

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory Board Meeting

2/21/2018

The meeting began at 6:07 PM

Members Present: Andrew Champagne, Lizzie Haskell, Alex Farrell, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol, Chol Dhoor, Erica Spiegel, Sam Beall, Chris Trombly, Alexander Friend

Members Not Present: Jane Helmstetter, Brian MacDonald, Gabrielle Sealy,

Staff Present: Marcy Esbjerg, Val Russell

Marcy welcomed the group and started introductions.

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.

Next, Marcy reviewed how the allocation process works, the materials presented, and the Budget Balancing Rules for the group.

The board decided that all development applications will be considered for funding, and to allocate funds starting with the highest scoring application and moving to the lowest scored application.

All Development Funding Requests:

D1	Laurentide Apartments aka Cambrian Rise	Champlain Housing Trust	\$130,000	1
D2	YouthBuild	Resource	\$54,631	4
D3	St. Joseph's Community Center aka Old North End CC	Champlain Housing Trust	\$100,000	3
D4	A Place to Call Home	Turning Point Center	\$75,000	5
D5	Women's Small Business Program	Mercy Connections	\$25,000	3
D6	Financial Futures Micro Business Dev. Program	CVOEO	\$46,352	2

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

DEV 1 Laurentide (Cambrian Rise) – CHT – Rank #1

Board Member comments on application:

- CDBG funds are not the primary income source for this project, it is a small amount of the total project cost. It's in the New North End. Application well written.
- This project was funded last year
- Concerned about the small amount of funds, they could cover this small amount with another source of funding?

- Likes that so many of the units are going to the most low income persons.
- Would like a stronger impact and evaluation section – surveys from residents on satisfaction with CHT as a landlord, how long the average person stays in a unit etc.
- Are they paying staff salaries with these funds?
- The fact that they are Developers made it hard for board members to rate the application because their application was so different. The Board could use more information about Community Based Development Organizations (CBDO's).
- A presentation was made to the Ward 7 NPA about the whole Cambrian Rise project, the public response was mixed about the project as a whole, but they were generally happy about Laurentide (affordable housing).

After the discussion of the Laurentide application a board member proposed altering the allocation process to discuss the merits of all of the applications before making any funding decisions. The group passed this on consensus.

DEV 6 - Financial Futures - CVOEO – Rank #2

Board Member comments on application:

- Too wordy need to edit, wanted it to be more up front about working with a makers space.
- Referred to their own waiting list, but asked for money for outreach, why do they need funds for outreach if they have so many people on the waiting list? It seems like the grant funds might be going through to Generator or Generator will host the classes? Are they allowed to do that?
- Large percentage of budget is CDBG funds, strong application, really addressed HUD objectives and how that connects to their programs.
- Data rich, outcomes were specific and tangible, colored data tables all really great.
- Discussing outcomes – will serve 160 Burlington residents even though they only served 72 last year – the narrative numbers VS the chart numbers didn't always match. In one section they say they will create 8 FTE's created and later they say 22 FTE's created. Inconsistent.

DEV 5 – Women's Small Business Program – Mercy Connections - Rank #3 (tie)

Board Member comments on application:

- Some board members don't love that it just serves Women, but still think it's a great program.
- Want them to serve more people, don't like that it only serves women, because that limits the range of recipients. Thinks housing is a bigger need than business assistance.
- Another member liked that it had a specific niche, the CDBG funds are distributed overall to a wide array, likes that they work with a credit union, and that they are well funded aside from the CDBG funds.
- There is a need for business assistance for women, just like any other specific groups that may need assistance. Likes that they have good outcomes from previous years – they seem to be succeeding in meeting established goals.
- Likes the application, they understand that there are barriers for women and they are coming in with the understanding that if they close that gap it will be good for the City and for families.

- Heavily weighted towards extremely low income.
- Biggest concern is #4, community and participant input was particularly weak. Wants more information regarding what they can learn from past participants.
- Overall supports project, great demonstrated need, lots of independent data is compelling, other sections are not as strong – how does this contribute to City’s anti-poverty strategy? When talking about other similar programs they put themselves in a very specific niche.
- High cost per person, low number of people who participate. Wants to know more about the longevity of these businesses – what is the long term impact? Do these businesses succeed long term?
- Demonstrated need is true, one member sees this through their own work. Concerned about “bang for your buck” small return in terms of numbers served.

DEV 3 – St. Joseph’s aka ONE Community Center – CHT – Rank #3 (tie)

Board Member comments on application:

- They totally didn’t answer the metrics question, they circumvented it by saying that the metric would be associated with the non-profits in the building instead of providing metrics for the renovation. Would have like to see examples like “these renovations will save these non-profits this much money on energy efficiency”.
- Likes that it is a strategic location, close to a lot of people, beneficial to many organizations. They fell short an explaining that benefit in terms of the renovations themselves.
- Frustrated that a lot of this was vague – we “may use the funds to cover the costs of parking lot”. If you are asking for three figures in federal funds specify what you are going to use the money for.
- Went into reading it wanting to love the project, but it was so vague they scored it low. They conflated the work of the other organizations and not the actual renovation work. They need to explain the specific renovation/construction deliverables. Examples: accessibility, renovation, efficiency, safety improvements etc.

DEV 2 – YouthBuild - ReSource - Rank #4

Board Member comments on application:

- This was one Board Members favorite application, it was simple and easy to understand the benefits were clear.
- This is one Board Members favorite nonprofit. Burlington has a skills gap in trades and construction. We need young people who know how to build things and have practical skills. The City has really old housing stock, we desperately need people to fix up the old housing stock.
- It satisfies many needs at once.
- There are so few households that they serve for the cost.
- How do they select households? Referrals from other agencies.
- The group discussed a HUD finding regarding whether the project was a development or a public service project.

