

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

DECEMBER 4, 2018

The Special Meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor John Haila at 6:06 p.m. on the 4th day of December, 2018, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue. Council Members Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, and Chris Nelson were present. Council Member David Martin and *Ex officio* Member Allie Hoskins were absent.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FIVE YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN PUBLIC FORUM: Mayor Haila acknowledged the participants and introduced Housing Coordinator Vanessa Baker-Latimer. Ms. Baker-Latimer said this is the first public forum to prepare for the 2019-2023 Five Year Consolidated Plan. She said Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) likes when public participation is a part of the process. She gave an overview of the CDBG and HOME programs. She said tonight is only about the Consolidated Plan, and is a first step in preparing this plan for HUD.

Ms. Baker-Latimer told Council Members the CDBG program was created to address the housing and community development needs of low and moderate-income persons. She said the HOME Program was created as part of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 and HOME funds are appropriated annually to Participating Jurisdictions. HOME is focused on low-income households and is comprised of four programs: homeowner rehabilitation, home buyer assistance, rental development, and rental subsidy.

Council Member Gartin asked for examples of CDBG projects funded in the last five years. Ms. Baker-Latimer said a renter affordability program to assist with rental deposits and first month's rent was established, transportation assistance has been given in the forms of bus tickets and gas vouchers, the City has acquired foreclosed properties to resell, the City has bought land to convert to infrastructure for homeownership, updated property for handicap accessibility, and provided down payment and closing cost assistance for first-time home buyers. Mayor Haila asked if the Tripp Street project used CDBG funding. Ms. Baker-Latimer concurred.

Member Betcher asked about projects where CDBG and HOME programs can complement each other. Ms. Baker-Latimer said HOME funding can be used to construct homes and CDBG funds can be used for infrastructure but not construction.

Mayor Haila asked what housing can be paid for by CDBG funding. Ms. Baker-Latimer said funds can be used for down payments, closing costs, acquiring property, and demolishing property.

Matt Koehler, 2111 Furman Drive, Ames, asked what made Ames eligible to become an entitlement community. Ms. Baker-Latimer said in 2004 Ames hit the population threshold of 50,000 and met the formula to become its own metropolitan area. She said Ames became an entitlement community in 2004 and started receiving its own direct allocation of CDBG funds. Ms. Baker-Latimer noted that prior to 2004 Ames applied for state funding as a small city.

Trish Stauble, 1319 Top O Hollow Road, Ames, asked if being a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) gives priority for funding. Ms. Baker-Latimer said HUD has requirements for CHDO's including an application process and certification through HUD.

Mayor Haila asked Ms. Baker-Latimer to describe how Ames became a recipient of HOME funding. Ms. Baker-Latimer said allocations come out every year and when she saw HOME funds as part of the allocation for Ames she called to inquire. She said at first HUD thought it was a mistake, and then it was determined that Ames "hit the lottery" by meeting the formula for HOME entitlement.

Member Betcher asked if funds could go to a CHDO, and if so would the CHDO be responsible for coordinating projects. Ms. Baker-Latimer said 15% of HOME funds can go toward a qualified CHDO and it is responsible for meeting the requirements as a sub-recipient. Ms. Betcher asked if there are other sub-recipients. Ms. Baker-Latimer said Community Based Development Organizations and others agencies or groups could qualify as a sub-recipient. She said in past years the City has administered all programs, so if sub-recipients are involved the City would be the monitoring agent to sub-recipients.

Ms. Baker-Latimer told the Council that the Consolidated Plan is the planning document that is submitted to HUD and includes three components: Strategic Plan, Action Plan, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). She told the participants to think about the community as a whole during the discussions, and said the goals created in 2004, 2009, and 2014 are at the discussion area, and can be used for discussion.

Council Members facilitated small group discussions to receive public input regarding CDBG goals and priorities. At the conclusion of the small group discussions, Council Members presented highlights from each group. A summary of proposed goals were as follows:

Group facilitated by Council Member Betcher:

- No increase of mixed-development is needed
- Expand emergency shelter and transitional housing
- Increase supply and quality of affordable rental housing
- Increase availability of affordable owner-occupied housing
- Return to former emphasis on infrastructure/ use CDBG funding for promoting universal design of public facilities for accessibility
- Use CDBG money creatively

Group facilitated by Council Member Nelson:

- Prioritize objectives in the existing order (2014-18 Plan)
- Create/expand/maintain affordable housing for homeless and low-income persons
- Create unrestricted housing for the homeless population with mental health needs
- Consider longer term rental assistance for those with high risk of eviction

