

APPENDIX 5.

City of Rockford
Community Development Department

PUBLIC HEARING
CONCERNING

Fourth Year of
Five Year Consolidated Plan

Tuesday, August 14th – 12:00 PM
Patriot's Gateway Center
615 South 5th Street

MINUTES

I. Welcome

Dwayne Collins, Grants Compliance Specialist for the City of Rockford, introduced himself and welcomed everyone. He explained that this public hearing is regarding the Consolidated Plan. The programs include the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Program and the Emergency Shelter Grant.

II. 2010-2014 City of Rockford Consolidated Plan: 2012 Action Plan

- The 2010 – 2014 City of Rockford Consolidated Plan: 2012 Action Plan was presented by Vicki Manson, Dwayne Collins, Jennifer Jaeger and Jovita Donahue. See slides attached.
- The following questions were addressed by staff members:
 - ☐ Question – Where is the focus area?
Answer – There is a map of the focus area in our Rehabilitation brochure. Resident was given a brochure.
 - ☐ Question – Why are people not qualifying for the Focus Area Rehabilitation program?
Answer – Reasons people are not qualifying include: the cost of the rehabilitation, applicants not bringing in the required information, not responding when they are contacted and not wanting a mortgage against their home.
 - ☐ Question – Are there any language barriers?
Answer – We have addressed the issue of any language barriers.
 - ☐ Question – Do the Down Home and Homebuyer Advantage programs do the same thing?
Answer – Yes
 - ☐ Question – How does the Tax Incentive Program (TIP) work?
Answer – The house must be in a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) area and there must be a need for a major rehabilitation. Taxes are then frozen and any increase in taxes can be rebated back to you over 10 – 12 years (if historic). This time frame can be extended to 12 years if the rehabilitation is "green".

- ☞ Question – When are applications accepted for the Healthy Neighborhood Program?
Answer – Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.
Question – What is the eligibility?
Answer – This program is for organizations that identify a lacking in the community that they can provide but they need financial assistance.
- ☞ Question – Is the LMA Façade program a 50/50 match?
Answer – Yes it is.
- ☞ Question – Are CHDO's HOME funded?
Answer – Yes, 15% of HOME funds are used for CHDO's.
- ☞ Question – Are CHDO's required to have full time staff? How many CHDO's are there?
Answer – CHDO's must have a part time dedicated staff member. There have been 5 CHDO's.
Comment – I went to CHDO training in Chicago, I am pleased with the changes and Rockford does a good job of working with CHDO's. Dwayne is right; the future is that CHDO's will need to combine.
- ☞ Question – Can you give an example of the programs in the Healthy Neighborhoods Program?
Answer – Arts Council, Literacy Council and English as a Second Language
- ☞ Question – Do you just write up your needs and submit them?
Answer – There is an application.
- ☞ Question – Is the budget for demolitions increasing or decreasing for 2013?
Answer – They will be close to the same.
- ☞ Question – What is the average cost of demolitions?
Answer – \$10,000.00
- ☞ Question – Is there a central contact person for questions?
Answer – Vicki Manson

III. Schedule of Continuation of Process

- We are having the Public Hearings today. The purpose of these meetings is to give the public a broader understanding of the three programs and their eligible use of funds, to explain what funds we have received in the past and the status of where we are today and for the public to provide us input and suggestions as we move through the process of drafting a plan for 2013. Over the next few weeks, we will draft a plan to submit to the City. The draft action plan will be available for public viewing for thirty days. The plan will go through the City of Rockford process and approval and must be submitted to HUD by November 15.

Respectfully submitted by,
Susan Diehl
Community Development Department,
Sr. Office Assistant

City of Rockford
Community Development Department

PUBLIC HEARING
CONCERNING

Fourth Year of
Five Year Consolidated Plan

Tuesday, August 14th – 6:00 PM
Northwest Community Center
1325 N. Johnston Avenue

MINUTES

I. Welcome

Dwayne Collins, Grants Compliance Specialist for the City of Rockford, introduced himself and welcomed everyone. He explained that this public hearing is regarding the Consolidated Plan. The programs include the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Program and the Emergency Shelter Grant.

II. 2010-2014 City of Rockford Consolidated Plan: 2012 Action Plan

- The 2010 – 2014 City of Rockford Consolidated Plan: 2012 Action Plan was presented by Vicki Manson, Dwayne Collins, Jennifer Jaeger and Jovita Donahue. See slides attached.
- The following questions were addressed by staff members:
 - ☞ Question – Could you explain Fair Housing?
Answer – Fair Housing is an eligible Block Grant activity. The purpose of Fair Housing is to promote awareness of the Fair Housing Board and state and federal laws as well as to provide educational opportunities to individuals renting or purchasing homes so they know their rights.
 - ☞ Question – Are you going to cover income guidelines for the programs?
Answer – They are in the brochure. You will not find income guidelines for rentals; they are 60% of median income.
 - ☞ Question – Is there an age limit to the programs for people becoming homeless?
Answer – No, there are no age limits.
 - ☞ Question – Is the number assisted for rehabilitation programs low because people don't know about the programs?
Answer – It could be. We market through the year but we don't know if people really look at the material or not.
 - ☞ Question – What is the average cost of a Code Enforcement ticket?
Answer – Each kind of ticket carries a different fee.
 - ☞ Question – Does the money come back to your programs?
Answer – No, it goes to the general fund.

