

**CITY OF CONCORD  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF October 26, 2016**

The regular monthly meeting of the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) was held on October 26, 2016, in the Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 41 Green Street.

**Attendees:** Chair Jeff Bart, Councilor Byron Champlin, Councilor Mark Coen, Michael Gfroerer, Councilor Allan Herschlag, Councilor Linda Kenison, and Janet Sprague

**Excused:** Councilor Keith Nyhan and Nadine Salley

**Staff:** Director of Redevelopment Matt Walsh and Administrative Assistant Donna Muir

**Guest:** Donna Lane, City's Grant Consultant  
Jim Doremus, CEO; Brett St. Clair; VP Board, Ken Traum, Board Member; YMCA  
Ellen Groh, Executive Director, Concord Coalition to End Homelessness  
Richard Royce, Executive Director, Community Bridges

**1. Minutes of August 24, 2016 Meeting:** The Chair asked that the minutes be reviewed and approved.

Councilor Champlin moved to accept the minutes as presented. Councilor Coen seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**2. Ongoing CDBG Grants Update:**

- a. Merrimack Valley Day Care – Mr. Walsh reported that Merrimack Valley Day Care received a CDBG grant in the amount of \$200,000, as well as CDAC approval for a Revolving Loan Fund in an amount not to exceed \$200,000, approximately one year ago. Merrimack Valley Day Care has hired Milestone Construction. The total project is expected to cost \$732,000, which is \$332,000 more than originally projected. Thus far, no funds have been drawn on either the CDBG or the RLF. Although the project is six months behind schedule, Merrimack Valley Day Care has another year in which to draw down the funds. Mary Jane Wallner, the Executive Director has reported that the organization raised \$185,000 for the required CDBG match. These dollars were originally intended to replace the City's \$200,000 loan, as Ms. Wallner is close to retirement and doesn't want to leave organization with debt. However, Mr. Walsh suggested that MVDC may elect to take the loan and combine it with fundraised dollars in order to get a budget which is closer aligned with the estimated project cost. Mr. Walsh reported that MVDC is working with Milestone Construction and the project architect to find ways to cut the project down.

**3. Revolving Loan Fund: Loan Status and Account Balance Report**

- a. Loan Status and Account Balance Report - CDAC reviewed the reports provided by staff. Ms. Muir stated there have been a number of inquiries regarding request for loans through the Revolving Loan Fund, but no applications have been received. One request was made this week to have a bathroom floor, ceiling floor, and toilet replaced because of rot. This request would more than likely be a grant instead of a loan, due to the applicants' financial status.

#### 4. Community Development Block Grants

- a. Proposals Received - January 2017 Round – Mr. Walsh introduced Donna Lane, the City’s Grant Consultant, and the four proposals that have been received for the January 2017 grant round.
  - i. YMCA – Jim Doremus, Executive Director, Brett St. Clair, Board VP, and Ken Traum, Board Member and Chair of Facilities, were introduced.

Mr. St. Clair explained that he is the incoming chair of YMCA Board. He provided a brief overview of the YMCA and its long-standing history in the community. He explained that the YMCA is largest child care provider in Merrimack County and child care services are located in the Firehouse Building. The YMCA offers full day child care and child development services for children ages 6 months old through kindergarten age, as well as afterschool programming. Approximately 57% of their childcare clients are below poverty income levels. Because of childcare programming available at the YMC, these families are able to attend school or work, thereby making them productive members of the community.

Mr. St. Clair explained that these programs receive state subsidies and are state licensed. The YMCA utilizes evaluation tools to see how the kindergarten students do in the program. Lincoln Financial Group, one of the YMCA’s funders, asked the YMCA to provide this information. Outcomes from these evaluations show that all of the children who attend the YMCA’s kindergarten programs are ready to start 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and about half of the kindergarteners from the YMCA would actually be eligible to skip ahead directly to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. These students are ready to successfully attend school without needing ancillary programs at the grade school level.

