

## **CDBG Advisory Board Meeting**

**3/16/2017**

The meeting began at 6:05 PM

**Members Present:** Rita Neopaney, Peter Ireland, Dana Kamenick, Paco DeFrancis, Erica Speigel, Jane Helmstetter, Michelle Mraz, Anne Brena, Andrew Champagne, Austin Robert Davis, Chris Trombly

**Members Not Present:** Cassie Lindsey, Gwen Ljung-Baruth

**Staff Present:** Marcy Esbjerg, Val Russell

Marcy welcomed the group.

A motion to approve the draft minutes from the last meeting is made and seconded.

**Public Comment** – The floor was opened for public comment, there was none, and it was closed.

Marcy spoke to the group about a CEDO intern that will arrive shortly to take a quick video of the meeting in progress and asked the groups permission to be taped.

The group spoke about the budget that the White House released recently which recommended eliminating the CDBG program and how that affects the allocation process.

Next, Marcy announced to the group that the Greater Burlington YMCA has withdrawn their application and the implications of the withdrawal on the allocation process. Board Members are disappointed that they withdrew and wish that we had received more applications and that the process was more competitive.

Next, Marcy reviewed how the allocation process works and the Budget Balancing Rules for the group. The Board decided to skip the first step where projects may be eliminated from consideration if they have extremely low scores. All development applications will be considered for funding. The board decided to allocate funds starting with the highest scoring application and moving to the lowest.

### **All Development Funding Requests:**

- DEV 2 BRHIP/ONE - Champlain Housing Trust - \$80,000
- DEV 3 Cambrian Rise - Champlain Housing Trust - \$50,000
- DEV 4 YouthBuild – ReSOURCE - \$73,893
- DEV 5 Women's Small Business Program - Mercy Connections - \$21,000
- DEV 1 Community Center at St. Joseph's School - Champlain Housing Trust - \$100,000
- DEV 6 YMCA – Application Withdrawn
- DEV 7 Teaching Kitchen/Meeting Space - Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf - \$200,000
- Dev 8 CHCB's Accessibility Improvement Project – Community Health Center - \$26,346
- DEV 9 Lund Residential Treatment Program - Safety - LUND \$8,242

Next the group discussed the projects one by one and voted to allocate funds:

### **DEV 9 Lund Residential Treatment Program - Safety LUND**

Vote for Consensus on average funding amount of \$6,971 – 8 no, 3 yes – Failed

Board Member comments on application:

- Unhappy with the budget – CDBG was a high percentage, there is not a lot of leverage, liked the description of collaboration, they were not asking for a lot of money, it's easier to give them the total.
- Low hanging fruit, good collaboration with police department
- They should have this in their operating budget, why do they need a grant for only \$8,000?
- Did people have the same question about the accessibility project at CHCB?

A board member proposed fully funding the project at \$8,242 – 9 yes, 2 no - Passed

### **DEV 2 BRHIP/ONE - Champlain Housing Trust**

The group voted for consensus on the average funding amount of \$63,893 - 11 no's – Fail

Board member comments on application:

- It pays to keep existing affordable housing, if it is not maintained it will go back into the market and not be available for low income people again.
- One member brought up the life cycle of buildings, is it actually beneficial to upkeep older less efficient units instead of building new efficient, well designed housing?
- Win for environmental as well as tax payers
- Want to fully fund, thinks the most efficient use of construction money is to reinvest in existing buildings. These are actual homes, not apartment buildings, which some people really want.
- Question – They said the vacancy rate in Burlington is 4.1%
- Those numbers were from Chittenden County not Burlington.
- Worth noting that when talking about vacancy rates there is a holding pattern, a lot of people around Burlington waiting to move in to Burlington.
- Some people disagree with the statement that permitting costs are driving cost of housing up, they think it is the student housing driving up housing costs.

A board member moved to fully fund at \$80,000 – 11 yes – Passed

- Question – would they have to go through a competitive bidding process for this project? Marcy said they usually go by the book and would probably do the competitive bidding process.
- Question – what do they mean that they used to apply for these funds in a different way? Marcy explained that they have previously applied for one lump sum of funds for all of their projects in one application. This created a HUD finding regarding reimbursement documentation and as a resolution they apply for all projects separately as a developer and we are funding CHT with a developer fee.

