

Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 30, 2023 – 5:30 PM
Lower-Level Conference Room 23 Union Street Norwich, CT 06360

Members Present: Les King (Chairperson), Sean Barnes, Gemma Fabris, Mark Marcy, Larry Rice, and Angela Duhaime

Others Present: Sydney Phelps (staff) and Tianne Curtis (staff)

1. The CDAC was called to order at 5:33 PM.

Chairman, Les King, deferred to the Director of Community Development, Sydney Phelps to review the CDBG process for the applicants. Sydney reiterated that non-public service and city department requests would be heard tonight and that the CDAC is scheduled to deliberate Thursday 4/6/23. The Committee's recommendations will then be posted in the paper for a 30-day public comment period before presenting their determinations to the City Council through a public hearing.

2. The presentation schedule for the meeting was as follows:

5:30 PM	NHS—Norwich Works
5:40 PM	NHA—Rosewood Manor Exterior Renovations
5:50 PM	Futures Inc.—Air Quality
6:00 PM	CD Property Rehabilitation
6:10 PM	DPW—Taftville Sidewalks
6:20 PM	CD Administration

Norwich Human Services (NHS)—Norwich Works: \$70,000

NHS Director Kate Milde presented the application for the Norwich Works job training program. The Norwich Works employs an Employment Specialist who matches unemployed and underemployed, low- and moderate-income residents to job training programs in pursuit of earning a living wage and increasing their employability. The program helps eligible applicants afford training courses and expenses related to completing the course such as uniforms. NHS is requesting additional funding from prior years to increase the working hours for the Employment Specialist from part-time to full-time. NHS is investing ARPA funds into the cost of training courses as well as to cover the Employment Specialist's fringe benefits. If funding for the program is cut the Employment Specialist would remain in a part-time position and it would hurt the number of individuals they will be able to serve through the program. Les King inquired about the program's follow-up capacity. The program now captures participants' income before and after the program and includes a follow up component in their case plan to be able to report the success of the program more accurately.

Norwich Housing Authority (NHA)—Rosewood Manor, Exterior Renovations (Part I): \$200,000

John Mainville, Modernization Coordinator, and Executive Director, Jeff Arn, presented the application on behalf of the NHA. The presenters thanked the committee for the funding they received in past application years and highlighted some of the improvements they have been able to provide to their elderly, low-income, and disabled residents, and provided examples such as roof and gutter replacements as well as energy efficient heating and cooling improvements that reduced residents' utility costs by 30%. They are requesting funding to wrap the deteriorating wood siding on the exterior of residential structures with aluminum coil stock, remove damaged siding, and provide energy-efficient LED lights for their residents of Rosewood Manor. The CDAC asked how they obtained their estimates and NHA responded that they pay internally for all required soft construction, evaluation, and planning costs. If awarded funding contracts for completion would be selected through competitive bid. Projects are proposed in Phases to keep cost estimates accurate. The project would benefit 110 low-and extremely low-income residents of Norwich.

Futures, Inc—Energy Conservation and Improved Air Quality: \$26,090.20

Executive Director Damieon Williams and Jo-Ann Flynn, VP of Programs & Technology, presented from Futures Inc. The request is for funding to update the HVAC system at their Norwich location. Futures provides one-on-one day programming for adults with intellectual disabilities. When asked about how their program

benefits Norwich residents, Futures reported that they currently employ 30 staff members to serve 15 residents, 3 of whom are residents of Norwich. The rest of their clientele are from surrounding towns. The CDAC clarified that the intended end-benefit of CDBG funding must be primarily Norwich residents and suggested exploring energy rebate options through Norwich Public Utilities.

Community Development (CD)—Property Rehabilitation Program: \$250,000

Program Manager, Wayne Sharkey, presented from the Office of Community Development. The Property Rehabilitation Program offers 0% interest loans to low- and moderate-income residents of Norwich to maintain their residential properties through safety, code, quality of life, and energy-efficient improvements. CD sighted common examples of improvements through the program such as the replacement of dilapidated roofs, installing energy-efficient windows, correcting electrical and sewer hazards, and updating broken or inefficient heating systems. Large-scale effects of the program are the reduction of the cost burden placed on residents and the prevention of neighborhoods from falling into blight or disrepair. All loan repayments are returned to the program to provide funding for additional properties to participate in the program. Gemma Fabris asked if any of the loan is forgiven. The Program Manager explained that Property Rehabilitation funds are often used in combination with the City's Lead Hazard Control grant, which offers a depreciating loan over the course of 10 years, and that any money from the Property Rehabilitation Program used for lead remediation is forgiven in tandem.

Department of Public Works (DPW)—Taftville Sidewalks \$480,000

Civil Engineer, John Gorman presented from the Department of Public Works. DPW is requesting funding to install accessible curb ramps and replace portions of the sidewalks located on South A Street, South B Street, 2nd Avenue, and 4th Street in Taftville, CT. The area is predominantly residential and proximal to Sacred Heart School, Wequonnoc School, and a post office. When asked by the CDAC why they selected this area of sidewalks over others, DPW reported that it is the responsibility of homeowners to maintain the sidewalks outside of their residences and that they offer an internally managed fund for homeowners to invest in future sidewalk repairs. The CD Department Director provided context that the location of the proposed project does fall within a census tract where at least 50% of residents are low- and moderate-income persons.

Community Development (CD)—Administration: \$168,846.60

Director, Sydney Phelps, presented on behalf of the Office of Community Development. CD is requesting funding to continue to administer the CDBG program. The Director conveyed that the request covers the salary and fringe of the Department Head as well as 30% of the Financial Administrator. Responsibilities of these positions include maintaining HUD compliance, writing and submitting multiple reports to HUD, compiling grant applications for other funding sources, management of the program and its sub-grantees, as well as populating and monitoring IDIS, the program's federal communication and reporting database. It was stated that the Office does not receive additional funding from the General Fund and that any awarded funding must be spent within the program year.

3. Communications

The CDAC confirmed attendance for their next meeting, Monday, April 3, 2023, @ 5:00 pm (Hybrid), and discussed the possibility of reevaluating the Citizen Participation Plan in the fall.

4. Motion was made by Mark Marcy and seconded by Angela Duhaime to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sydney Phelps,
Community Development Director