

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**NOVEMBER 15, 2004**

**PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL**

**5:15 P.M.**

Present: Robert Layton, Chairman; Cicero Lewis, Vice Chairman; Jean Pecunies; Nancy Emerson; and Lynne Langley

Absent: Paul Staples; Dani Rooney; and William Thorpe

Staff: Cindy Hayden, Community Development Director; David Moore, Community Development Program Manager

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Chairman Layton opened the meeting and read a letter (attached) from Mr. Van Billiard indicating he was resigning from the Citizens Advisory Committee. Members and staff expressed their deep regrets. A brief discussion followed regarding the type of individual the CAC should consider in order to replace Mr. Van Billiard. The possibility of someone from the Portsmouth Listens study circles was mentioned, and/or someone from the housing sector. The need for broad geographic and professional representation was also mentioned. Ms. Hayden said she would work with Chairman Layton and the Mayor on this.

Mr. Layton then asked Ms. Hayden to provide an update on the status of CDBG projects and programs and Ms. Hayden provided the following overview:

Preble-Crescent Way Improvements

Engineering, design and bid specifications are complete. The improvements will include new concrete sidewalk, granite curbing, street trees, and improvements to the travel way and on street parking and drainage improvements. Project will be put out to bid in February 2005 for spring construction start. Current total project cost estimate is \$1.2 million, with \$275,000 of this total to be funded by the City (non-CDBG) for water line replacement. The balance of \$975,000 is for streetscape improvements and \$560,000 in CDBG funding is currently budgeted and available in this current fiscal year. This will fund approximately two-thirds of the project, with improvements beginning at the Ranger Way end of Preble-Crescent.

Route 1 Pedestrian Improvements at Crossroads House

Project design for sidewalk and related improvements was completed late this summer. The CDBG-funded pedestrian safety improvements designed to benefit Crossroads House residents are combined with nearby public transit improvements just south of Crossroads House on Route 1. The project was put out to bid earlier this fall, however, only one bid was received and the decision was made to not award the project to that bidder due to the bid being significantly above the engineer's estimate. This project is funded at \$35,000 from CDBG, with the balance coming from non-CDBG sources. Project work will be re-bid in early Spring.

## Hislop Park

Improvements, including walking trails, waterfront overlook, benches, plantings, and upgrades to the facilities that serve the little league field, have now been completed at 6+ acre Hislop Park in Atlantic Heights. Dedication and ribbon cutting was held on October 28<sup>th</sup> and attended by approximately 20 people.

Mr. Lewis said he was disappointed that more was not accomplished at Hislop Park for the money spent. Ms. Hayden said that for the next meeting she would provide CAC members with the details of total, as well as line item costs, for this project. She said from her perspective, the City got a great bang for the buck because of all the donated labor and materials provided by Timberland as part of their Servapaloosa day last year. She said that seemingly small park improvement projects can be very expensive and gave as examples Big Rock Park (2002), which cost \$100,000 and Hanscom Park (2000), with a total project cost of \$120,000. She also said that park designers/engineers are required to prepare a cost estimate and that multiple bids are sought to ensure competitive bidding. However, she said relatively small park improvement projects have tended over the years to receive very few bids.

## National Community Development Association Regional Conference

Held this year at the Sheraton with presentations by Portsmouth CD and PHA staff on various local CDBG-funded projects including Osprey Landing, Atlantic Heights, and Cottage Senior Housing. Harbor boat tour and trolley tour of various CDBG-funded projects as well as the Tradeport and Newcastle hosted by CD staff and CAC Chairman Layton. A great job of conference organization by David Moore, with help from Nancy Carmer.

## Presentation and Tour of Portsmouth Housing Projects

At the request of the Workforce Housing Coalition, CD Director provided a powerpoint presentation and tour of three successful affordable housing developments in the City: Cottage Senior Housing, Osprey Landing and Atlantic Heights.

## Cottage Senior Housing

The facility is now almost fully occupied and all is going well operationally. Various HUD project reporting requirements are ongoing. Dedication and ribbon cutting was held this summer.

## Osprey Landing

The NH Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA) completed their annual compliance review for the Osprey Landing project on July 22, 2004. The review consisted of an examination of tenant files, financial records, outreach and marketing, overall management practices, housing unit inspections, and an inspection of the physical property as it pertains to the various requirements of the project financiers. The review found no significant concerns and commended the JCM Management company staff for their site management and maintenance.

## Housing Rehab and Residential Accessibility Programs

Applications for low interest and deferred Housing Rehab loans and Residential Accessibility Program grants have been particularly strong during the first four months of this fiscal year. A significant proportion of funding budgeted for these two programs has now been committed. As the year progresses, there will likely be a need to consider reprogramming funds for these programs from completed under-budget projects and/or contingency.