### **DEV 3 Cambrian Rise - Champlain Housing Trust - \$50,000**

Vote for consensus on average funding amount of \$46,307 failed – 11 no's

Board member comments on application:

- They were focused on the building but not housing seniors, seems like a lot of money going into construction in an area of town that doesn't need it – the New North End.
- Fully funded project because it contributes to affordable housing, agrees that the New North End does not need more affordable housing specifically.
- Question - Does the developer pay for that affordable housing since it is meeting the Inclusionary Zoning requirements for the larger project? The developer pays for some, CHT is providing more units and deeper subsidies in rent than regular inclusionary zoning.
- Question - Why are some Board Members opposed to projects like this in the New North End? There is already high density in some places, like around Avenue Apartments, and it isn't a low income area.
- It's close to the Old North End and the high school, that's a good place for affordable housing.

A Board Member moved to fully fund the project at \$50,000 – 11 yes - Pass

The group took a break at 7:25 and regrouped at 7:35

#### **DEV 4 YouthBuild – ReSOURCE**

Vote on consensus to fund at average amount of \$65,822 - 10 no, 1 yes – Fail

Board member comments on application:

- This is the most creative program, its triple pronged – GED for kids, teaching them a marketable skill, and weatherizing homes. Triple scope of “positiveness”. Hopes there are more girls participating in the future. Really likes that they work with highly at risk youth.
- Based on outcomes it seems like they should be a public service instead of housing. Why do they submit as housing if they are only completing a few units a year? Marcy responded about the general competitiveness of PS funds.

A Board Member moves to fully fund it at \$73,893 – 11 yes - Pass

#### **DEV 1 Community Center at St. Joseph's School - Champlain Housing Trust**

Vote for consensus at average funding of 87,696 – 10 no - Fail

One Board Member has a conflict of Interest, which she disclosed. She did not vote on funding amounts or speak about funding this project.

Board Member comments on application:

- Very well written application, very happy about all of the great programs running out of there.
- Do we really need more community space in the old North End? One Board Member feels like we need more housing and preschool as opposed to community space.
- In the Parks Master Plan they assess how much indoor space the community needs, and we do not have enough for a City of this size. A lot of people asked if it was going to be mixed use, why are they not doing housing on the top and other uses on the bottom. It was not considered.
- One Board Member used to run a sports team, they couldn't find indoor space to practice they had to pay high prices at UVM or sometimes at Memorial Auditorium. She thinks that the city needs more indoor community space. Specifically recreational space.

- Is it common for applicants to be one step removed from the direct service? This is a development project in the lowest income census tract, they should have mentioned the area wide benefit for bringing community space to an area with a high need instead of focusing on the services that other nonprofits will be providing in the building.
- One board member pointed out that he lives in an expensive building in the Old North End with other young professionals. He hears a lot about how low income the area is but he does not see it where he lives.
- Will it be sustainable if it's full of nonprofits?
- Some community members are on the fence about this project. They don't like that it will disrupt where they have the Ward 2 & 3 NPA meetings and dinners.

A Board Member moved to fully fund the application at \$100,000 - 9 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain – Pass

**Dev 8 Accessibility Improvement Project – Community Health Centers of Burlington (CHCB)**

Vote for consensus on average funding at \$20,649 – 9 no's, 2 yes's – Fail

Board Member comments on the application:

- Some members felt like they exaggerated the numbers of beneficiaries by saying that 7,000 people would benefit when everyone who goes there won't use the door assist or call buttons.
- Why do they need a call button for outpatient exam rooms? This is not an inpatient facility. Is this something that is really needed? One member thinks that the call buttons are not necessary but the door assists are good.
- One member shared that she was there with a nurse who was struggling to communicate with a doctor from their exam room. The Nurse was really looking forward to upgrades.
- Hospitals are the most profitable organizations in our state, they should be able to pay for it.
- Other members countered that this is a federally qualified health center, they provide sliding scale and Medicaid and serve people with no insurance.

A Board Member moved to fully fund the project at \$26,346 - 9 yes's and 2 no's - Passed

**DEV 5 Women's Small Business Program - Mercy Connections**

Vote for consensus on average funding amount of \$16,538 - 1 yes, 9 no's, 1 no vote – Fail

Board Member comments on application:

- One Board Member wished they got more into addressing that many small businesses are in traditionally male dominated fields and that maybe that is why there are fewer female entrepreneurs.
- Likes it because it encourages women to get into business.
- We have some really cool businesses in town because of this program.
- One member didn't feel like benefits/outputs are clearly communicated. What does it mean to "expand a business", what are the indicators that the business is successfully expanded? Specifically, what good was done? Is the program actually causing successful businesses? How do we know that?
- One Board Member commented that, when he thinks of low income issues he thinks of homelessness or hunger. This doesn't seem like an essential need, people who are in a position to start a business are not people with the highest need. They are not on the bottom rung of the

ladder and if we have to choose the funds should go to programs that support the lowest income people.