Councilor Coen asked what percentage of the children attending the YMCA are served in the YMCA’s kindergarten program? He also inquired as to how the YMCA might be impacted if the public school system implements a full day kindergarten program. Mr. Doremus responded that about 20 percent of the children attending the YMCA are in either the half-day or full-day kindergarten programs. Mr. St. Clair added that the YMCA held a strategic planning session to discuss the impact and will be able to increase services to fill that gap; one possibility would be to begin accepting infants. Councilor Herschlag asked whether the YMCA had a waiting list and would that list be used to fill in for the loss of kindergarteners? Mr. Doremus stated that without kindergarten, it would provide space for an additional 20 children.

Mr. St. Clair reported that approximately 450 adults and 150 children use the YMCA each day, as well as staff. Additionally, the Concord YMCA partners with the Nashua YMCA to host summer camps at Camp Spaulding, serving 175 children per week over ten weeks in the summer.

Mr. Doremus said that the YMCA has been investing in improving the property and replaced the HVAC system in 2013 in the Firehouse Building. The facility is really just worn from the number of users each day and the YMCA wants both the families and staff to be able to take pride in the building. Mr. St. Clair interjected that the recent rain storm in Concord washed bark mulch into a storm drain causing the Firehouse Building to flood.

Both national and state objectives of serving low income children and families of the CDBG program are met by the YMCA, with fifty-seven percent of children/families qualifying and about 2/3 of these are right at or below the poverty levels. The YMCA supports these children and families with not only high quality childcare, but other resources to help them be able to move forward successfully.

Mr. Traum explained that both the main building and the Firehouse Building were served by Concord Steam and the YMCA recently finished the conversion from steam to gas for the main building. The YMCA is estimating \$125,000 for the conversion from steam to gas in the Firehouse block; \$375,000 for lighting, flooring in the entry area, upgrading the bathroom areas, and paint; and \$60,000 for the elevator, which has been shut off allowing handicapped individuals to only access the first floor; and \$150,000 for playground improvements. The YMCA understands that the CDBG grant requires matching funds which they will accomplish by fundraising and other grants.

Councilor Herschlag asked several questions regarding cost savings that would be realized with the conversion from steam to gas. Mr. Doremus replied that the YMCA still needs to have the system designed by an engineering firm to determine what the costs savings would be realized. They have contracted with the same engineering company that designed and installed the HVAC at the main building.

Ms. Lane explained that the points the YMCA would receive in the grant scoring for having 57% of the YMCA's children would be minimal and asked whether the YMCA would be able to provide a dollar for dollar match. She also suggested that the YMCA look into CDFA's energy program to help offset some of the costs. Mr. Doremus stated that the YMCA would need to flesh out the details for the dollar for dollar match and the energy program, but they are willing to do so.

- ii. Community Bridges – Economic Development Proposal – Richard Royce, the new Executive Director of Community Bridges introduced himself and stated that he has been working in this arena for a total of 43 years in eight states. He submitted the proposal for workforce development after analyzing Region 4 and finding that there is a natural lapse as to why services are difficult to provide: capacity is one issue and the weather is another. The 19 vendor agencies that Community Bridges contracts with have difficulty hiring staff. Easter Seals, one of their vendors, has a 17 percent vacancy rate.

Mr. Royce stated that there have been listening sessions on workforce development conducted by the NH Department of Health & Human Services which have found that entry level positions and recruitment in the direct support field are competing with retail positions. Many people do not understand the functions direct support personnel provide on a daily basis. There are also different issues for hiring people to work with individuals who are no longer living in institutions. Direct support personnel not only provide daily living activities assistance, but also have to be able to understand and deal with behavioral health issues.

