

CITY OF GARDNER

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING



CDBG STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, September 22, 2010
Meeting Room – City Hall Annex
Gardner, Massachusetts

Committee Members present: James Cruickshank, David Curran, Jennifer Dymek, Joanne Foster, Robert Hubbard, Julie Meehan, Richard Reynolds

Committee Members absent: Bernard Sullivan, Darlene Morrilly, Councilor James Minns

Others present: Katie Fucile, DCDP; Trevor Beauregard, DCDP; Councilor Ed Gravel

J. Dymek read the announcement regarding the recording of video or audio of the meeting. There was no response.

J. Dymek called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

1. Acceptance of Minutes

D. Curran moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of July 21, 2010.

Seconded by J. Cruickshank

Vote – Unanimous

2. Old Business

None

3. New Business

3.1 BG11 Planning Meeting

J. Dymek notified the committee that there was a BG11 Planning Meeting on September 20, 2010. The meeting was well attended and some new projects were mentioned, such as renovating Greenwood Playground by repairing the basketball court and creating a skate park from the unused tennis court. Another was the Community Health Center would like more dental space which would lead to extended hours. CDC would like to see economic development. The City is also in need of more demolition and fixing streets and sidewalks. Also, another façade project would be helpful to the City.

3.2 BG11 Request for Proposals Meeting

J. Dymek notified the committee that an informational meeting was held on September 20, 2010 about Request for Proposals for Block Grant 2011. Possible projects for the application are:

City Hall Annex, 115 Pleasant Street, Room 201, Gardner, Massachusetts 01440
Telephone: (978) 630-4011 ♦ Facsimile: (978) 632-1905 ♦ CDBG (978) 632-3800

- GAAMHA – to replace an existing boiler with a new energy efficient boiler
- MOC – to provide financial literacy workshops for 40-50 Gardner residents for an estimated cost of \$20,000
- MVOC – need for housing for homeless veterans with families. There are a significant number of female veterans either pregnant or with toddlers without a home. Possibility of acquiring a two family home to provide family housing. Another possible project is transitional employment opportunity – opening a coffee shop or bakery to provide employment training.
- CDC – soft costs for two units of affordable housing on Chelsea Street as well as computer replacements for the Cyber Café and the Homework Center at Olde English Village
- City projects would include design for renovations to Greenwood Playground, as proposed by a citizen's group, more demolition funds which could also be used to secure unsafe, vacant buildings and street and sidewalk repair projects.

Requests for Proposals are due October 6, 2010 and there is a public hearing on October 13, 2010.

3.3 BG11 Community Development Strategy

The 2010 Community Development Strategy was sent with the meeting notice. J. Dymek asked if there were any ideas about changes that needed to be done to the Community Development Strategy. She asked that the committee review the 2010 CDS and be prepared to discuss possible changes with the Target Area and Priority List at the next meeting. R. Hubbard mentioned that the Police Department are looking for a new Police Station so that is something that should be included.

3.4 MORE Grant Program Income Requests

T. Beauregard gave a brief description of the MORE Project on 354 Main Street and distributed a budget sheet. He said the Department received a MORE Grant totaling \$345,000. The project is expected to create 15 new jobs. The original bid price for the retaining wall was \$180,000 and engineering services were provided at \$30,000, which was well within the budget of \$345,000. There have been two major problems, so far, which has significantly raised the original price of the project. The first problem arose when the owner of one of the properties abutting the site would not allow an easement on the property. Due to this problem, the original block wall needed to be changed to a poured concrete wall, which increased the price by \$123,000. The other problem was the ledge onsite. It was determined, based on the price per cubic yard in the bid proposals, that the ledge removal would cost an additional \$108,000. T. Beauregard referred to the budget handout to note the costs. He approached the state for more money and was granted an additional \$80,000 in funds. The cost of the ledge removal forced a review of the bid items and removal of items that were ancillary to the project construction. This resulted in a credit of \$17,000, which was significant, but still did not cover the additional costs. The contractor also discounted the cost of the ledge removal by \$16,200. With the six total proposed change orders and the additional funds from the State, the project is still short by an estimated \$25,000. Change order six is the last change order that the City will consider. This change order is for a short section of retaining wall that was not foreseen when the plans were drawn, prior to a related demolition project.

