

APPROVED ON 2-8-07

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING**

**JANUARY 25, 2007**

**PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL**

**6:00 P.M.**

Present: Chairperson Nancy Emerson, William Thorpe, Lynne Langley, Bob Layton,

Absent: Vice Chairperson Dani Rooney (called), Jean Pecunies (called), Algene Bailey (called),  
Stephen Lichtenstein (called)

Staff: Cindy Hayden, Deputy City Manager; David Moore, CD Program Manager

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Chairperson Emerson opened the meeting and noted the absence of a quorum. As a result, Chairperson Emerson moved on to the second item on the agenda and recognized Mr. Moore to discuss potential CDBG projects raised to date. Mr. Moore provided a two-page handout to the committee which included both multi-year funded projects such as the Residential Accessibility, Residential Rehabilitation, Affordable Housing Challenge Grant, and Non-Profit Loan Programs. In addition to these programs, several one-year projects were raised by the public, committee and staff. Mr. Moore noted that the Senior Center had come forward to ask for a loan or grant assistance for a roof replacement. Cross Roads House submitted a letter to the Committee requesting up to \$100,000 towards its \$3.5-\$4 million renovation project for its homeless shelter at 600 Lafayette Road. A member of the Atlantic Heights Neighborhood Association came forward to request funding for construction of the Raleigh Way streetscape improvements which are currently in design. Finally, while there has been no specific request from the neighborhood the committee and staff are hoping to identify an eligible project for the Frank Jones Farm Neighborhood such as a park facility.

After Mr. Moore discussed the potential projects, Ms. Hayden was recognized to speak about the current funding available for FY 2007-2008 projects. Ms. Hayden provided a handout which indicated an estimated amount of new entitlement funding of \$670,000 for FY 2007-2008. This estimate is based on the assumption of level funding which HUD has indicated will likely be available to entitlement communities in the next fiscal year. Ms. Hayden pointed out that if current multi-year programs are funded at their typical levels a total of approximately \$316,000 would be available for additional projects.

The committee then began a discussion about funding for one-year projects which had been submitted to the committee. Mr. Layton indicated that a certain portion of the costs for the Raleigh Way project could be set aside for FY 2007-2008 with the hopes that additional entitlement grant support in FY 2008-2009 would allow the City to move forward with a portion of the project. Ms. Hayden indicated that that scenario would work and has been effectively used in the past for previous streetscape projects like Preble Way. Mr. Moore indicated that the streetscape improvements in the Atlantic Heights are expensive. Mr. Thorpe asked how the construction phases would be carried out. Mr. Moore explained that Raleigh Way is the first interior street in the Atlantic Heights to be improved. On a plan of the neighborhood, Mr. Moore showed how the neighborhood's main access streets, Saratoga and Kearsarge Ways, divide Raleigh Way into three sections. Mr. Moore said the City's engineering consultants and Department of Public Works have indicated that phasing construction of the improvements in these three sections would be logical.

Mr. Moore indicated that phasing may be necessary because of the expense of the streetscape projects. He also noted that it is likely the entire project would not be constructible in one construction season because of the street's size. Ms. Langley asked if additional funding could be secured by sources other than CDBG funding. Ms. Hayden indicated general fund dollars through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) could be available. However, she noted that usually only 1.2 million in local tax dollars each fiscal year are spent on capital projects. Ms. Hayden indicated that a large portion of the entire CIP allotment for one fiscal year would be required to construct one of the Atlantic Heights streetscape projects. Ms. Hayden indicated the neighborhood could come forward to ask for support of construction projects in the Atlantic Heights.

Chairperson Emerson then asked staff for clarification on the request from the Senior Center for the roof replacement project. Mr. Moore indicated that the Senior Center is in need of a roof replacement for its building known as Parrott Avenue Place, which the Portsmouth Housing Authority jointly owns with Compass Care. Mr. Moore clarified that a new roof is needed for the original structure and not the addition which was constructed a few years ago. He indicated it is unclear whether the Senior Center would be seeking loan or grant funds, but said a combination of loan and/or grant funding is possible. Mr. Moore indicated that a combination of loan and grant funding had been used for the Betty's Dream Rehabilitation project.

