

CITY OF ASHLAND

Ashland Housing and Human Services Commission Draft Minutes April 2, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Coriann called the meeting to order at 4:45 pm in the Civic Center Council Chambers 1175 E. Main Street, Ashland OR 97520.

Commissioners Present:	Council Liaison
Coriann Matthews (Acting Chair)	Pam Marsh
Heidi Parker	
Regina Ayars	SOU Liaison
Sue Crader	Vacant
Rich Rohde	
Connie Saldana	Staff Present:
Gina DuQuenne	Linda Reid, Housing Specialist
	Leslie Gore, Housing Program Assistant
Commissioners Absent:	
Joshua Boettiger	

Approval of Minutes

Rohde/DuQuenne m/s to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2015 Housing and Human Services meeting. Voice Vote: All Ayes; Commissioner Connie Saldana abstained. Minutes were approved as presented.

Public Forum

No one was present to speak.

Public Hearing on the draft 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan

Housing Program Specialist Linda Reid reviewed the process of creating and the 5 year Consolidated Plan (CP) for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Reid outlined pg. 99 of the CP, Goal Summary Information explaining the stated goals were similar to previous years. Reid reviewed the Commission Memo detailing the goals and measurable outcomes from the previous two CDBG rounds and the proposed goals for 2015-2019. She noted that the achieved goals were funded with both the CDBG funds and the City Social Services Grants. While the goals are substantially unchanged the categories have been streamlined because of the changes in Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reporting requirements.

The high priority goals are: 1) Creation and maintenance of affordable housing. 2) Supporting services for homelessness outreach prevention and transition. 3) Supporting housing and services for peoples with special needs. The low priorities are: 1) Improve safety and access in neighborhoods and areas throughout the City. 2) Improve transportation options for low-income and special needs populations. The medium priority goal is Support Economic Development activities that assist in reducing poverty among low- moderate-income and special needs populations.

These are catch-all all categories that include a broad range of support services. Reid asked for questions from the commission:

Commissioner Parker asked about the process for the Social Services Grants (SSG).

Reid clarified that the SSG were included in the CDBG reporting because the City funds were used in achieving the outcomes because the CDBG funds were insufficient to have enough of an impact on identified goal outcomes.

Commissioner Matthews inquired about the amount that could be awarded to social services from the CDBG. Reid explained that it was 15% of the entire allocation for the year, (\$165,550) a total of \$24,832.

Commissioner Ayars inquired as to source of the reported numbers for the goal "assistance to homeless and at risk populations". Reid explained that the proposed numerical goals for the next five year period were based on the previously achieved goal outcomes over a five year period. She said the 414 people reported in the 2005-2009 CP period included people who were served by ICCA [recorders note: Interfaith Care Community of Ashland], the number was short of goal because ICCA stopped serving the Ashland community. The next five year plan 2010-2014 set the new goal of 750, which included individuals served through staff activities with the Homeless Task Force and Project Community Connect event, and Maslow Project, St Vincent de Paul and the more recently the Community Resource Center. These combined activities have lead to a much larger outcome of 2,765 individuals receiving assistance. Moving forward this category has been superseded by a new category; Support services for homeless outreach, prevention and transition.

Ayars questioned the ambitious goal, articulated on pg 99, of building of 50 rental units over the next five year period. Reid said that 50 units was an ongoing goal satisfied in the last five years by the Snowberry Brook Development. It is known that the Housing Authority is looking at developing a project in the City in the near future. That development will probably not provide all 50 units but staff feels that it is important to continue to shoot for the optimistic goal of 50 units as housing is the greatest identified need within the City.

Reid announced that the Consolidated Plan was on a very tight timeline and is scheduled to be submitted to HUD on May 4th and therefore must be presented to the Council at the April 21st meeting.

Commissioners Saldana/Ayars motioned and seconded approval of the Consolidated Plan. Voice Vote: All Ayes.

Community Development Block Grant Applications Presentation

Commissioners Ayars and Crader recused themselves from participating in the CDBG grant review and recommendation portion of the meeting.