- CDBG has a goal of moving people out of poverty – this program is an example of that.
- Fully fund it, we have the funds. People who are poor do start businesses. Is it moving people out of poverty? With the lack of more specific data it is difficult to assess if it is moving people out of poverty.
- These businesses could be hiring people who are at the first rung, we don't know the effect that these businesses are having on other people, not just the business owners.
- Consider the liability that women carry with starting a business, it is male dominated field.
- Good point, owning your own business can be flexible, and women often carry the burden of raising children, good opportunity for mothers/single mothers who have the highest rate of poverty in Burlington.
- Wouldn't it be great to give New Americans and Refugees hands on experience with entrepreneurship? Why don't they do that?
- Question – Are there other programs for men and women to learn about business together?
- This is considered a safe space for women. Often times in a co-ed environment men take a leadership role over women and the women don't get a chance to speak and learn.

A Board Member moves to fully fund at \$21,000 - 11 yes's - Pass

- A Board Member is part of a women in leadership course at his work, there is a need to address this inequality, and it's a good use of funds.

#### **DEV 7 Teaching Kitchen/Meeting Space - Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf**

Vote on consensus on the average funding of \$126,785 – 9 no's, 2 yes – Fail

Board Member comments on application:

- \$200,000 seems like too much for a kitchen. The application was good, is this kitchen and meeting space really what we need most in this community?
- The Board wished that they had raised other funds, very low leverage. Where is their buy in? Marcy noted that we have fully funded other kitchen rehab projects.
- Why do we need this? Do we need more community kitchens? We have them at the Miller Center, City Market, and Pathways. Can they use on offsite kitchen for this?
- Duplicative, high cost, other activities funded but not successfully completed.
- One board member doesn't want to fund client meeting space.
- Another Member thinks it's reasonable to need private space to discuss sensitive client information. They run 5 programs out of that space and each program has to move out when the next comes in. They are teaching the most vulnerable people how to cook. In this location they have a high need for food preparation.
- They serve very low income people, they are very crowded all of the time, people shouldn't have to talk about their income in front of other people.
- Where did this budget come from? They didn't put their agency budget in the application, it's not broken down. \$332,000 for an addition doesn't seem like enough.

A Board Member moved to fund at \$120,000 - 4 yes, 7 no - Fail

A Board Member moved to fully fund at \$200,000 - 10 yes, 1 no - Pass

Next the group talked about a final meeting. We may or may not have additional information about CDBG funding. We could also use the time to re-visit the funding decisions. A Board Member suggests voting now to approve this budget so that we don't have to meet again.

A Board Member moves that the group votes on the budget tonight and that Marcy will reconvene the group if we are not fully funded for ENT 17. A motion is made to approve the public service funding and the development funding as decided, fully funding all projects and it passes unanimously.

Marcy asked for Board member to complete meeting evaluations. She also said that she will invite the board members to the next meeting to review the process for feedback. In addition, the representatives will receive information to share with their wards.

**Total Funding approved: \$559,481**

Proj #	Project/Program	Organization	Amount Requested	Recommended Amount
<b>Housing</b>				
D2	BRHIP/ONE	Champlain Housing Trust	\$80,000	\$80,000
D3	Cambrian Rise	Champlain Housing Trust	\$50,000	\$50,000
D4	YouthBuild Energy Efficiency and Housing Rehabilitation Project	ReSOURCE	\$73,893	\$73,893
<b>Economic Development</b>				
D5	Women's Small Business Program	Mercy Connections	\$21,000	\$21,000
<b>Neighborhood Development</b>				
D1	Creating a Community Center at St. Joseph's School	Champlain Housing Trust	\$100,000	\$100,000
D6	Staying in the Heart Capitol Campaign	Greater Burlington's Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Inc	\$250,000	Application Withdrawn
D7	2 Story Addition- Teaching Kitchen/Meeting Space	Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf - CVOEO	\$200,000	\$200,000
D8	CHCB's Handicapped Accesibility Improvement Project	Community Health Centers of Burlington	\$26,346	\$26,346
D9	Lund Residential Treatment Program - Safety	LUND	\$8,242	\$8,242
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>			<b>\$809,481</b>	<b>\$559,481</b>

**The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Val Russell  
Community Development Specialist