- The budget was confusing, why the big difference in projected funding? It's the Americorps and DOL YouthBuild potential grant funds.

DEV 4 – A Place to Call Home – Turning Point Center – Rank #5

Board Member comments on application:

- Of all the applications, this was very confusing, from reading the application one board member had no idea what they do at Turning Point and what they will be using the funds for. It is vague.
- One member thought it was equally vague to the CHT development applications and shouldn't be punished for that unless they are going to do the same for those other projects.
- Why don't we ask for a construction budget?
- They keep referring to 3,000 guest visits per month, are those unduplicated? How many people do they actually serve?
- Some members feel like in their budget they are fairly specific. Likes that they have solid numbers for their outcomes, high numbers for the funds.
- This is a huge need in the community.
- It seems like they need more space, and that a lot of people are coming and they need privacy, and they have other needs like the ability to clean themselves and space for group meetings.
- Red flag at section 5.2 regarding internal capacity. They are going to complete it by soliciting bids. Are they going to hire an architect? Have they talked to a contractor? How do you know that \$75,000 is enough for the project? Buyer broker comment was a red flag.
- What is their income to pay for the mortgage? What is the risk?
- One Member loves how they use so many volunteers and finds that impressive.

A break was taken at 7:50 PM, and the group reconvened at 8 PM.

Each board member shared what their favorite project was and their first priority for full funding.

Next, the Board went through each application again and tested for consensus on the average funding amount, if there was no consensus then a board member would propose a new amount and vote on it until there was a majority.

DEV 1 Laurentide (Cambrian Rise) - CHT

Test for Consensus on average funding amount of \$126,349. 6 no, 2 yes – fail – no consensus

A board member proposed to fully fund at \$130,000. Vote – 7 yes, 1 no. Passed

DEV 2 - Financial Futures - CVOEO

Test for Consensus on average funding amount of \$45,803. 9 no – fail – no consensus

A board member proposed to fully fund at \$46,352. Vote - 8 yes, 1 no – Passed.

DEV 5 – Women's Small Business Program – Mercy Connections

Test for Consensus on average funding amount of \$23,502. 6 no, 3 yes - fail – no consensus

A board member proposed to fund at \$21,485. Vote - 6 yes, 3 no – Passed.

DEV 3 – St. Joseph’s aka ONE Community Center - CHT

Test for Consensus on average funding amount of \$97,667 – 8 no, 1 yes – fail - no consensus
A board member proposed to fully fund the project at \$100,000. Vote – 6 yes, 3 no – Passed.

DEV 2 – YouthBuild - ReSource

Test for Consensus on average funding amount of \$51,663. 6 no, 3 yes – fail – no consensus
A board member proposed to fund at \$48,500. Vote - 6 yes, 3 no – Passed.

DEV 4 – A Place to Call Home – Turning Point Center

A board member proposed funding them with the remainder of development funds available - \$70, 587.
Vote - 4 yes, 5 no – fail.

A board member proposed funding them fully at \$75,000. Vote – 4 yes, 5 no – fail.

A board member proposed funding them at \$73,500. Vote – 4 yes, 5 no – fail.

A board member proposed funding them at \$72,000 – 6 yes, 3 no – Passed.

After the first round of funding there is a deficit of \$1,413.

A board member proposes to take it out of Resource. Another member disagrees, they feel like it should be taken out of the Turning Point grant. Another board member wants to take \$700 off of two of the larger projects because it is such a small amount of money compared to the millions that the project costs. Next, each member shared what project they would like to take the \$1,413 out of to balance the budget and discussed why they wanted to take the overage from whoever they voted for. The projects with the highest number were St. Josephs and YouthBuild. The majority (5) group members would take it out of YouthBuild.

The board voted on taking it out of St. Josephs to fund St. Joseph’s at \$98,587 – 4 yes, 5 no – Fail

The board voted on taking it out of YouthBuild and funding YouthBuild at \$47,087 – 7 yes, 2 no – Passed

Next the group voted for consensus on the final development budget. Motion made and seconded.
Passed with consensus with 9 approval votes.

Total Funding approved: \$ 416,924

2018 CDBG Applicants - Development				
Proj #	Project/Program	Organization	Amount Requested	Recommended Amount
	Housing			
D1	Laurentide Apartments aka Cambrian Rise	Champlain Housing Trust	\$130,000	\$130,000
D2	YouthBuild	Resource	\$54,631	\$47,087
	Neighborhood Development			
D3	St. Joseph's Community Center aka Old North End CC	Champlain Housing Trust	\$100,000	\$100,000
D4	A Place to Call Home	Turning Point Center	\$75,000	\$72,000
	Economic Development			

D5	Women's Small Business Program	Mercy Connections	\$25,000	\$21,485
D6	Financial Futures Micro Business Dev. Program	CVOEO	\$46,352	\$46,352
		TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED	\$430,983	\$416,924
	*ESTIMATE	DEV FUNDS AVAILABLE - ENT 18	\$362,785	
		UNSPENT AVAILABLE FROM ENT 16	\$54,139	
		TOTAL AVAILABLE	\$416,924	\$416,924
		DIFFERENCE	-\$14,059	\$0

Next Marcy reminded the group of the homework deadline of March 13th at 4pm. This next one will be more challenging as there is more competition for funds.

The group talked about how the process went and if they liked discussing all of the projects first before making funding decisions. The group thought allocating this way worked well for them.

Meeting Evaluation

What worked well: good moderation, when we were stuck Marcy suggested different approaches to find consensus.

What could have been improved: No board members recommended any changes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Val Russell
Community Development Specialist