

**Meeting Minutes
State College Borough
CDBG/Citizen's Advisory Committee
June 7, 2016**

The State College Borough Community Development Block Grant/Citizens' Advisory Committee (CDBG/CAC) meeting was called to order by Chairman Meashey on Tuesday, June 7, 2016 at 12:03 p.m. in the Borough Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street, in Room 241.

Members Present

Jay Meashey, Chair; Selden Smith, Vice-Chair; Shelton Alexander, Rebecca Misangyi, and Connie Randolph

Others Present

Ed LeClear, Planning Director; Elizabeth Eirmann, Planner-Housing Specialist; Denise Rhoads, Staff Assistant; Mark Whitfield, Public Works Director; Morgan Wasikonis, new Executive Director to Housing Transitions, Inc.; Susan Venegoni and Mark Huncik, Highlands neighborhood residents; Morgon Goranson, University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) representative to the Borough and other interested parties

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Randolph to approve the May 3, 2016 minutes as amended and Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Chair Report

Chairman Meashey met with Margaret Gray, Director of Local Government/Community Relations at Penn State University (PSU). He noted they discussed how CDBG funds are used and how students could take advantage of these fund. He noted it was mostly an informational meeting.

Chairman Meashey stated Mr. Prabhu is in Colorado for the summer and will not be able to attend the next few meetings.

Public Hour

Mr. Goranson noted they are working to promote the resources that are available to the students. He noted most students are not aware of the CDBG funding possibilities. He also stated, when he met with Chairman Meashey, they discussed ways the CDBG funds could help students. Mr. Goranson asked, moving forward, that the CAC think about how to use these funds to help students.

Mr. LeClear asked if there is something that staff could do to help get the word out.

Ms. Wasikonis stated there is an organization called Project Care that helps provide food and some necessities for students.

Allocation of Funding / Priority Needs / Possible Activities

Mr. LeClear stated staff recommendations for 2017 annual allocations are based on statutory limits and historical distribution.

He stated the CDBG will lose about six percent in funding and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) will remain the same as last year.

Mr. LeClear noted one concern item is the language in the document that tells us if a Participating Jurisdiction (PJ) has had less than \$500,000 in funding we, then, could possibly lose the funding. The President has now mandated Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to utilize that clause.

Mr. LeClear stated he does not anticipate funding for 2016 to arrive until 2017.

Next discussed: HOME Funding Allocations

- Mr. LeClear stated ten percent of the FY HOME allocation will go to Administration funding. This is a statutory cap.
- He noted that for the Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) affordable housing activities funding, eighty-five percent is for the FY HOME allocation. There is a fifteen percent statutory minimum.
- Mr. LeClear noted there is also a CHDO Operating Support which funds 5% of the FY HOME allocation. This is a statutory cap.

Next discussed: CDBG Funding Allocations

- Mr. LeClear stated twenty percent of this funding is used for Administration and Planning. This is a statutory cap.
- He noted fifteen percent of this funding is used for Human Service Agencies. This is a statutory cap for public service activities.
- Mr. LeClear stated, historically, fifty percent of this funding is for infrastructure improvements.
- He noted the balance is then allocated to Housing and Contingency.

Next discussed: Strategy to Address the Priority Needs of Affordable Housing which included:

- Goal of Rehab: Single-Unit Residential:
Owner-Occupied Rehab Program Project
- Goal of Acquisition for Rehab:
State College Borough First Time Homebuyer Program (Low-Income) Project; State College Community Land Trust Homebuyer Program Project; Temporary Housing Foundations' First Time Homebuyer Program Project
- Goal of Rehab: Multi-Unit Residential:
Bellaire Court Rehab Project

Next discussed: Strategy to Address the Priority Needs of Public Improvements and Infrastructure and Public Facilities:

- Mr. LeClear stated public facility and infrastructure improvement projects eligible for CDBG funding are identified in the Borough's Capital Improvements Program (CIP).
- The CIP is a planning document used to identify our long range non-housing community development objectives and to project revenue that will be available and expenditures that will be made to meet these needs. This includes future objectives to upgrade public facilities, complete infrastructure improvements, and increase accessibility in public buildings and facilities.

