

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**PUBLIC HEARING ON COMMUNITY NEEDS
MEETING MINUTES**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024 AT 6:30 PM

**CONFERENCE ROOM A
PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE**

CAC members present: Hannah Meade, Chair; Kirsten Barton; Kelly DeCourcy; Susan Durling; Annelise Hartley

CAC members absent: None

Staff: Elise Annunziata, Community Development Director; Caitlin Hart, Community Development Program Assistant

Public present: Lissa Gumprecht, Director of Development and Communications, Cross Roads House; Mark Lentz, Facilities Director, Portsmouth Housing Authority; Tammy Joslyn, Executive Director, Operation Blessing; Ann Strachan, Clubhouse Program Director, Granite Pathways; Jeff Donald, Regional Mobility Manager, TripLink

Chair Hannah Meade called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) reviewed the minutes from their meeting on January 11, 2024. Kelly DeCourcy made a movement to accept the minutes as presented. Annelise Hartley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Elise Annunziata presented on CDBG eligibility requirements, the process and requirements for the FY 2025 Action Plan, the status of FY 2024 public services and public facilities projects, and the anticipated FY 2025 allocation and timeline. Concerning the FY 2025 allocation, Ms. Annunziata noted Congress's continuing resolution, which will delay the City's receipt of its FY 2025 allocation amount.

The Public Hearing portion of the meeting began at 6:40 pm. Before hearing from those who came to speak, Ms. Annunziata emphasized the value of sharing housing, infrastructure, and transportation projects that would be shovel-ready for FY 2025.

Lissa Gumprecht, Director of Development and Communications for Cross Roads House (CRH), stated that the shelter building, which was completed in 2009, was starting to show its age. She shared three projects that would be ready for immediate undertaking in FY 24: 1) HVAC rooftop unit replacement; 2) a water mixing valve replacement; and 3) installation of a safety and access system for CRH's congregate dorm spaces. Ms. Gumprecht said that CRH had quotes for all projects mentioned that they could provide to CD. Potential FY 25 projects were not raised by CRH at this time.

Chair Meade asked Ms. Annunziata what the follow-up process would entail, for the edification of new CAC members, and Ms. Annunziata explained.

Mark Lentz, Facilities Director for Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA), spoke next. He gave updates on FY 2024 projects—the Gosling Meadows Pavilion and the exterior lift at Connors Cottage—which have been underway, with some delays. Ms. Annunziata then asked if there were any FY 2025 projects that Mr. Lentz planned to speak about. Mr. Lentz mentioned that the stairwells at Margeson Apartments need handrails on the interior side of the stairs. The CAC and CD staff requested that Mr. Lentz submit a list that indicated priority and shovel-ready projects for consideration for FY 2025 funding, preferably before the next CAC meeting on March 7, 2024. Mr. Lentz said he would follow up with such a list.

Tammy Joslyn, Executive Director of Operation Blessing and Resident Services Coordinator for PHA, came to speak as a citizen. She shared her observations concerning the lack of a bus stop on Holiday Drive (which is owned by the housing authority, Ms. Annunziata stated she believed) for youth residents of Wamesit Place. Additionally, Ms. Joslyn shared her observations of disabled and autistic youth residents and their limited ability to enjoy existing City playgrounds due to their design. She spoke to the benefits of a sensory, universal design playground. The CAC, CD staff, and agency attendees discussed the idea of adding such a playground or extending the existing playgrounds in the Wamesit neighborhood to enhance opportunities for play for youth who may be neurodivergent or disabled. Ms. Joslyn confirmed that the Greenleaf Recreation Center skate park was still being regularly used for skateboarding.

There was a question about a potential roof improvement and/or solar array project for Operation Blessing from CD Staff. Ms. Joslyn was interested in these potential projects. Ms. Gumprecht expressed that Cross Roads House would also like to pursue a solar array project (an expansion of their existing rooftop array).

The public comment portion of the meeting closed at 7:55 pm.

The CAC discussed the contents of and procedures for the next meetings, which will consist of Public Service Agency Grant Program applicant presentations.

Chair Meade called for someone to motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 pm. Susan Durling made a motion to adjourn. Annelise Hartley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.