Maslow Project, Karen Phillips and Lacy Renae presenting: Providing wrap around services for homeless youth ages 0 to 21. Maslow served over 2000 individuals last year with the average age of 11. Maslow's activities have a focus of keeping kids in school. Nationally 87% homeless kids drop out of school and the graduation rate for homeless seniors is 25%. The graduation rate of students involved with Maslow staff last year was 51% in Jackson County and 100% in Ashland. This year 100% of the Ashland high school seniors are on track for graduation with 62.5 %, (6 kids) on track to go to college, one student having received a full ride scholarship to Reed. 88% of the homeless kids that were case managed by Maslow did not dropout. Maslow has been providing services in Ashland since 2012, and requests a continuation of support for Ashland High School based case manager position at .6 FTE. Maslow is requesting \$10,000, or 30% of Maslow's total program budget to provide an Ashland school district based case manager.

The commissioners asked and received clarification on the following; 1) What the stated amount of staff expense \$23,000 represented? .6 FTE. Which provides two days a week on site staff with additional phone coverage. 2) Could the work be done with the limited amount? Based on results the answer is yes, the work was getting done. 3) Did Maslow work with Community Works? Community Works no longer has a staff person in Ashland. 4) What was the outreach plan for the summer? Maslow would spend the same amount of time in Ashland during the summer as they do during the school year but at locations such as Uncle Foods Dinner, ACRC and Pioneer Hall. Maslow hopes to keep kids engaged in the summer. 5) How would the program be affected if the whole \$10,000 request was not awarded? Maslow is committed to staying in Ashland, but there might be a reduction in hours. 6) Are you planning to apply for Social Service Grant as well? Yes.

St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP), Rich Hansen and Charlotte Dorsey presenting: Mr. Hansen reviewed the achievements of the 2014 Grant of \$19,000 which enabled SVDP to serve 21 Ashland Families, 26 adults and 10

children. On average SVDP used \$900 of HUD funds per family they help. The request of \$ 25,500 would help more than 26 Ashland families avoid homelessness and assist them in obtaining self-sustaining housing. Hansen noted that rental deposit is a big deal for this community. SVDP sent \$53,000 of their own funds on rent relief. In total SVDP spent over \$141,000 in the Ashland home visitation program, making 800 home visits and assisting 1300 people. Of the \$141,000 spent in Ashland approximately half came from the SVDP council in Medford and \$30,000 from local donations, the grant is highly leveraged, and none of the funds go to salaries as all SVDP workers are volunteers.

The commissioners asked and received clarification on the following; 1) Please explain the special needs funds from the United Congregational Church? The church has made a blanket statement of support and SVDP can draw on the fund when the needs exceed what the program guidelines can spend. Commissioner Rohde commented that he was impressed by SVDP's ability to get support from the community. 2) Do you plan to apply for the social service grant as well? Yes.

Staff commented that security deposit assistance has been very valuable to the community and in the new Consolidated Plan it is a stand-alone priority. Mathews supported this statement saying people often lose their section 8 vouchers because they do not have the security deposit and they go back on a three-year wait list.

Staff announced that the State is currently doing outreach for its CDBG Consolidated Plan. The outreach meeting will be April 14th at the Access Olsrud Center.

Ashland Supportive Housing, Tabitha Wolfe and Judy Beyer presenting: Ashland Supportive House (ASH) runs three group homes for development disabled adults and provides community outreach. ASH has been operating in Ashland since 1982. ASH is requesting funds to update Linley House. The entire project cost is \$130,000 and the request for CDBG funds is \$99,000. The Linley House, established in 2005, is an age-in-place facility and as the residents have aged mobility issues have increased. The first project component is replacement of the cracked driveway, crumbling patio and adding a level walkway from the rear of the house. This component is \$16,156. These improvements will allow residents to move safely in and out of the facility and provide an additional fire escape option.

The second component would replace an existing non-permitted and nonconforming laundry room while expanding the existing living space. The total cost of this portion of the project is estimated at \$55,844. The additional square footage would enable a larger pathway for residents to maneuver around the common areas. The current square footage is 1840 which would be increased to 2140. Living space would be increased from 485 to 755 by altering the laundry room. Blue prints are included in the grant application. These changes would improve natural light in the communal areas and access to the laundry facility.

The third component of the project is installation of a solar power system at a proposed cost of \$58,000. The current average monthly bill is \$198.00. The solar system is expected to reduce the monthly bill by 83%.