- ⇒ Question – Do you have a count or percentage of people that are helped by the ESG program?
Answer – It is mostly agencies that receive the money, not individuals.
- ⇒ Question – For the Rehabilitation and Development Assistance program, is there a requirement for the business based on how many people they employ?
Answer – No, that is not part of the criteria.
- ⇒ Question – The Microenterprise Assistance program is offered three times a year, how many times has it run so far this year?
Answer – Just the one, so far.

III. Schedule of Continuation of Process

- We are having the Public Hearings today. The purpose of these meetings is to give the public a broader understanding of the three programs and their eligible use of funds, to explain what funds we have received in the past and the status of where we are today and for the public to provide us input and suggestions as we move through the process of drafting a plan for 2013. Over the next few weeks, we will draft a plan to submit to the City. The draft action plan will be available for public viewing for thirty days. The plan will go through the City of Rockford process and approval and must be submitted to HUD by November 15.

Respectfully submitted by,
Susan Diehl
Community Development Department,
Sr. Office Assistant

City of Rockford
Community Development Department

PUBLIC HEARING
CONCERNING

Fourth Year of
Five Year Consolidated Plan

Thursday September 13th – 12:00 PM
Northwest Community Center
1325 N. Johnston Avenue

MINUTES

I. Welcome

Dwayne Collins, Grants Compliance Specialist for the City of Rockford, introduced himself and welcomed everyone. He explained that this public hearing is regarding the Consolidated Plan. The programs include the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Program and the Emergency Solutions Grant.

II. 2010-2014 City of Rockford Consolidated Plan: 2013 Action Plan

- The 2010 – 2014 City of Rockford Consolidated Plan: 2013 Action Plan Presentation was explained by Dwayne Collins, Andrea Hinrichs, Jovita Donahue and Angie Walker. See slides attached.
- The following questions were addressed by staff members:
 - ☞ Question – How can a people in a specific ward benefit from these programs and how can they find about these programs?
Answer – There are brochures containing maps outlining the focus areas available. You may also contact the Community Development office with any questions you may have.
 - ☞ Question – Can a carryover from one program be used toward Acquisition, Relocation and Disposition?
Answer – Yes, it's possible.
 - ☞ Question – Is anyone reviewing the statistics regarding the number of homes with lead-based paint issue?
Answer – Yes, contact our Human Services Department for statistical information.
 - ☞ Question – How does one know if they have a lead-based paint issue?
Answer – A good rule of thumb is any home built prior to 1978.
 - ☞ Question – What is the cost of a ramp?
Answer – Approximately \$1500 - \$2000 ea.

- ⇒ Question – Where do you get your lists for proposed demolitions?
 Answer – From the aldermen.
- ⇒ Question – Why is there carryover in some programs—shouldn't the dollars have been used in 2012?
 Answer – In some instances applicants couldn't get finalized in time for the end of the year and in other instances, the program was moving slower than anticipated.
 Comment – Carryover is good, because we don't know exactly how much or when we will receive grant monies.
- ⇒ Question – Is the SBCD manufacturing training program part of construction training?
 Answer – No, this program replaces the construction training program. There was not enough interest in the construction training program.
- ⇒ Question – Does RAEDC funding come out of CDBG?
 Answer – No.
- ⇒ Question – Can ESG monies be used to for assistance when Singer Mental Health Center closes?
 Answer – It is a possibility.
- ⇒ Question – Can you give a program example of Healthy Neighborhoods?
 Answer – Northwest Community Center's Out-of-School Suspension program is used to keep suspended students current in their studies.
- ⇒ Question – Are there statistics to show if this program is successful?
 Answer – Northwest Community Center has that information, but I believe approximately 85% did not fall behind in their studies..

III. Schedule of Continuation of Process

- We are having the third of four Public Hearing input sessions today. The purpose of these meetings is to give the public a broader understanding of the three programs and their eligible use of funds, to explain what funds we have received in the past and the status of where we are today and for the public to provide us input and suggestions as we move through the process of drafting a plan for 2013. Over the next few weeks, we will draft a plan to submit to the City. The draft action plan will be available for public viewing for thirty days. The plan will go through the City of Rockford process and approval and must be submitted to HUD by November 13.