Ms. Hayden then elaborated on the discussion held at the previous CAC meeting regarding the funding challenges facing the Portsmouth Housing Authority and its Transportation and Senior Center programs. She noted that an administrative decision by U.S. Housing and Urban Development to no longer allows the nation's housing authorities to use proceeds from rental activities for ancillary services, including senior centers and transportation programs. She said this opened a large funding gap for the Housing Authority's Senior Center which caused the PHA to come forward to request a loan from the Portsmouth City Council to continue its operations. Ms. Hayden said that the loan is set to be repaid through the refinancing of the Wamesit Housing Development. Several members of the committee inquired about the fate of the transportation program in this scenario. Ms. Hayden indicated that she did not believe the PHA had determined what the future of its transportation services would be. The committee had a general discussion about public transportation services in the City and how these services are very expensive to sustain. In summary, Mr. Moore said that staff would have a conversation with the Senior Center in order to determine how to structure the CDBG assistance for the proposed roof replacement. Specifically, he would determine whether loan funds for the project are feasible for the agency.

The discussion then turned to the funding request from Cross Roads House for its renovation project. Mr. Thorpe asked if residents of Cross Roads House would be displaced by the proposed renovation. Mr. Moore indicated that Cross Roads House plans to construct the improvements and continue to shelter residents "in-place" and indicated a conceptual construction phasing plan had been developed with this goal. Chairperson Emerson and Mr. Layton toured the current Cross Roads Facility with its Executive Director Chris Sterndale as well as with Mr. Moore and Ms. Hayden prior to the meeting. All committee members were invited. A general discussion about the renovation project and its purpose then ensued. Chairperson Emerson said that Cross Roads House has done a great job in its mission with its current facility. She said that the series of buildings at 600 Lafayette Road are inefficient from an operational perspective in terms of maintenance and utility costs. She also indicated the facility is inefficient from a service perspective in terms of good outcomes for residents. She and Mr. Layton indicated that the purpose of the renovation is not to expand the number of beds at the facility but to improve the services provided to the shelter residents. They indicated that the goal is for the shelter to move individuals and families into

permanent housing. A better facility, contained in one building with a single entrance, will help Cross Roads House to do this work. Ms. Hayden indicated that Cross Roads House would be applying for State CDBG funds and that, in general, the State CDBG program likes to see support from local CDBG programs for projects within their jurisdictions.

Mr. Moore then indicated that staff was working with the Recreation Department to determine the number of children who would benefit from a park facility in the Frank Jones Farm Neighborhood. He noted that two publicly-owned parcels in the neighborhood were not appropriate for park facilities. He noted that a non-profit agency in the neighborhood had been suggested as a possible location. However, he noted that after looking at the amount of funding available for new projects in the FY 2007-2008 budget, that further development of this project at this time may create expectations that cannot be met right now due to budgetary constraints. He added, that building infrastructure, especially parks and playgrounds on property not owned by the City is very difficult to achieve. Ms. Hayden said that as Mr. Bailey is a resident of the neighborhood and suggested this idea that she and Mr. Moore would speak with him about it. Mr. Moore indicated that this proposal may be more appropriate to move forward when more CDBG entitlement funding is available.

Ms. Langley then asked about the Affordable Housing Challenge Grant and expressed her concern about the difficulty in non-profit housing agencies accessing this funding to create badly needed affordable housing units in the City. Ms. Hayden indicated that the development of affordable housing in any area is a notoriously complex task for any agency and that support for large scale housing developments on the scale of the housing authority complexes for example, are not possible due to the lack of federal housing programs to move these projects forward. The last major housing redevelopment project in the City of Portsmouth was the Osprey Landing Housing Development, which included the construction of 329 housing units. Ms. Hayden said that project benefited from private capital, land, and several federal funding sources including CDBG funds.

Mr. Moore indicated that staff would follow-up on the projects raised and report back to the committee at its next meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

Chairperson Emerson adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.