butler asked who owns the properties the City is interested in acquiring for Dixon Park. Mr. Kendrick stated they are owned by several different property owners. Councilperson Butler stated she would like to see a high-rise apartment building put in the area. She understands the issue with density, but a high-rise building could provide housing to so many more people. Chairperson Smith stated there needs to be one level housing for senior citizens who cannot physically use steps. Councilperson Jason Knight stated the limitation on the amount of land would limit what could or could not be built in the area.

2) Discussion of L&N Train Station

Mr. Newburn stated in the budget that was just approved by the City Council, the administration allocated funding for repairs to the L&N Training Station. Community Development is actually going to take over the repairs. The discussion has been started as to what type of repairs are actually needed and the cost associated with the repairs. An action plan will be drawn up for the physical improvements that are needed and programming since the train station is a very under-utilized facility that is full of history. Chairperson Smith stated this was the train her father used in the 1960's to travel to Tucson, Arizona. Mr. Kendrick stated the train station operates on a \$6,000 budget.

3) Overview of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Mr. Newburn gave an overview of the American Rescue Plan Act. It was signed into law in January. The part everyone was aware of is the \$1,400 checks that were issued in February. The part you may not be aware of is the funding that goes to state and local governments of \$350 billion and unemployment insurance. Another part of the program that may not be familiar is \$1.9 trillion Pandemic Recovery. This particular part of the act is the community development part that he will overview. This part benefits several different groups but the one Mr. Newburn stated he heard discussed most during the budget process is Capital Improvement Projects. It was disclosed during the budget process that the City of Clarksville had received \$24.5 million associated with the act. One-half of that money has already been received. The Chief Financial Officer explained at the budget meetings that the remainder of this money would be received next year. The Mayor and CFO explained at the budget hearings that there were no rules as of yet for this funding. That is a true statement and still stands to this day.

The Housing and Community Development department has also received \$1.8 million of funding from this act with no rules. We are waiting for rules to be published. The rules that have been published are basically proposed rules. One of the challenges of receiving federal money with proposed rules is if you go ahead and spend the money and you spend incorrectly, the money must be paid back. The administration has made the wise decision that the City would not spend any of this funding until the rules were known. This has been the position of most state and local governments throughout the United States.

Mr. Newburn stated he wanted to emphasize the word COVID. This word will be heard throughout all discussion concerning this funding. He then explained that the current interim guidelines state that these funds must (1) be used for anything and everything from a public health perspective and its negative impacts because of COVID-19. Anytime this subject is discussed, the words "because of COVID-19" must go with the discussion. If those words do not go with the subject, it cannot be funded using this money. (2) Replace lost public sector revenue due to COVID-19. (3) Provide premium pay for eligible essential workers. (4) Invest in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

Mr. Newburn explained there are sub-allocations within Public Health or Negative Economic Impacts which include (1) Mitigation and Prevention, medical expenses, emergency medical transport, behavioral healthcare and public health programs; (2) Qualified Census Tracts health access, public benefit navigation, housing services, lead paint remediation, community violence intervention, and early learning; and (3) Public Safety Payroll with documented COVID response, ventilation systems for public facilities, green streets to direct and filter rainwater from impervious surfaces, and COVID related expenses for incarceration and homeless shelters. All of these are to respond to COVID-19. Responses to Negative Economic Impacts include (1) Assistance to unemployed, household assistance, business and non-profit assistance, and COVID-19 mitigation/protection measures for tourism/travel/hospitality industry; (2) Child Assistance including childcare, home visit programs, enhanced services for academic and social development, mental health, and substance abuse; (3) Qualified Census Tracts homeless assistance, affordable housing, and housing vouchers; and (4) Improve program efficacy through data analysis, consumer outreach, restore city staff to pre-pandemic level at March 31, 2020, and city unemployment costs.

Councilperson Butler asked if this funding would be used for the assistance to landlords through the rental rehabilitation program. Mr. Newburn stated that program would be funded with CDBG funds but could possibly be funded using some of this funding.

The last category, Premium Pay for Essential Workers includes (1) Nursing homes, hospitals, home care, farms, food production, grocery, restaurants, janitorial, sanitation, truck drivers, transit staff, warehouse workers, public health and safety staff, childcare, educators, school staff, social and human services staff; and (2) Up to \$13 additional per hour, not to exceed \$25,000 per eligible worker. Prioritize lower-income workers.

Mr. Newburn emphasized that nothing has been decided yet concerning this funding. He was only explaining the interim guidelines. Chairperson Smith asked if the capital projects improvements portion of this funding could be used in the community for anything that needed to be developed. Mr. Newburn stated the first example would be a qualified census tract area would automatically qualify since the majority of the residents who live in that area would be considered to be low-income and most likely were adversely affected by COVID. The second example is as long as the activity was able to demonstrate that it would result in either the decline of the transmission of COVID-19 or it would help people who are adversely affected by COVID-19.

Mr. Newburn then explained these funds cannot be used for (1) Tax cuts or deposits into pension funds; (2) Debt service or fees to issue debt; (3) Legal settlements or judgements; and (4) Deposits to rainy day funds or financial reserves.

The City of Clarksville will not spend any of this funding until it is known what the rules are. The local ARPA allocations are Montgomery County: \$43.9 million and the City of Clarksville: \$25.4 million. These funds are to be received in two equal installments one year apart. The funds must be totally obligated by December, 2024 and exhausted by

December, 2026. Periodic reports to the Treasury Department with a detailed accounting of the use of funds.

The City's tentative approach is to (1) Engage key stakeholders; (2) Opinion survey of the citizens throughout the City and County; (3) Confer with community leaders and legislators; (4) Compile and distill the ideas; (5) Collaborate and develop a prioritized list of projects and initiatives, some joint, some City/County specific; (6) Present to Legislative bodies (County Commission and City Council); and (7) Implement IAW the approved schedule of projects/initiatives. The City and County money will not be co-mingled. City funding will be used for City of Clarksville residents and Montgomery County money will be used for residents outside the City. Chairperson Smith asked why the County was give more money than the City. Mr. Newburn explained the formula used is based on population, housing stock, housing stock that was built after World War II, and the number of people who would live here but cannot because they cannot find housing.

Distribution of funds will (1) Apply non-recurring funds to non-recurring expenditures; (2) Avoid creating new programs that require ongoing financial commitment; (3) Rebuild/build financial flexibility/stability; (4) Covering operating deficits is temporary; (5) Consider regional and other partnerships; (6) Use other dedicated funds first; and (7) Invest with an eye toward the future.

Mr. Newburn stated to keep in mind that no funding will be spent until there is a final rule determined and he encouraged all the committee members to read the possibilities on the American Recovery Act online.

Mr. Newburn then stated we need a consent action from the committee on the first discussion on the possible improvements at Dixon Park including the acquisition of property. Councilperson Holleman asked with everything that was proposed at Dixon Park, would dimensions be measured to determine how much area it would take to complete the project. Mr. Newburn stated that dimensions would be given to the committee along with a proposed project for approval from the committee.

Chairperson Smith asked if a survey could be taken of the resident concerning some of the ideas proposed. Mr. Newburn stated a survey could be completed and that Mrs. Cates and Mr. Kendrick would be reaching out to her concerning community meetings to be held at the Burt-Cobb Community Center.

PUBLIC COMMENTS *(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 Knight and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.