

**Meeting Minutes  
State College Borough  
CDBG/Citizen's Advisory Committee  
February 5, 2019**

The State College Borough Community Development Block Grant/Citizen's Advisory Committee (CDBG/CAC) meeting was called to order by Chairman Smith on Tuesday, February 5, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street.

**Members Present**

Selden Smith, Chairman; Rebecca Misangyi, Vice-Chairman; Alexis Burke; David Gaines; Jason Olcese; and Marcia Patterson

**Others Present**

Maureen Safko, Senior Planner; Elizabeth Eirmann, Planner-Housing Specialist; Alan Sam, Environmental Coordinator/Borough Arborist; Denise L. Rhoads, Administrative Assistant; and other interested parties

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Ms. Patterson and seconded by Ms. Burke to approve the January 8, 2019 minutes as submitted. The vote was unanimously in favor.

**Public Hour**

There were no members of the public who wished to discuss items not on the agenda.

**February 2019 Ice Breaker**

Ms. Safko stated with the number of new committee members, and the recent freezing temperatures, called for some "ice breaking" activity. Members and staff were asked to share a vehicle vanity plate that they would choose and explain why it fits them so well.

**Chair Report**

Chairman Smith's report on the East Fairmount Park Improvement Project included:

- A public informational meeting was held last week to share a draft concept plan for the E. Fairmount Park Improvement Project.
- The park is one, to one and a half, acres in size.
- Project funding would come from a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant and from the CDBG Entitlement funds.
- There would be a perimeter of walkways, and shade trees with playground equipment in its current location, preserving the large area of open space.

Mr. Sam's overview included:

- Staff worked with Centre Region Council of Government and the Parks and Recreation organizations to evaluate each park to identify needed improvements.
- Work on the E. Fairmount Park Improvement Project is scheduled to begin in 2020.
- Previously, there were complaints about the basketball court and the noise level so, the hoops were taken down.
- At first glance, the equipment looked fine, but a closer look showed there were some safety hazards.
- Sam stated that the woodchips under the swing sets tend to hold water and discussed an approach to improve drainage that builds the play areas up rather than deep.

- Sam noted the playground mulch will be a certified mulch that meets accessibility standards.
- Could replace some equipment with ADA accessible equipment.
- FY 2020 CDBG funds (\$32,000) were budgeted to make improvements to the East Fairmount Park. Our Borough crews would provide some in-kind help such as removing some of the equipment and overgrown vegetation.
- The Borough planned to contribute \$10,000 toward the improvements, and contracted with landscape architect, Daniel Jones, to provide a site design that was needed to compete for a grant from the PA DCNR grant program (Community Conservation Partnership Program).
- All local and federal funds, and in-kind contributions could be matched dollar for dollar by the DCNR grant.
- Efforts were underway to gather public input on the improvements needed, and on the park design. Two public meetings were held in the fall of 2018.
- Additionally, a committee of volunteers met on January 31, 2019 to review a concept plan based on input from the two prior public meetings.

CAC's comments included:

- Ms. Misangyi asked what the publics' feelings were on the proposed changes. Mr. Sam stated some residents wanted to have separate playground areas for each of the age groups. Mr. Sam stated the consensus was to make sure some of the equipment was kept but wanted to remove the basketball court.
- Mr. Gaines asked what some of the grant constraints were. Mr. Sam stated the DCNR grant looked for accessibility, and ADA parking regarding all the equipment and signage. Mr. Sam noted native plantings, and rain gardens would boost the grants point system with DCNR. Staff met with the local DCNR representative, and he was encouraged because the park itself was a bit smaller than what they normally approved.
- Mr. Gaines asked how mature the trees would be when planted. Mr. Sam stated 2.5-inch caliper to a 3.5-inch caliper would be equal to about 12-15 feet tall.
- Mr. Olcese asked if there would be benches along the outside. Mr. Sam stated there would be. Mr. Sam noted there could be some hammock stands in this park to provide an alternative to people hanging hammocks from trees, which can damage the trees. He also noted that staff had taken into consideration how the park might be used by the homeless population. Safko added that there is currently a sign posted to inform the public that the park is closed after dark. This sign is near the entrance closest to the play equipment. The public favors continuing to close the park at dark.

Mr. Sam stated there was a possibility of applying for another grant called a "Tree Vitalize" grant; and that the Highlands Civic Associations (HCA) wanted to help with this application. Mr. Sam stated the HCA was moving in the same direction as the Borough with this project.

### **CDBG & HOME Policy Update**

Ms. Safko stated federal grant requirements included compliance with federal laws including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and the Davis-Bacon Act. A compliance requirement involved the naming of a Fair Housing Officer, and a Labor Compliance Officer.

She stated that the Planning Department recommended the Fair Housing Officer be herself, and the Labor Compliance Officer be Denise Rhoads.

A motion to recommend Ms. Safko as the Fair Housing Officer, and Denise Rhoads as the Labor Compliance Officer was made by Ms. Patterson and seconded by Ms. Misangyi. The vote was unanimously in favor.

## **2017 CAPER (Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report)**

Ms. Safko stated to prepare to review the 2018 CAPER in March, staff included, in this agenda, the report from 2017 for all members to have an opportunity to become familiar with the format and content of the annual performance report.

Her summary included:

- Required to be completed by CDBG recipients every year.
- Budgets were smaller in 2017 than in 2018.
- Followed program requirements to use 20% for Administrative services, and the maximum of 15% for public services.
- Followed HOME program requirements to use 10% for Administrative services, and 15% for the Community Housing Development Organization operating support. Staff used to alternate the operating support between Temporary Housing Foundation, Inc., (THF), and the State College Community Land Trust (SCCLT). The HOME CHDO Operating funding practice was changed to be split equally between the two CHDOs annually rather than providing the entire allocation to each CHDO on alternating years. Safko stated that the change was made to allocate funds more fairly considering that funding amounts vary from year to year.
- SCCLT had approximately 50 homes in the affordable housing program.
- Year-end CDBG balance was \$570,985.49, and HOME balance was \$234,162.63.
- She noted that the CAPER includes the timeliness ratio, which measures the speed with which CDBG funding is spent.
- In November of each year the timeliness of expenditures is evaluated. HUD's maximum ratio was 1.5 ratio. To achieve this, the amount of unspent funds is compared to the latest annual allocation.
- She reviewed the goals for the 2017 CDBG and HOME Programs as a precursor to next month's review of 2018 goals and achievements.
- In March, staff would present the accomplishments of 2018 and the goals for 2019.

## **CDBG & HOME Program Fund Recipients Site Visits**

Ms. Safko introduced the opportunity to visit the Public Service agency facilities. Ms. Misangyi stated she would be responsible for setting up a doodle poll to schedule these visits.

Ms. Safko stated Council appointed Bruce Quigley as the CDBG/CAC's newest member.

## **Upcoming Meeting**

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

## **Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p.m. by Ms. Burke and seconded by Mr. Gaines.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise L. Rhoads,  
Administrative Assistant