

APPROVED ON 2-8-07

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING**

JANUARY 11, 2007

PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL

6:00 P.M.

Present: Chairperson Nancy Emerson, Jean Pecunies, Lynne Langley, Algene Bailey, Stephen Lichtenstein

Absent: Vice Chairperson Dani Rooney (called), William Thorpe, Bob Layton

Staff: David Moore, CD Program Manager

Chairperson Emerson opened the public hearing by recognizing Mr. Moore who explained that this was the second of two public hearings held to solicit input on the FY 2007-2008 budget. In addition, he explained the CDBG budget process and what types of projects are eligible for CDBG funding. Mr. Moore also stated that the amount of FY 2006-2007 entitlement funding is not yet known. Mr. Moore then made a presentation about the CDBG program, including eligibility of CDBG projects and examples of recent past projects in the categories of neighborhood public facilities, affordable housing and accessibility.

At the conclusion of Mr. Moore's presentation, Chairperson Emerson opened the hearing to the public for comments and input.

Ms. Judy Bunnell was recognized and thanked the committee for its past support of the Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA) Senior Center and for the Portsmouth Housing Authority generally. She indicated that the PHA planned to apply for funding for the Senior Center again. In addition, Ms. Bunnell indicated that Parrott Avenue Place on Parrott Avenue, a building jointly owned between the PHA and Compass Care, is in need of a new roof. She said she expects the cost to be between \$40,000 and \$45,000 and asked for any loan or grant funds the CAC could provide through the CDBG program. She noted that several programs are there which serve Portsmouth seniors including the Senior Center and the Adult Day programs run by Compass Care. She said administrative offices are also there.

Ms. Susan Chase was then recognized to speak and thanked the committee for its past support of the Community Child Care Center (CCCC) through the public service agency grant program. She reminded the committee that CDBG funds are used to provide tuition subsidies to families earning eligible incomes. She said that the CCCC provides day car services to youths between the ages of 8 weeks and 12 years. She said the agency plans to submit an application for the FY 2007-2008 grant round.

No other members of the public wished to be recognized, however the public hearing was held open so that additional members of the public could come forward while the CAC conducted other business.

Chairperson Emerson asked for a motion relative to the minutes of December 5, 2006. Mr. Lichtenstein moved that the minutes be accepted as presented and Ms. Langley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Chairperson Emerson asked Mr. Moore about the uncertain funding outlook for the PHA senior center. Mr. Moore noted that Ms. Bunnell had referred to an administrative decision by U.S. Housing and Urban Development to no longer allow the nation's housing authorities to use proceeds from rental activities for ancillary services, including senior centers. He said this opened a large funding gap for the Housing Authority's Senior Center and popular transportation services. Mr. Moore explained that the PHA had come to the City Council late last year to ask for assistance in the form of a loan. Mr. Moore said the loan was completely separate from the CDBG program and that PHA's request for assistance with the new roof and participation in the Public Service Agency Grant program should be considered separately from the loan currently agreed upon between the City and the PHA.

Ms. Stephanie Krenn was then recognized to speak. Ms. Krenn spoke in favor of funding the Raleigh Way streetscape improvements currently in design. Ms. Krenn thanked the CAC for its past support of recent streetscape improvement projects including Preble and Crescent Ways. She took the opportunity to provide an update on Atlantic Heights activities which she says, result from the significant investment of CDBG dollars in the neighborhood. She said park and street improvements had empowered the neighborhood to pursue other community building activities such as holding events including a neighborhood yard sale, building a community herb garden, applying for private grants for garden club initiatives, participating in a gingerbread house decorating contest, holding a holiday open house, and hosting a lecture by Dr. Richard Candee author of the book on the architectural history of the Atlantic Heights.

Ms. Krenn also said that the public participation process for the Raleigh Way Streetscape Design and Atlantic Heights Circulation Analysis have been very good. She noted that the engineers were doing a great job in being receptive to resident concerns at both the public meetings and the one-on-one field days. She noted that these streetscape and traffic study projects are important because of changes taking place in the neighborhood including the construction of additional housing units.

Ms. Krenn also wanted to add that she feels that it is important to keep people with disabilities in their homes for social and economic reasons. She noted that that institutions providing care to elderly persons often remove seniors from their community and isolate them. She said institutionalizing the elderly is also expensive. She said efforts to assist those to stay in their homes include modifications to their living spaces. Earlier in the evening, the presentation on CDBG eligible projects included the ongoing Residential Accessibility and Housing Rehabilitation Programs, which serve many Portsmouth seniors. She said, generally, the City should have a role in providing additional services to seniors.

Seeing no additional members of the public seeking recognition Chairperson Emerson closed the public hearing.

Ms. Langley asked Mr. Moore how long the CDBG program was going to be able to fund public facilities improvements in the Atlantic Heights. Mr. Moore said it is likely that the neighborhood would remain eligible until at least 2012 after the next census is taken and reported back to communities. He said, meanwhile, the Portsmouth CDBG program's ability to fund streetscape improvements would depend on the level of entitlement funds made available to communities.

Ms. Langley said it is possible that additional units in the Atlantic Heights neighborhood will be sold. She asked if the City could be in a position to purchase homes if many of them came on the

market at one time. Mr. Moore said he was unaware if cities and towns in New Hampshire are permitted to purchase homes en bloc for community redevelopment purposes. He added that non-profit housing developers are more likely prepared to pursue those opportunities because they work in the housing sector all the time.

At the request of Chairperson Emerson, Mr. Moore provided clarification on the HUD Median Family Income (MFI) limits methodology and the income limits themselves. Mr. Moore said HUD provides MFI to communities based on census data which are updated each year with economic indicators from each geographic area. The MFI limits for Portsmouth come from the Portsmouth – Rochester, NH HUD Metropolitan Fair Market Rent Area.

Chairperson Emerson then entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Bailey moved to adjourn and the motion was seconded by Ms. Pecunies. All voted in favor and Chairperson Emerson adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.