J. Dymek questioned why there was a line for drainage structures then also a line for drainage on change order 3. T. Beauregard stated the reason was because of the piping for the drainage. Some needed to be deleted and the developer did indeed take on some costs associated to the additional piping.

J. Foster questioned how much actual Program Income was available. J. Dymek stated there was \$52,300 uncommitted in Program Income. J. Foster then asked if we could foresee any other requests coming up and J. Dymek answered not at this time. J. Cruickshank asked if there was a Program Income standard as to how much we have to have and R. Hubbard responded that traditionally, the Department likes to have \$50,000 uncommitted on hand. Housing Rehab paybacks are mainly the source of Program Income. J. Dymek indicated that DHCD prohibits grantees from having more than \$100,000 uncommitted funds in Program Income. R. Hubbard stated that we have to have projects to attach to the Program Income money. This project will require an amendment. .

J. Cruickshank moved to approve an amount not to exceed \$25,000 of Program Income to be used for the MORE Grant project at 354 Main Street.

Seconded by J. Foster

Vote-Unanimous

3.5 Urban Renewal Plan Update

R. Hubbard explained that the State reviewed the plan and has required “windshield” appraisals be done on each property that the City has identified as possible –acquisitions. An estimate of \$4,999 was obtained to perform the appraisals. A notice to proceed has been issued and the appraisals should be ready within a week or two.

R. Hubbard also explained that the initial planning phases of the Urban Renewal Plan included a police station / public safety complex but the police did not really support that idea. Now that the plan is nearing completion, the police department would like to see a new station included in the Urban Renewal Plan. Adding this to the plan will cost an estimated \$5,000 to \$10,000 due to changing several maps and sections. The Gardner Redevelopment Authority is providing the funding for this additional cost.

J. Cruickshank asked how long the appraisals would be valid. R. Hubbard said they are good for six months. R. Hubbard said that prior to any acquisition; a full appraisal would need to be completed. There are about 30 windshield appraisals and full appraisals will be costly. Hopefully those funds will be able to come from the Block Grant.

3.6 Financial Summary

J. Dymek presented the financial summary of all grants. J. Dymek said that a six month extension will most likely be requested for BG09 in order to complete Housing Rehab and Public Social Services. RCAP Solutions seems to be having trouble spending down their foreclosure prevention money. R. Hubbard asked if they don’t end up spending their money if it could be moved around to another line item. J. Dymek answered yes.

For the CDF Grant, the Fire Department has finished their training in the building and the Police Department was scheduled for a week of training but the facility was too wet and the training has been canceled. For BG10, all procedural requirements have been completed. The Environmental Review is awaiting approval at DHCD. The Public Social Service agencies are approved to start and contracts have been prepared. J. Foster commented that HOPE will be finished their project by December.

4. Announcements and Recognitions

R. Hubbard informed the committee of an announcement by the Lt. Governor that the Mill Street Corridor has been selected as a site eligible for state funding from the Brownfields Support Program. The Gardner site was one of five sites across the state selected. Over \$8 million was spent on five sites back in 2008. There is no promise of funding with this selection. The Lt. Governor and Mass Development will be in Gardner on October 15 for the formal announcement.

J. Cruickshank announced the CDC is having their annual meeting on October 13, 2010 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. at the PACC.

5. Adjournment

J. Cruickshank moved to adjourn. Seconded by J. Foster Vote – Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

DOCUMENTS:*

Minutes from meeting of July 21, 2010

Planning Public Hearing Notice from September 20, 2010 3PM

RFP Public Hearing Notice from September 20, 2010 4 PM

FY2010 Community Development Strategy

Lower Main Street Gateway Improvement Project Budget

Financial Summary spreadsheet

September 22, 2010 Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Meeting notes taken by K. Fucile

*All documents are filed in the Office of Community Development and Planning, 115 Pleasant Street, Room 202, Gardner, MA.