### HomeTown First Time Homebuyers Program

While no longer funded with CDBG funds, CD staff continue to oversee the endowment-funded down payment and closing cost assistance provided through the HomeTown program. This includes marketing the program via realtors and lenders as well as efforts such as informing City employees via their paycheck stubs. CD staff also continue to work with The Housing Partnership to provide homebuyer training to prospective HomeTown applicants through educational workshops. Downpayment and closing cost assistance has been committed to three first time homebuyers during this fiscal year.

### Lafayette School Workforce Housing Redevelopment

The City is exploring, in partnership with the Portsmouth Housing Authority, the possible redevelopment of the old Lafayette School for workforce housing. The City Council held a work session on this matter on November 15<sup>th</sup>. The building has been vacant for the past seven years and, while various re-use options over the years have been explored, none have been successful to date.

### Accessibility Grant Program for Non-Profit Agencies: Phase 1, Design

Accessibility improvements for restroom facilities at Crossroads House were developed by CD staff; no grant funding for outside services was needed. Accessibility improvements for The Pearl were designed by JSA Architects, funded through a \$15,000 CDBG grant; this work has been completed and the grant funds have been paid out.

### Accessibility Grant Program for Non-Profit Agencies: Phase 2, Construction

The Accessibility Grant Program for Non-Profit Agencies provides CDBG grants, on a competitive basis, to local non-profits so that they may fund the construction of accessibility improvements at their facilities. Grant applications were made available, and the program was advertised this summer. Two applications were received: one from Crossroads House to create accessible restroom facilities; and a second from Compass Care. The Crossroads application was funded and a grant contract and bid specifications have been prepared, with competitive bids to be sought for the work in the near future. Unfortunately, Compass Care could not be funded as they had already awarded a contract for more comprehensive facility improvements and, therefore, could not meet certain HUD-required regulations related to procurement and Davis Bacon wage rates.

While The Pearl was funded during the design phase of this program, they did not seek funding for construction due to pending changes in building ownership. However, representatives of The Pearl did express interest in future funding for accessibility improvements, and urged a much higher level of funding for this program.

### Accessible Curb Cuts

Quotes were sought for curb cuts at the intersection of Washington and Hancock Streets near Strawberry Banke and will be carried out later this month or next Spring if the weather does not allow.

### Bettys Dream Improvements

Facility improvements are funded in part through a CDBG loan (\$125,000) and grant (\$33,000), as well as the NH Housing Finance Authority. Project loan closing has not yet occurred but is

expected to take place in January. Staff continue to work with representatives of Bettys Dream as they move towards completion.

#### Affordable Housing Challenge Grant

One inquiry; no application as of this date.

#### Portsmouth Economic Development Loan Program

Two inquiries; no loan applications as of this date. Five existing loans are currently in repayment.

#### Homelessness

CD staff will attend a meeting on homelessness later this month convened by the Police Department, with various social service agencies and the City Welfare Director attending. CD staff continue to participate in the Continuum of Care and met with United Way and a representative of the Strafford County Continuum of Care earlier this month.

#### City Master Plan

Ms. Hayden said CD staff are working with other City staff and consultants to complete the City-wide Master Plan. Mr. Lewis said that a profile of the City, particularly with regard to changing demographics was needed. Ms. Hayden said this was contained in the Master Plan and said she would be happy to provide members with copies of the relevant Master Plan sections, of particular interest being the Housing and Population chapters.

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

At the close of each fiscal year, CD staff must prepare and submit the CAPER to HUD by the end of September. David Moore has completed this work and a copy is provided to each member. HUD uses the report to evaluate Portsmouth's progress toward its program goals. HUD will issue a letter later this fiscal year after they have reviewed the CAPER.

Mr. Layton then turned to the next agenda item, the upcoming preparation of the five-year Consolidated Plan to be submitted to HUD and asked David Moore to provide members with information on this subject. Mr. Moore said that the Community Development Department is required by HUD to submit a plan every five years. Each year the department submits annual updates to the plan. This year begins the start of a new five-year plan. The consolidated plan address the goals and strategies for programs related to housing, homeless, special needs populations and community development. In December, the department staff will ask the CAC for their input into the planning process.

Mr. Layton moved on to the next agenda item, the schedule for the upcoming year. Ms. Hayden asked if there were any particular days of the week that were inconvenient for meetings. One member expressed that they often have another commitment on Wednesdays. It was agreed that, except for public hearings, members would like to continue to meet at 5:15 p.m. Ms. Hayden said she would like to schedule the first of two public hearings for early December to hear input from the public with regard to future CDBG spending priorities.

With regard to the final agenda item, Ms. Hayden handed out new telephone numbers (attached) for CD staff as City Hall has a new phone system.

## **NEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT PHONE NUMBERS**

Cindy Hayden, Community Development Director	610-7218
David Moore, Community Development Program Manager	610-7226
Nancy Carmer, Community Development Program Manager	610-7220
Dan Hartrey, Housing Specialist	610-7299
Terry Poulin, Office Manager	610-7232