

CDBG Advisory Board Orientation
January 26, 2016
6:00 pm

Board Members Present: Cassie Lindsay, Karen Freudenberger, Jane Helmstetter, Peter Ireland., Anne Brena, Rita Neopaney, Hemant Temang (arrived 7:30)

Guests: Mike McNamara

Staff: Marcy Esbjerg, Val Russell, Marcella Gange

The meeting opened at 6:15 pm with introductions.

Mike McNamara, Field Office Director for HUD in Vermont, welcomed the Board. Michael noted that Burlington's CDBG allocation process is unique and considered a best practice nationally for its community participation. He explained that the Community Development Block Grant funds must be used to benefit low to moderate income residents of Burlington, must meet one of three CDBG National Objectives, and must address the City's goals as per the 5 Year Consolidated Plan. He let the Board know that his team at the regional office in Boston is available for any highly technical questions. Mike also mentioned that participating in this process is a wonderful way to learn about the City of Burlington.

Next, Marcy reviewed the 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 (i.e., no lobbying by applicant agencies).

Then the group reviewed the first two sections of the CDBG Advisory Board Binder and Marcy briefly discussed the Application Scoring form. She explained Section 10 where the Board can score based upon personal opinion regarding what will have the most impact on the community. A discussion followed addressing bias and Marcy reiterated the importance of scoring all applications consistently and without bias. It was noted that the discussion and variety of perspectives that the Board brings to the process is essential to understanding all aspects of funding various projects.

Marcy then reviewed the NOFA and strongly recommended that the Board read it before scoring.

Next, Marcy gave an overview of the CDBG process and general funding policies (see Background Data and Info in the CDBG binder).

Marcy noted that CEDO has partnered with the United Way on certain questions in the Application to make it easier for the applicants. Those questions are indicated with [UWCC].

Next, Marcy presented a PowerPoint to review the Evaluation Criteria.

BREAK 7:45 PM

Marcy then reviewed the contents of the notebook including the Consolidated Plan, Community Data, the Rating and Budget sheets and process, the Public Service applications, and the Development applications.

Marcy noted that digital copies of the Budget sheets will be emailed to the Board by the end of the week. She asked that as the Board reviews the Public Service applications they email her any pass/fail questions and she will respond to the entire group with the answer as soon as possible.

A discussion followed regarding the rating and budget allocation process. Board members who have been through this process suggested taking notes about why you choose your scores and your budget allocations, and clarified rules for new Board members. Marcy informed the board that 15% of CDBG funds can be used for Public Services.

Marcy then handed out information on the past performance of applicants, and CDBG funding history.

Next, Marcy reviewed the homework.

Homework:

- Read and Rate all Public Service Applications
- Send any Pass/Fail Questions to mesbjerg@burlingtonvt.gov ASAP
- Return completed Public Service Rating/Budget Spreadsheet to mesbjerg@burlingtonvt.gov by *Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at 4:00 pm*

Board members then discussed the procedure for conflicts of interest.

To close the Board members reflected on what worked in this meeting and what could be improved:

Plus

Appreciated the food
The organization of the notebook

Delta

The meeting was a little overwhelming for new Board Members. It is a lot to learn.