

CDBG Priority Task Force
Meeting 11: Tuesday September 16, 2008
6:30-9:00pm Room 209, 2nd Floor City Hall

Attendance: Anna (Priluck) Tesmenitsky, Denis Lachman, Co-Chair, Rhonda Juneau, Kyra Walker, Frank Gallagher, Larry Gross, Jeannemarie Celentano.

Staff: T.J. Martzial, Amy Grommes Pulaski, HCD Program Manager.

Introduction & Overview

Amy provides a summary of the meetings. There were about 70 interested citizens who participated in the community input meetings, representing 45 organizations. There were four members of the city staff including planning, public services, economic development and health and human services.

Social Service Outreach Review

Jeanemarie says the social service group broke the participants into four categories: Basic Needs, Education and Employment, Safe and Strong Communities, and Health and Wellness. She put dots next to the items and within the categories where the priorities were, according to the dots. She stuck to the few top needs. She explains the handout.

Basic Needs

- Affordable Low Income Housing
- Care for elderly/ senior wellness
- HIV/Aids housing/ case management
- Domestic safety

Education & Employment:

- Cultural Education & Cultural Brokering
- Job opportunities for new Americans
- Increasing the quality of childcare

Side note for Community Centers

Emergency needs- food assistance, emergency shelter, fuel assistance didn't really come up as much in the discussion. She thinks it was the way the focus groups were structured, however this should not be overlooked. If we don't have a priority set for urgent needs, Jon Bradley had a recommendation that some funds would be dedicated to "urgent" needs.

The committee discusses what qualifies as an urgent need- something that poses an immediate threat to the health/ welfare of a community, and is unable to be financed elsewhere.

Safe & Strong Communities

- Neighborhood/ Community Centers
 - Neighborhood watch/ community policing
 - Neutral territory for groups to meet
 - Education & empowering residents/ landlords
 - Increased transportation

- More racial/ethnic diversity in city programs- police, fire, EMT

Health & Wellness

- Mental Health & Substance Abuse
 - Long term...etc.

Rhonda adds that the community center idea as a place for people to gather and a place that they could use but also a place that addressed the needs of the neighborhood.

Jeannemarie said that with the funds available we probably couldn't build a neighborhood community center, maybe another space could be utilized. Can we think outside of the box- can we use Portland West or the High School?

Rhonda says that all the issues around substance abuse and mental health causes many of the problems in society. If we could address this proactively then maybe we can solve some of these issues. Many needs also circulate around new Americans- life skills.

Jeanemarie says people from the meeting explained that CDBG shouldn't fund big substance abuse/ mental health initiatives, but if could fund grass roots, preliminary, and create support networks within the community. It's important to know where the resources are.

Larry says that within substance abuse there is short term funding but not long term funding. He is not sure if that's an appropriate use of CDBG funds.

Rhonda says the significant needs with food, soup kitchens, and homelessness. If we can address the need before it gets to that point, maybe it could help curb the problem.

Denis says to add to the discussion for community centers. He asks if the community center is neighborhood based or a cultural center which is neutral territory that can serve a number of communities. Anna says that another thing that there is a separate space to worship.

Jeannemarie says that she also heard that there could be a community center that is place based but also serves cultural communities. Sometimes these communities need larger spaces as well. She says the difference is that this community center becomes almost a one stop shopping, child care, after school activities, neighborhood activities, etc. If you build it with an education piece, the spirituality space can come later, once they feel connected.

Larry asks if Portland Public library is an eligible activity. The Portland Public Library is talking about having a community space. Many of the spaces they want to create are a community space like this.

Anna says lets invite Steve from the libraries to the public forum.

Jeanemarie refers to Mark Swann's letter about the set aside for social services.

Larry says the theme came up that we have huge basic needs. We could spend all CDBG money on basic needs then we could never solve it.

Anna asks the difference between basic needs, essential needs, urgent needs. Larry says basic needs is housing, food security. They discuss HUD's definition of urgent need applies because urgent needs is a disaster. Urgent needs has three tests to qualify for an urgent need, 1) serious threat, 2) recently became urgent, 3) can't fund it on its own or no other funding.

Development Activities

Frank summarizes both nights.

Sept 9 Community Outreach Meeting summary

- Community Centers
- Connectivity- whatever is funded should connect to other aspects. Workforce housing connects to jobs, connects to transportation. This allows to cut across different categories
- Housing was a primary concern. Many emphasized to spent money on housing- rehab, weatherization, social supported housing, home ownership as well.
- Public infrastructure- a lot of discussion about brick sidewalks. Many think there are better places to spend the money. Brick is difficult to walk on in the winter.

Sept 10 Community Outreach Meeting summary

- More focus on economic development
- “Teach a man to fish, don’t give him a fish.
- In respect to structural change not to spread the funding through. Other funding organizations are moving toward larger impact projects.
- The idea of measuring outcomes, performance measures, and also defining critiera so the outcomes reflect the criteria, rather than politics
- Reducing city staff time. It take just as much time to administer a \$5000 grant as a \$50,000. Work smarter.

Anna adds that in the planning aspect and community outreach. There will need to be additional supporting for staff in areas that have not been funded yet. The people that were there on the 19th were large organizations: MECA, USM, and Chamber of Commerce.

They represent having priority to the main street that intersects with the LMI area.

Address the most needy areas, greatest number of people, and the longer time duration.

Theme & Trend Identification

The group discusses the idea of adding supportive services to the three categories.

The development activities group identifies three categories of priority: Housing, Transportations, and Workforce Development.

Frank says what we haven’t discussed is that we will have a set of principles and structural changes. We want to make sure that specific populations are not excluded.

Larry brings up that those three categories do not displace people, like the elderly.

Priorities, Models & Structural

Frank says what if we have a discussion about principles.

Recommendation districts 1, 2 & 3 rotate their funds allotments to receive impact funds.

Jeannemarie asks if the low/moderate income neighborhoods are close to the neighborhood business districts.

Do we want to serve the areas that are the most needy?

Larry says we can characterize this by lower percent of are median income.

Rhonda says that we were going to focus on where the action was, to focus on the wow factor. The priority would be where the action was to combine efforts.

Anna says there two wow affects- 1) deering oaks or 2) symbol of impact. The creation of a center or strengthening later.

Anna says that if we are to focus on LMI and focused on specific neighborhoods.

Kyra says that Lewiston and Portland are not the same. Lewiston was in need of some gateways. Portland is beautiful and doesn't need additional gateways.

Jeanemarie says we need more nucleus. Denis says the neighborhood centers are a good place to focus. The group discusses the categories. The talk about an example

The group works toward identifying four categories of priority:

Priorities

- Transportation and transit
- Work & shop/ Education & training
- Safe Communities
- Housing
- The group talks about having a set aside for basic needs.

The group begins to talk about principles:

Principles

- Benefit of existing residents
- Serving lower income- less than 50% AMI
- Collaboration
- Sustainability- long term visioning and investment
- Diversity/ inclusion
- Measurable impact- objectives and reinforcing
- Capacity building
- Location

Larry refers to the Oregon paper. We can use some of the language from this group.

Jeanemarie suggest using the original five and add the other two based on the Projects.

The group is asked to define the principles and priorities. Here are the volunteers:

- Principles- Frank (Denis)
- Safe Communities- Jeanemarie
- Essential Services- Jeanemarie
- Housing- Rhonda
- Transportation- Larry
- Work/Shop & Education/Training- Anna