The commissioners asked and received clarification on the following; 1) The slope of the driveway will not change? The driveway will be resurfaced which will allow people in walkers to navigate, and the walkway will have a more gentle grade for additional ease of access to house. 2) How many individuals live in the house? 5. 3) Will the number of individuals increase with these improvements? No, there is a limit of 5 bedrooms. The increased space will be in the communal areas. Additionally, the elimination of day services means the residents are in the home all the time. 4) What is the cost of the electricity? The average is \$190 the savings would be 83%, saving \$150 a month. 5) Is that total utilities? No, just electricity. 6) Why is it so high? There are five full-time residents and 1 to 3 staff on site. Currently there is not a lot of natural light. We run light and heat pretty much 24 hours a day, bathe each resident once a day, and cook three meals a day for residents and staff. 7) Is the heat electric? No, gas. 8) Do you have a plan for the proposed savings? The saving would be used for small remodels, such as grab bars. 9) Recouping the cost of the project would be approximately 32 years? Confirmed. "not quick recovery". 10) Why, if the patio is only 10 years old it looks so terrible? The contractor went out of business a year after this was done. They will insure that the contractor they use will be established in the community and accessible if anything goes wrong.

Staff commented that it was important that they were accommodating aging in place for special needs populations.

Habitat for Humanity, Denise James and Dan Thomas presenting. Habitat in Ashland concentrates on repairs for low income people eliminating sub-standard housing. Habitat believes that it has not served Ashland as well as it could, especially as there has been a consistent donor base here. Habitat acknowledged a slow start to the program but are committed to serving Ashland better going forward. There are two types of repairs: Critical home repair program, and a small repair program called a Brush with Kindness. Next year they will include projects for mobile homes. Habitat has almost finished the first critical home repair and has completed 3 small repair projects. Habitat feels like their work stimulates renovation in the neighborhood as well as the specific home. Habitat believes a second year would establish trust in the program which has been missing, and feels that the outreach with community groups such as the local churches, Rotary, and the Senior Centers will help to bring in applicants in the second year.

The commissioners asked and received clarification on the following; 1) How do you decide if the project a brush with kindness or a critical repair and how many projects can you do? We will continue to do projects as long as there is funding. It also depends on who applies. There have been a couple of project that have been cancelled because the home owner is afraid. What is the average loan repayment amount? With the Brush with Kindness Program the payment can be \$15 a month and the Critical Repair at maximum of \$100. It is a 0% interest loan on materials only. 2) How does the micro loan process work? The homeowner would apply and explain what they want. The income qualification is 30% to 60% of Family Median Income, homeowners must be current on their taxes and home owners insurance. If agreed to, the project will be completed at cost. Habitat holds the note until the payments are complete. 3) Does Ashland have a separate phone number? No, same number as the main office. 4) Is the interest 0% for everyone? Yes. 5) Does Habitat ever partner with anyone such as clean energy works? We work with every group we can find. 6) You guys are the great people that help the volunteers do the work. Yes, there is an orientation for volunteers and 1.5 FTE construction staff which supervisor the project. 7) What happens if the loan is not paid back? It depends but if it is for a significant critical repair Habitat would put a lean on the home that would stay until the transfer of the home.

Staff asked if there were requested for ADA improvements? Yes projects include many aging-in-place upgrades.

The commission had the following questions of staff. 1) Is it legal to ask clients to repay CDBG funds? Reid explained it was an established use for CDBG funds to provide 0% interest loans for housing rehabilitation. This activity would fall under the category of maintaining affordable housing stock. 2) Do the Davis-Bacon wage restrictions apply? Davis-Bacon does not apply to single unit rehab.

Options for homeless residents of Ashland (OHRA), John Wiczorek and Leigh Madsen, presenting: OHRA serves homeless and very low income residents of Ashland. In February 2014 OHRA opened the Ashland Community Resource Center (ACRC) in a joint partnership between OHRA and ACCESS. The City of Ashland provided some seed money for operations in 2014-2015. During the first year of operation there were 3684 client visits, of these 600 first time clients, 347 homeless, 253 with homes, and 57 veterans. The ACRC has helped to house 21 families and assisted 14 people in securing employment. Services range from intensive job searches to simple use of the bathroom. ACRC has been more successful than expected and donations have increased from \$2900 in 2013 to almost \$35,000 in 2014. OHRA has been awarded over \$20,000 in private foundation grants. With success has come the realization that the 2,200 sq ft location is inadequate. OHRA is proposing to buy the entire building at 572 Clover Lane going from approximately 2000 to 8000 sqft. The building is currently owned by the Masons. With the additional space ACRC would become a "one stop shop". It would also replace the cold weather shelters expanding the shelter to 7 nights a week. The shelter would be integrated with the other ACRC services. The budget is included in the proposal. The total project budget is \$850,000, OHRA is asking for \$260,000 of CDBG funds over a two year period. The Foundation intends to leverage other funds, including the Housing Trust Fund (HTF), a capital campaign drive and foundation grants. The City of Ashland request is a large request for funds however helping Ashland most venerable population is an important and stated goal of the City's. ACRC received \$55,000 this year and spent \$90,000 doubling money for services. The need is huge. Transportation is a big issue for homeless people and ACRC has a minimum of 12 major agencies bringing services to the ACRC to serve Ashland residents. The facility is doing a great job, with great partners, without disruption to any neighborhood. The facility has been for sale twice over the last two years. It is a challenge to find a facility to service homeless populations, and ACRC seeks to be its own landlord. In addition, the current rent of \$ 15,000 would be put into services. With an expanding facility the community partners can increase their

