

MINUTES  
CDBG Advisory Board  
January 29, 2013

Board Members Present: Russ Elek, Japhet Els, David Scherr, Jim Holway, Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur, Lisa Lillibridge, Karen Freudenberger, Jason L'Ecuyer, Jane Helmstetter, Kevin Worden (ex-officio)

Also Present: Mayor Miro Weinberger, Michael McNamara, Gary De Carolis, Marcy Krumbine, Denise Girard

The meeting opened at 6:00 p.m. with a welcome from Mayor Miro Weinberger. With shrinking CDBG funds, increasing needs due to a challenging economy, and increased oversight on HUD-funded programs, the Mayor asked the Board to consider making strategic awards, to value innovation, and to decrease the number of grantees resulting in the grants and the administration of the grants being more effective.

Michael McNamara, Field Office Director for HUD in Vermont, also welcomed the Board and provided some perspective on both the unique nature of this Board nationally and the current HUD budget priorities, noting that an 8-10% reduction in CDBG funding is being anticipated for this year.

Board members introduced themselves and shared whether they were new or had served before.

The Board members reviewed and approved the following ground rules:

1. Be on time - start and end on time
2. Everyone participates – and encourage everyone to speak - but pass if you wish
3. Share the air; be brief and don't speak twice until all have had a chance to speak
4. Move on when opinions are established
5. Tell or ask about assumptions and conclusions
6. Respect opinions - disagree respectfully
7. Facilitator will acknowledge speakers. One speaker at a time - don't interrupt - let each speaker finish
8. Pose, accept and explore difficult questions
9. Operate by consensus; vote when needed
10. For Board members...what is said here stays here (except for the content of minutes) – don't have outside discussions about Board work

Marcy Krumbine reviewed the CDBG program – its history and federal process – including the goals of the CDBG program and the priorities for the City of Burlington. In addition, Marcy shared the national objectives and mentioned some of the eligible CDBG activities. Next, Marcy explained the role of CEDO, the Board, the Mayor and City Council. She noted the change in the process for the CEDO applications and told board members where they can find the applications online. She also went over the criteria for applications. There are three screening levels that applications must go through:

1. They must comply with the federal eligibility and national objective requirements set by HUD. CEDO screens applications at this level, and the Board does not see applications which don't comply.
2. They must meet an objective of the city's Consolidated Plan, which is the local governing document for the CDBG program. Each application must specify which objective(s) it meets. The city will be rewriting its Consolidated Plan over the few months, and will welcome input from Board members.
3. The local criteria spelled out in the Consolidated Plan (the "Resource Allocation Priorities") are included in the criteria to rate applications.

All of these priorities were folded into a new scoring system and application which was reviewed in detail.

Marcy used a PowerPoint to review each section of the application and gave examples from actual applications on what to look for during their review and the scoring criteria. Board members asked a lot of questions and there was some discussion on how this type of scoring would work. Discussion ensued regarding the new scoring process. Some Board members felt that Applications could receive fewer points for certain aspects which could put them at a disadvantage. Marcy explained that this will average out, as applications may be strong in some areas and weaker in others. She asked that Board members be consistent in their evaluation and scoring of each Application.

Marcy then reviewed the contents of the notebooks provided to Board members, went over the Meeting/Work Schedule, and explained why Public Service and Development Applications are separated. Marcy and Gary briefly reviewed the process used for decision-making. The Board will take one meeting to identify conflicts of interest and questions to be asked of applicants. Questions, this year, will be limited to Pass/Fail questions only. In other words, members should ask whether the answer they seek will impact funding or not. Then, after receiving answers, Board members will rate applications and make individual funding recommendations. That information goes to CEDO, which prepares a composite rating, summary of funding recommendation levels (with colored dots) and median funding recommendation for each application. The Board will then meet to make group funding recommendations using that information, group discussion, consensus where possible and voting where there is no consensus.

The Board meetings are public meetings. Board members are asked not to discuss the applications outside of the meeting setting.

Marcy mentioned that one of the Applications, PS3 Housing Assistance Program, was received at 4:23 pm on Monday, January 14, 2013, 23 minutes past the deadline. Following a brief discussion, the Board voted 6-3 to consider this Application for funding.

The assignment for the next meeting is to read the Public Service and Development applications, to identify conflicts of interest, to identify pass/fail questions for applicants and to provide those questions, as much as possible, to Denise by Tuesday, February 19.

Board members reviewed this meeting to see what worked well and what could be changed for the better next year. Things that worked well were well-organized binders, examples given for reviewing/scoring new application format, sticking to the schedule, and that the Board is no

longer reviewing CEDO Applications. Suggestions for improvements included adding more tabs for binder sections, hearing more from Board members who have served before, and using examples from past rather than current applications.

There were no public comments. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.