

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING**

**JANUARY 14, 2014**

**PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL  
Conference Room B**

**6:30 P.M.**

Present: Vice Chairwoman Dani Rooney, Constance Carmody, Lynne Langley, Alison Hamilton

Absent: Chairwoman Nancy Emerson, Alicia Weaver

Staff: David Moore, Adam Cannon

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Vice Chairwoman Dani Rooney called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Next, the committee unanimously approved the minutes from the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Citizens Advisory Committee meeting. Chairwoman Rooney opened the public hearing and invited Mr. Moore to begin a presentation on the CDBG program, including past uses of the funds and examples of eligible projects as well as recently funded and active CDBG projects. The ongoing projects included City Hall Accessibility Improvements, Maynard Park Improvements, an Emergency Access Route development out of Atlantic Heights and Emergency Power Sources for Public Service Agencies.

Regarding City Hall Accessibility Improvements, Mr. Moore stated that there were obligated funds for these improvements. He noted that Public Works is in the process of completing a building assessment and strategy and that CDBG funding set aside for these improvements will be coordinated with the findings of that work. The project includes significant improvements to accessibility of the front entrance way to City Hall.

Next, Mr. Moore discussed the status of the recently closed Maynard Park and the improvements that had been planned for that facility. He indicated that the City has closed the Maynard Park facility, including the fenced in area for dogs, until further notice. The City has learned from the NH Department of Transportation that inspection reports have noted some loose concrete at joints that have the potential to fall from the bridge into the park below. This is a non-structural issue that is consistent with the bridge's age and, according to the State, has no impact on its function or structural integrity. He indicated that the City is assessing the future of the facility with the State and neighborhood. Additionally, the NH DOT is planning on a rehabilitation project in 2018 and 2019 which would require closure of the park to the neighborhood for two years.

Mr. Moore also discussed the status of another ongoing project, the Emergency Access Route for Atlantic Heights. After recounting the history of the site, he stated that the City is exploring additional improvements to the old boat road that is the current emergency access route in place to serve residents. He also referenced questions related to the rerouting of trucks in the neighborhood. He noted that the City presented a change order to the scope of the agreement to the Parking, Traffic and Safety Committee which took no action on the item.

Lastly, Mr. Moore discussed the Emergency Power Source Grant for Public Service Agencies. He noted that Operation Blessing has come forward and requested the installation of a generator to protect its meat freezers during power outages. He also advised the Committee of other community development projects that CD staff is involved with including ongoing work with senior issues, the Haven School Playground Improvements, and planned Cater Park improvements.

There were three speakers for the public hearing:

Resident Ms. Del Morse of 35 Concord Way commented on all of the projects related to the Atlantic Heights neighborhood. She began by asking why the City would expend funds to rehab Maynard Park if there was going to be a project in 2018 and 2019 and whether the State would level the park for the City as she felt it was

pretty ugly. She also asked for additional information about the park closure so she could provide an update to give to the Atlantic Heights neighborhood.

Next, Ms. Morse asked what the neighborhood should do during an emergency and how the City would prepare them to utilize the boat road. She also voiced her concerns about the need to reroute trucks along a different route through the neighborhood. She asked who she should talk to on the Parking, Traffic and Safety Committee to get them to take action on the change in the scope of work.

Mr. Moore responded to all of the questions asked by Ms. Morse. He indicated that moving forward with removing the recreation amenities under the bridge, which are currently in poor condition, would result in aesthetic and safety improvements in the event of a long term closure of the facility. He indicated that the State of New Hampshire is unlikely to make substantial capital improvements underneath the bridge deck in order for the City to continue to operate the park facility. He also indicated that he had had discussions with City staff about how the City could do more to make the neighborhood aware of the current agreement with PSNH for emergency access. In addition, he advised that Ms. Morse check in with Mr. Cannon or himself in a month or so for contact information for the new Chair of the Parking, Traffic and Safety Committee.

Ms. Jennifer Decker, 175 Longmeadow Road, a resident and disability advocate who works for Granite State Independent Living, made comments about the Woodbury Avenue intersection and the Gosling Road/Gosling Crossings intersection. She stated that the sidewalk crossing walk signal has such a short span of time that disabled and elderly people are unable to make it across in time. She also stated that this crosswalk was important because it allows access to the Market Basket store for grocery shopping and that the signal is often non-functional. Additionally, she recommended improvements and maintenance to the sidewalks.

Ms. Decker also explained concerns with the Gosling Meadow intersection leading to the strip mall. She stated that the median does not allow access for those who are wheelchair-bound and that the median is very dangerous to cross.

Mr. Moore indicated that he needed to follow-up on learning more about the issues with those intersections. He is going to ask Public Works about the other issues involved and will work with the Committee to follow-up on the issues raised by Ms. Decker. Ms. Decker advised Mr. Moore and the Committee that she has reached out to DPW on this issue in the past and that awareness of access issues needs to be raised in order to meet the challenges she identified.

Ms. Beth Weiland of Great Bay Services asked if there would be strength in numbers on this issue or doing some grassroots activism. Mr. Moore responded that it would not be necessary for others to organize an effort at this stage prior to his having an opportunity to learn about the issues involved and to determine if there are any major policy issues that need to be addressed. He noted that advocacy for policy changes are appropriate and he recommended that the issues involved be researched further.

Ms. Weiland asked if all the CDBG deadlines are available on the website. Mr. Moore stated that there are no formal deadlines other than the ones related to Public Service Agency Grants.

Following the public comment period, Special Projects Manager Adam Cannon gave a brief presentation on the work of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Senior Committee. Mayor Lister, joined the meeting earlier, commented that he would be recommending Committee members to the Senior Subcommittee of the Recreation Board at the next City Council meeting and he is optimistic about the subcommittee's future work. The CAC and staff briefly discussed the various Senior services related developments and the excitement in the community about moving forward.

Ms. Rooney asked where the dog park is currently located. Mr. Moore advised that it was located on the north eastern end of the Maynard Park underneath the I-95 bridge.

Ms. Alison Hamilton asked if SeaCare, a public service agency grant recipient, had closed its doors. Mr. Moore answered that it did and that the City was able to provide the CDBG grant funding for the first two quarters of the fiscal year.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.