services.

The commissioners asked and received clarification on the following: 1) Is there any indication that the City will continue to fund ACRC? What happens at the end of the current funding period? City Administrator Dave Kanner recommended ACRC apply for the Social Services Grant funds. Mr. Madsen did not want to presume but with the record of success and the city's council stated goals he believes there will be continued support. In addition there are foundation opportunities not available in the first year of operation. The City has already provided an additional \$20,000 for a jobs program. 2) Could you explain a little more about your request of \$260,000 over two years? The request is patterned after the Ashland Emergency Food Bank. ACRC sees the City as a 1/3 partner and the Ford Family Foundation as 1/3 of a capital campaign. 3) What would happen if one of the three pieces does not come through? As with the Food Bank all the money goes back. 4) Has there been a market assessment? Staff clarified that CDBG does not require an appraisal, but you would have to make sure that it is not an inflated price. You should pay fair market value. Mr. Wiczorek has been a real estate broker for twenty years in Ashland and said that the price per foot is very close to their neighbor the food bank and that there would be a negotiated savings as Mr. Wiczorek could navigate the sale without a \$ 50,000 commission. 5) If this grant application is solely for the purchase of the building what is the budget for operation expenses. ACRC has supplied a budget in their application to the Social Service Grant. A rough budget in 2014 was \$79,000 cash expenditures and \$20,000 in-kind donated services. 2015 projected expenditure is \$132,000 of that \$55,000 will come from the City. The budget for the following year is \$180,000 with \$60,000 coming out of City funding. 6) What will be done with the shelter space in the summer? There is a 1600 sqft meeting room, bigger than Pioneer Hall, which is big enough to accommodate 35 people overnight. There is a commercial kitchen, which may be used for teaching job skills. There is a dining area that could serve over 100 people. 7) Would the building require renovations? The only renovations being considered would be moving the portable showers and laundry inside, but that is a long term goal. The building, was built in 1999 and is in excellent shape. 8) Have you looked into the costs of heating the building in the winter? The cost of operation in that building is \$500 a month including electric, gas, and phone. Utilities are expected to increase by \$300 per month. It is a really beautiful meeting space and may take some pressure off Pioneer Hall for social events 9) Have you considered assuming a mortgage? They have been advised that is much more difficult to fund raise for debt relief than for capital expenditures. 10) Can you make the additional space a profit center? The landlord has generated revenue and the option will be explored. 11) What happens if ACRC does not succeed, as with the previous resource center? The location is key to the success which is one reason to make the request for CDBG funds. 12) What would happen if the full amount was not awarded? Could partial funding be leveraged? A commitment of any amount would help to leverage of funders. The Capital Campaign could be expanded. This site is unique and works extremely well with the support of the landlord and neighborhood. While there is no threat today there are only 40 members of the lodge and they will not be able to support a million dollar building indefinitely.

Community Development Block Grant Applications Discussion and Recommendations

Staff noted that the staff evaluation has been presented to the committee; these recommendations along with the committees' recommendations will be provided to the Council at their regular meeting on April 21st.