Ms. Lane suggested that this proposal is more of an economic development project than a public facilities project. Economic development projects are accepted year-round and do not affect the City's \$500,000 per year limit for housing/public facilities grants. She explained that CDBG has training grant programs that might be a better fit for this proposal. She stated that, if CDAC is amenable, she would work with Community Bridges to investigate other options. CDAC was in agreement and Mr. Royce stated that he is interested in looking at other avenues for funding.

- iii. Concord Coalition to End Homelessness – July 2017 Round - Ellen Groh, Executive Director for the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, explained that the proposed project is twofold – the first part is to have a permanent location for the daytime homeless resource center. The Coalition is currently renting space for the resource center. The second part of the program is to provide space for a reliable cold weather shelter, which would be a wet or low barrier shelter. They are interested in having a permanent space that could house both programs. The Coalition is willing to own the winter shelter, but does not desire to be the operator of the shelter.

The Coalition is not currently ready to go forward with the proposal for CDBG at this time, but they may be ready for the July 2017 round. At this time, the Coalition is working with the NH Center for Nonprofits and the Coalition may decide that they will not apply for CDBG funds at all and instead utilize tax credit programs available through the NH Community Development Finance Authority. Ms. Groh stated that they submitted a CDBG grant proposal as a way to hold the City's place, if there were no other applicants.

Councilor Coen asked why the Coalition was interested in purchasing a property instead of renting property. Ms. Groh replied that one of the advantages is that a good deal was available. The owner of the proposed property is looking to sell and is not willing to rent long term. The biggest factor involves the opposition of many who do not want to have these services in their neighborhoods. Also, there is the need to have the resource center and cold weather shelter in locations that are in proximity to other services.

Councilor Champlin asked what the mission of the Coalition is. Ms. Groh stated that it is to end homelessness. The number one program of the Coalition is Housing First, which takes chronically homeless individuals and puts them into housing as well as providing caseworker services and rental assistance. Councilor Herschlag asked what financial impact Housing First has on communities. Ms. Groh explained that they are just starting the program and have placed two individuals in Concord Housing and Redevelopment units. The Coalition has also been awarded ten rental assistance vouchers. Generally speaking, a community spends \$30,000 to \$60,000 for each homeless individual, because of the amount of services homeless individuals use, including emergency room services, police services, etc. The cost of providing services like Housing First is approximately \$20,000 per year per individual.

Mr. Walsh stated that he asked Ms. Groh to provide the letter which was distributed to the Committee as part of their agenda package. Given that homelessness has been a dominant issue for the City for the past several years, Mr. Walsh stated that he wanted to the Committee to fully understand where the Coalition was regarding its planning process for the permanent winter shelter prior to making a decision about the January 2017 CDBG round. If the City receives CDBG funding in the January 2017 round, it would be ineligible to seek any other CDBG housing/public facilities in 2017. The question is whether CDAC wants to keep their option for funding until the July 2017 round. Chair Bart asked if the Coalition's project will be ready by July 2017. Ms. Groh responded that would be a stretch, but they are trying to get it together and would like to have everything ready to be able to open the cold weather shelter next year. Mr. Walsh added that the project would still need to receive development approvals, permits, etc., as well as the determination as to who would operate the shelter. All this would need to be resolved prior to making application to the NHCDFA for CDBG funds. Therefore, it was suggested that it might be appropriate to plan to apply for CDBG funding in January 2018. Ms. Groh said that the tax credit programs may be the better way to obtain funding.

- iv. Crisis Center of Central New Hampshire – There was no one present representing the Crisis Center of Central New Hampshire. Ms. Lane reported that the Crisis Center's proposal showed that they serve less than 50% of low income individuals and that the Center did not have match money at this point. She explained that she had been in contact with the Center and requested that they track the clients they serve for the next few months to determine if they, in fact, serve a higher number of low income individuals.

CDAC members briefly discussed the proposals presented and decided that they would like to have another meeting within the next week to be able to have further discussion prior to making a decision.

**5. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Muir  
Administrative Assistant