Group facilitated by Council Member Beatty-Hansen:

- No increase of mixed-use development
- Prefers language including individuals with special needs under 2009-13 Plan, Goal 2
- Add language including individuals with special needs under 2009-13 Plan, Goals 1a and 1b
- Support facilities and services that would address above goals
- Support infrastructure
- Consider requirements for multi-family dwellings to accept low to moderate-income residents

Group facilitated by Council Member Gartin:

- No increase of mixed-use development
- Address public service needs
- Increase availability of affordable owner-occupied housing

Group facilitated by Council Member Corrieri:

- Increase and improve supply of affordable rental housing
- Increase availability of affordable owner-occupied housing
- Address public service needs for homeless and special needs populations
- Look into supportive housing options
- Lower the priority of public infrastructure
- Address accessibility and deteriorating sidewalks

Group facilitated by Mayor Haila:

- Empower renters toward home ownership and consider employment training to help residents afford housing (2004-2008 Goal 4)
- Address mental health housing needs
- Address homeless population needs
- Consider subsidized units
- Review how CDBG funds have been used in the past
- Continue activities in Strengthening Neighborhoods program
- Use outcomes that can be measured

Ms. Baker-Latimer said it is engaging for Council Members to be part of the public forum process. She clarified the mixed-use development goal as listed in the priorities was related to housing. She said HUD has actively demolished public housing because it created a stigma for low-income people, and mixed-use development in this context means nobody knows who is who. Ms. Baker-Latimer referenced the Bentwood and Ken Maril Road areas where low-income housing has been incorporated in existing neighborhoods. It was noted that goal was misunderstood during the small group discussions.

Ms. Betcher asked about ways money could be used for things like Code enforcement or incentives to encourage compliance. Ms. Baker-Latimer said a Code enforcement program has been attempted where the Inspections Division identified dangerous buildings and followed up with owners, but every property owner in those situations did what was requested of them. She told the Council that

a rental rehabilitation program for property owners to fix up units with a low interest loan or grant was in place but there was a stigma with federal funds and owners thought they would have to rent to low-income individuals. She also told about a single family conversion program that also wasn't successful because it had to benefit low-income families. Ms. Baker-Latimer said more data will be collected as part of the Consolidated Plan process and she would like the community to remain engaged by attending public forums, offering feedback, and completing surveys.

Member Gartin asked about using CDBG funds for mobile homes. Ms. Baker-Latimer said CDBG funds have not been used for anything regarding mobile home parks in the past, but now that there's a combination of CDBG and HOME dollars there is an opportunity to focus CDBG funds on infrastructure. She said HOME funds are specifically for housing so the City will be able to expand what is done with another source of federal dollars.

Next steps were discussed by Ms. Baker-Latimer including a public hearing for the Consolidated Plan in May 2019 and the Consolidated Plan submission to HUD by May 17, 2019. The public hearing for the Action Plan will be June 2019 and the Action Plan will be submitted to HUD by July 1, 2019.

Mayor Haila asked about other opportunities for public input. Ms. Baker-Latimer said she is hoping to receive more data from HUD before continuing public forums. Ms. Baker-Latimer said a Press Release will be sent out, email communication to neighborhoods and non-profits will be sent, and advertisements will be utilized. Mr. Gartin asked if the information could be added to the City of Ames website. Ms. Baker-Latimer said she will add information to the Housing Division page.

Mayor Haila opened public input. He closed same after no came forward to speak.

Mayor Haila told the group Council has retained a consultant to do a Comprehensive Plan as an update to the Land Use Policy Plan, and said it is different than the Consolidated Plan. He said public input will be needed for the Comprehensive Plan also.

DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL:

Moved by Corrieri, seconded by Nelson, to take no action regarding the rental property complaint and request for payment from Carson Sinclair.

Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Moved by Nelson, seconded by Betcher, to put on a future agenda the request from Justin Dodge of Hunziker Companies to reconsider the Ordinance that mandates individual water meters on apartment buildings effective January 1, 2019.

Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Beatty-Hansen, to put on a future agenda the request from Duane Jensen for reimbursement of costs related to the 321 State Avenue RFP.

Member Nelson said he wants to know how much of the design was used to construct the project.

He would like this information by the time this item appears on a future agenda.

Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Moved by Nelson, seconded by Betcher, to put on a future agenda the request from Quarry Estates regarding payment for off-site traffic improvements.

Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Ms. Betcher thanked the participants.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Nelson to adjourn at 7:57 p.m.

Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary

John A. Haila, Mayor