The Committee asked for clarification on the timeliness requirement of the CDBG program. Which Reid provided. The funds must be expended in a timely manner. The general rule if there is more than 1.5 time the annual award in the CDBG account when the timeliness test is run in May a workout plan for expenditures of the funds will be required. If the workout plan has not been implemented and the grant balance has not been brought below the 1.5 level by the next test than HUD has the discretion to take the money back. The City can have up to \$ 248,325 in the line of credit without the hitting the timeliness cap. Additional questions include the following: 1) Has the 20% administrative fee been drawn down? The administrative fees cannot be drawn until after they have been incurred. The draw down will happen at the end of the funding cycle. 2) Will we hit the timeliness cap? Yes, it is likely and a workout plan will have to be created, however HUD recognizes that Ashland is a small community and it does not take much to reach the cap. 3) What is the breakdown of the amount of money that can be awarded? \$201,000 is available of that \$24,832 may be awarded to social service activities. 4) What did the Food Bank do in order to buy the building? There was a remaining balance of \$87,000 of unallocated funding which the City put in reserve. A letter was issued for this amount with the caveat they had to raise a certain amount of money or those funds would be reallocated.

General Discussions: The commissioner made the following points

- The 32 year return on the solar energy system was not appealing and the funds would impact many more lives if giving to OHRA
- In recognition of the good and valuable work that SVDP and Maslow provided to the community the commissioner wishes that there was more funding available to award to those two entities. Commissioner was in agreement with the recommendations of staff.
- ASH and OHRA would have the opportunity to apply for the Social Service Grants.
- A smaller award to OHRA may help with seed money, and give them leverage with other foundations.
- There was concern that the staff did not recommend funding OHRA. The concern being the timeliness piece and the risk to the funding.
- The success of the ACRC may indeed be dependent on the location.
- There will be additional grant applicants for the Social Services Grants, as many services organizations do not want to apply for CDBG because of the reporting requirements.
- The reserve letter will help OHRA raise additional funding.
- The number of people helped by OHRA is much greater, and while the ASH work is very important it only benefits 5 people.
- ASH addresses the longevity of the housing
- All the projects meet the goals.

Rodhe motioned ***“to accept the staff recommendation for social service funding.”***
Saldana seconded Rodhe’s motion. Motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

\$176,886 remained.

Additional discussion included

- Concern was expressed that a commitment to OHRA of less than a \$100,000 would not be effective in leveraging other grant sources.
- Committing \$100,000 to OHRA would leave \$76,886 for the other two applicants.
- Concern was expressed that not providing enough funding to Habitat might impact the continuation of the program long term.
- It was noted the Habitat did not use all of their last allocation, but their program had additional value through neighborhood beautification.
- Dividing the remainder amount may make both projects unfeasible.
- If OHRA is unable to raise their piece and the money is “returned” it would put the City way over the cap and there is a risk of losing the HUD funds entirely.
- It was suggested that OHRA’s award include a stipulation that the \$100,000 would not be awarded next year unless OHRA had succeeded in their fund raising goals.
- All Commissioners were in agreement that if that location was lost it would be a detriment to the community.

Mathews motioned ***“with the remaining balance of \$176,886 the commission recommendation is to award a reserve letter of a \$100,000 to OHRA, \$16,156 to Ashland Supportive Housing and \$60,730 to Habitat.”***
Parker seconded the motion.

Rodhe expressed the concern over the timeline. At the end of two years OHRA has bought the building or two hundred would be in danger. He asked for a clarification of that risk. Reid explained that in the first year we will have to write a work out plan, in the second year HUD has the option of taking the money back. This would not harm the ongoing allocation but does risk these funds. If OHRA failed to raise the additional money the amount returned would have to have an immediate allocation to an activity which was ready to proceed and could expend the funds quickly.

Reid said the staff recommendation prioritized the ASH project as it was ready to proceed, and could expend the funds quickly, providing benefit to people right now as opposed to a potential future benefit.

Parker asked if OHRA could buy the building with a mortgage could they comeback for CDBG funds to pay off the mortgage? Reid believed that was an eligible use of funds, but was not completely sure. Reid agreed to research

the issue.

Saldana suggested that the remaining funds be split in half so they could choose which of their projects to do. Rodhe said the key piece was to look at OHRA's progress in a year.

Voice vote was taken with Mathews, Parker, DuQuenne and Rohde ayes, with Saldana opposing. Motion passed.

Parker motioned to "attach a stipulation that if Habitat for Humanity has not fully spent their allocation by March 1 2016 that the funds will be reallocation and further added the stipulation to the OHRA grant that they secure \$250,000 by March 1, 2016 or the funds will revert back to the City for reallocation"
Mathews seconded the motion. Motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Upcoming Events and Meetings:

Next Housing and Human Service Commission Meeting is April 23, 4:30-6:30 pm. All plan to attend.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45.

Respectfully submitted by Leslie Gore