IV. Comments

- None

Respectfully submitted by,
 Laura Brown
 Community Development Department,
 Sr. Administrative Assistant

City of Rockford
Community Development Department

PUBLIC HEARING
CONCERNING

Fourth Year of
Five Year Consolidated Plan

Thursday, September 13th – 6:00 PM
Katie's Cup
502 7th Street

MINUTES

I. Welcome

Dwayne Collins, Grants Compliance Specialist for the City of Rockford, introduced himself and welcomed everyone. He explained that this public hearing is regarding the 2010 – 2014 Consolidated Plan. The programs include the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Program and the Emergency Solutions Grant. This purpose of this meeting is to outline what we propose to do with our 2013 funds.

II. Admin / Neighborhood & Economic Development Proposed Activities & Budget

- The 2010 – 2014 Consolidated Plan: Status of 2013 Action Plan Presentation was presented by Dwayne Collins, Andrea Hinrichs, Jovita Donahue and Jennifer Jaeger. See slides attached.
- The following questions were addressed by staff members:
 - ☞ Question – Are the Affordable Housing Projects identified for 2013 yet?
Answer – No, they have not been identified at this time.
 - ☞ Question – We have money being carried over from 2012 not being utilized for those developments?
Answer – That is correct.
 - ☞ Question – Pilgrim's Promise/CDC participated as a CHDO in 2012. We appreciate the support we received from your staff. We worked in partnership with Habitat for Humanity which was something we like and they did as well. A challenge we have now is that since June, CHDO's are required to have a staff member. What would the impact be on the City working with a CHDO without a staff member? Also, does the CHDO have to pay the entire cost of the staff member?
Answer – We are working with Housing Action Illinois to build capacity for our current CHDO's and to have some courses at the end of the year that will hopefully bring on some other CHDO's that are interested in utilizing those funds. The money budgeted under CHDO Operating could help pay for staffing of CHDO's. Also, the funding does not

have to come from a participating jurisdiction such as the City of Rockford. You have to be able to generate resources to pay for staff with experience.

- ☐ Question – It looks like CHDO's have been reduced from 5 to 2 or 3 with consolidations. Can an organization share an existing CHDO?

Answer – That is being proposed now. One of the organizations, Pilgrim's Promise, has been in meetings with Housing Action Illinois to try to bring them together with Hands That Help.

Comment – I have attended meetings with David Young on a couple of occasions, he is very knowledgeable. He is working on a work plan now to do exactly that, combine CHDO's. We think that it would create a great opportunity for you to carve out a niche that three or four organizations could work on and still utilize some of the expertise that Habitat has. I think we'd have an effective group that would make a positive impact and then maybe we could begin to train individuals in construction.

- ☐ Question – What is the code enforcement process?

Answer – Code enforcement can be anything from high grass to abandon vehicles, anything violating local code.

- ☐ Comment – The purpose of the 2010 – 2014 Consolidated Plan is to satisfy the city's housing, homeless, non-homeless and special needs population as well as community and economic development needs. The #1 item the city was going to pursue was to reduce housing blight and blighting influences.

Response – Yes, and I think that eliminating or addressing code deficiencies are things that contribute to the blight neighborhoods.

- ☐ Comment – In the 8/14/12 session, there were service providers there that actually were really interested in the homeless programs and in the dollars that come with that. They were more concerned at that meeting on neighborhood development; they were voicing a concern that their biggest obstacle was demolition of housing. As I look at the numbers for neighborhood development, we have administration costs of \$294,000 and code enforcement of \$479,000. We are about \$753,000 into a \$1.5 million dollar budget. About half of that is going to people and not neighborhood development. I have spoken with Charlie Schaefer and asked what can reasonable property owner's do and those that are in the leasing business. What they can do to help alleviate some of these code violations which were at about 3,500 now on an annual basis. His concern in the Weed and Seed areas was 50% of those complaints were mowing, grass and weeds. If we are continuing to send money there that's a never ending battle. As we fine and put liens on properties that are dilapidated, nothing happens. The best we can do is force mow at \$75.00, another \$100.00 fine that doesn't happen. I believe we need to divert more of that money to going to demolition and then under economic development get programs that are reasonable to keep money in those very blighted areas and address these concerns instead of having code enforcement do the same enforcement with no results. I would recommend that continuing from the last meeting, that more money be put to demolition and some of that code enforcement money be moved to economic development so we can build small businesses and tackle programs in these worst areas to get the job done. The city has that authority to go on some of those properties and get it done. It should be used in conjunction with volunteers and economic development so we don't continue to spend half the budget on policing and administration that isn't getting the job done.