Committees' comments included:

- Ms. Misangyi asked how the fifty percent was determined and Mr. LeClear noted he researched as far back as he could and couldn't find much but, it has been used historically.
- Mr. Alexander asked what other eligible activities could be funded. Mr. LeClear directed Mr. Alexander to the list of activities provided in the agenda. He also noted there are economic development projects but, until HUD changes their rules it makes it hard to utilize funding for these types of projects.
- Ms. Venegoni asked who makes the determination that it has to be all infrastructure projects. Mr. LeClear stated ultimately, it is Council's decision as to how they want to allocate those funds using staff recommendations.
- Ms. Venegoni also asked if hiring an additional code enforcement employee would go under this funding. Mr. LeClear stated there would be very specific criteria that would have to be followed.
- Ms. Venegoni asked if a neighborhood had a project that they wanted CDBG funding to be used for how they would go about this. Mr. Whitfield stated all the neighborhoods need to do would be to let him know what type of project(s) they wanted done.

Proposed CDBG-Funded Capital Improvement Program Projects

Mr. Whitfield gave a brief overview of the projects that have been funded in the last ten years.

He stated they have learned during these last ten years not to break up the funding into many projects.

He also noted using in-house crews has allowed staff to stretch the funding out over more projects.

Mr. Whitfield gave a brief overview of the CDBG CIP Projects 2017-2021 which included:

- Some pictures of streetlights that are showing a lot of rust and foundation cracks.

- He also noted that 40-50% of the downtown streetlights need to be replaced. They have outlived their life expectancy of 25 years.
- He also stated they will be replacing the poles, foundation and looking at using the LED lighting system that would reduce the electric usage and help with meeting the dark sky ordinance in the Borough.
- Mr. Whitfield also noted they will be replacing ADA ramps near the streetlights that will be replaced.

Committees' comments included:

- Ms. Randolph asked if the \$250,000 for each project will cover all lights that have to be replaced. Mr. Whitfield stated it will not.
- Mr. Goranson asked if this funding is to replace old lights and not place new ones. Mr. Whitfield stated that is the correct.
- Ms. Randolph asked if departments use in-house crews where does the money saved go to. Mr. Whitfield stated that those funds are then moved to the next project on the list.
- Mr. Huncik asked if the 48-foot rule between streetlights is the standard rule. Mr. Whitfield stated, generally, it is.
- Mr. Huncik stated he has not heard that lighting is insufficient in the downtown area. He has heard that it is insufficient in the neighborhoods.

Public Hearing on Housing and Community Development Needs, Development of Proposed Activities, and Proposed Strategies and Action for Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

Federal regulations require communities that receive entitlement Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development to complete a Consolidated Plan, which is a five-year planning document that identifies a community's overall housing and community development needs and a strategy to meet those needs. State College Borough completed its 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan and will be working on completing the 2016 Consolidated Annual Action Plan which will list the activities to be undertaken with CDBG and HOME funds during 2016.

Public Comment included:

Mr. Huncik asked for clarification of what needs to be approved. Mr. LeClear stated they are only looking for approval for what is recommended for 2017 in the CIP.

Mr. Stone asked if downtown lighting is the best proxy to use the funding for. Mr. LeClear stated that through the whole process, Council is the ultimate decision maker.

Mr. Whitfield stated it would be extremely helpful if the neighborhoods have a project they want to see funded that they step forward and let staff know about this. He stated there are many funding opportunities out there.

Ms. Randolph would like to recommend to continue to use funding to replace streetlights.

A motion was made to approve the 2017 CDBG Capital Improvement Projects by Ms. Randolph and seconded by Mr. Alexander. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, this meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m. by Ms. Randolph and seconded by Mr. Alexander.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Denise L. Rhoads, Staff Assistant