Comment – Rockford does not have the authority to do the kind of code enforcement we need, therefore in order to try to help to prevent blight in certain rundown areas that have a high concentration of low and moderate income individuals, Rockford has to look at some kind of vehicle that we already have. It may be time for the community to come together to bring in the state officials to talk about some strategies that would lead you into the state giving some assistance in that. I think that right now, code enforcement is an extremely important function for the older rundown areas because property owner's or abandon property owners just will not do anything because they know the city cannot do anything. It would be a good subject for us to come together as residence and come up

with a petition so we can petition the state and let them know that the city is not going to be able to do it. I think that right now, the weeds are sad in the older areas and they are just deteriorating neighborhoods. I think again citizens are going to have to take on different roles. If elected officials, especially in Washington, don't get a handle on what the real problems are, the funds are going to get cut and you are going to have decaying areas and still no revenue going back into those areas and then you are going to have a depreciating area.

Comment – I agree that its serious but as you said, these properties that are abandon continually to put \$1,000, \$2,000, \$21,000 fines on the property isn't solving the problem and its tying up the code enforcement process. We need to come up with a system where those houses, and we do have the ability, they can start to go. That sends a clear message then you can get individuals, which would be a great suggestion, to put their minds together and find a different way to work and definitely petition the state because the state is one of the biggest problems we have in the homeless communities.

Response – If you think that for most people, their largest investment in their life is the home they live in, so code enforcement can be very important to people who are trying to keep their home up and who own their homes but maybe you've got some neighbors who don't take care of their property so the idea of trying to get their property up to code is an important investment. Typically, in a given year, we will only demolish 15 – 20 homes with the resources we have. A couple of years ago, we got some NSP funds for \$2.2 million that allowed us to demolish 60 or 70 more which was great. We could use that kind of money every year for 10 years, some kind of alternate source of resources to allow us to demolish homes. Back in 2005 there was a housing study that said at that time, there was 1,000 abandon or vacant homes and another 1,000 that were in such disrepair that they needed to come down as well. If you fast forward to what the last 3 or 4 years have been like with all the foreclosures, we could easily have 2,000 – 3,000 homes out there that are beyond repair and need to come down but with the resources we usually get. I think next year we are estimated to do 14 or something like that. If we do 15 – 20 homes a year with a few thousand out there, that is a lifetime supply of structures that need to come down. The problem is generating some other kind of resource that would allow us to really attack the problem to the point where it makes a difference. Until we get to that point, it's trying to use the resources in the best way we can to make a difference.

Comment - If we could cut half of these complaints on the code enforcement because of the weeds and grass that would allow us to free up half of that budget which could address 50 – 60 homes a year.

Comment - The reason that we are spending a half a million dollars in Block Grant money in code enforcement is because two or three years ago when our general fund was under such strain because of the loss of money that we had experienced, we had to back fill some of our Community Development exercises with Block Grant money otherwise we were going to lose more people. We used to have 56 people in the department, we now have 36 people. We lost 20 people and so we are trying to keep the level of service as high as possible with diminishing resources. We seem to have flattened out and things seem to be on the path to improvement but not to the point where we can hire people again yet. We are looking at how we generate some additional funding for some of these blinding issues we are dealing with and still try to generate some jobs.

Comment - I can appreciate the staffing levels and the struggles the administration is having with that but we have many income sources including property tax and sales tax available to help with the general fund and everybody gets to share with that. This is specific federal money that's taken from income taxes and most of the people in the blighted areas do not pay the income tax so this is the only mechanism that they can possible benefit from and if we continue to pull from that to fund administrative jobs, I don't believe it's fair for those individuals that are in the blightest of areas to pull that money from them. This funding is coming from the federal government that is pulled throughout the country and it's coming back to address these specific problems. We do

have the general fund if we can't manage. I understand that's a very real issue with the administration but my concern is with mixing the funds when somebody can benefit from programs that they weren't able to fund due to lack of economic conditions. We should be taking those monies and targeting those areas not spreading them throughout the city. They should stay in District 1 where those hard core problems are. That's my opinion and that's what's been stressed to me from some of the individuals I've talked with. That's not to say that the administration with a loss of employees is struggling to keep that code and economic development area up and running with limited resources. I get that, but I don't think the person on the street living in those depressed areas in District 1 would get that if it were explained to them.

III. Schedule for Continuation of the Process

- Monday, September 17th – This draft plan will be read into City Council for a pending date to be on the agenda for November 5th.
- Tuesday, September 18th – Starts a 30 day comment period on this draft.
- At the end of the 30 day comment period, the plan goes before the Planning and Development Committee of City Council for their approval. Once we get the Planning and Development Committee's approval, they will make recommendations to the full City Council so this plan can move forward.
- We will submit the plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development by November 13, 2012.
- December 15, 2012 – We will request the release of funds so they are available by the beginning of our fiscal year, January 1, 2013.