

CDBG Priority Task Force
Meeting 17: Tuesday October 14, 2008
6:30-9:00pm Room 24, City Hall

Attendance: Anna T. Collins, Kyra Walker, Wendy Harmon, Rhonda Juneau, Jon Bradley, Larry Gross, Rachel Talbot Ross, Amy Grommes Pulaski

Welcome and Minutes

Larry has a correction on Jon's comment in the Council Workshop page 2. "Also with higher minimum the TF has a second set aside for smaller grants for training or capacity building. ..."

Jon moves to approve notes for Meeting 15 on October 6 and Meeting 16 on October 7, seconded by Anna. Seven in favor.

Review Council Workshop and Public Forum

Anna says the two comments from the workshop that she remembers were comments from the Councilors Leeman and Cohen. Councilor Leeman described how much of an impact a single sidewalk can have on a neighborhood. The big picture collaboration, does not take into account the single sidewalk that can make an impact. Larry comments that Councilor Leeman also comments that after CDBG investments, the income in her neighborhood rose, and then became in-eligible for CDBG funding.

Anna recalls that Councilor Cohen said that he'd like to see flexibility in the program.

Larry says it's the City Manager's job to see to the balance of fund investments in the various neighborhoods. He looks to see how different resources are allocated among neighborhoods.

Anna asks if we want to adjust our recommendations if some councilors are not into the collaborative model.

Jon argues against changing the model. If a sidewalk needs to be done, that neighborhood or Public Services can give a compelling argument.

Anna agrees that we should keep the collaboration and coordination model. However, in regards to brick sidewalks the Task Force can make a recommendation based on the input they received.

Anna switches the discussion to the Public Forum. She was surprised at how well the recommendations were received. There was some concerned how this would translate into the allocation. Some expressed concern how these recommendations would work. Therefore its important that the Task Force come back to the table to re-look at the recommendations after a year or two.

Jon says that's similar to what Jon Anton said. It may have a big impact, it may be a little impact but we don't know until we try. We got the same support as the public forum as the council workshop. People were positive, especially the Mayor.

Anna says that she did speak with Aaron Shapiro, who expressed some concern about the recommendations. He wanted to see priorities specific to one area, specifically changing something in Portland. Anna explained that the Task Force weighted a lot of data. It's hard to come in at the end to see what has been reviewed. She explained that it is transition. This was a

consensus type transition. Anna said that Aaron felt that we should have been more specific and concise.

Amy also comments that many of the agencies that have received funding for the past several years did not attend the public forum. Amy warned that they may be ok with the recommendations or be contacting councilors directly.

Larry says we could recommend a hold-harmless clause for this year but expect the recommendations to be fully implemented for next year. Jon says if we throw it out too quickly there will be resistance. They discuss the power structure that has existed in the past where agencies could call the City Manager or Councilors to change the allocation.

Jon recommends that an email go out to the participants support the Recommendations.

Jon says that everyone will call and ask how each program fits in. There will need to be a lot of education and training on this model. He suggests that we hold a lot of hearings and workshops. They will have to talk or re-frame their programs to fit the goals of the program. Staff will need to nurture them along. He says don't push it too hard this year.

Larry says this would be a great opportunity for planning to present the plans that no one has never read. They can present them and explain how you can align with them. We all want it to thread back to the city plans. These recommendations are a paradigm shift. We are also asking them to re-align their programming to meet the needs of the city.

Capacity Building

Amy explains that both herself and T.J. have spoken with Rachel Talbot Ross. Rachel has been involved in an exploratory group that is trying to define and identify the organizational needs here in Portland.

Rachel Talbot Ross explains her conversations with United Way, Maine Community Foundation and other funders that are looking to fund capacity building. There would be no money handed out to agencies this year, but first a study would be conducted to determine what type of capacity building is needed. Each organization can contribute a small amount to the study and then create small grants to address the actual need.

Additionally, she explains that there is a foundation that has a People of Color fund. This can go to help assist immigrant and refugee groups getting started. But before this can happen it's important to assess the community to determine what the needs are.

Jon makes a motion for the City to participate in the collaborative effort to conduct a community needs assessment on capacity building with United Way and Maine Community Foundation. Next year when the recommendations are fully implemented, the amount of the capacity building set-aside will be tied to the results of the community needs assessment for capacity building.

Basic Needs

They discuss what the definition of basic needs would be. Amy recommended basic needs are emergency need. This would include emergency shelter and food programs. Amy passes out a handout that lists the programs that lists the shelter and food programs that have been funded for the past three years. The handout shows that of the social cap shelter and food has ranged from 17 to 25%, and of the total grant that has increased from 5 to 7.3%.

Kyra says that Meals on Wheels should be a basic need because elderly can not get out of their homes.

Rhonda argues says that basic needs should be emergency needs and there should be a time limit on how long it would serve an individual. Short term support could be limited to 18 months; this is the HUD time limit for temporary. Meals on Wheels is a long term support service.

Anna says she agrees with Rhonda.

Wendy says that Healthcare for the Homeless could be argued to be a basic need.

Anna explains that we need to define basic needs. We previously said that basic needs are food, shelter, heat. Jon says if we are looking at this as basic shelter, then the Teen Center would not apply. He is not sure how the Day Shelter would be funded. However the Lighthouse for teens is currently not funded, he could then request money for the Teen Shelter. We should define shelter where people can go or services that support shelter, case work would not be a basic need.

Basic needs: programs that provide a last resort need, where no other options exist. 1) Short term shelter, a place people can go when they have not other options to stay, including shelter operation and staff, excluding case work. 2) Emergency food, food for persons when they have no other options to eat, including food, food service operations and support services for persons limited to 18 months. 3) Emergency Heat assistance, if eligible. HNS Staff will explore using CDBG for heating fuel assistance. Basic needs serve the needs of the most vulnerable when there are no other options.

After reviewing the programs that have been funded the group decides to take the basic needs set aside to from the total grant as opposed to taking the percentage from the social service cap. They discuss how much the set aside should be. They see that the programs requesting food and shelter has increased over the past three years. They decide in order to allow for the further need to increase the percentage.

Denis moves that we change the basic needs set aside would be up to 10% of the total grant. All vote in favor. They would still be encouraged to collaborate.

This will be implemented next year. They task force stresses that the recommendations is up to 10%, with the hope that as the rest of the programs are developed then the need for basic needs will decrease.

Implementation

As the Task Force requested Amy recommends some areas of implementation for this year. She has a copy of the RFP. There is a section that explains what the priorities are; she suggests replacing the old priorities with the newly adopted principles and priorities. She also recommends a slight variation of the point system to reflect the new principles and priorities, and some other minor changes recommended by CMPAC last year. Finally she recommends adjusting the questions to reflect the new principles and priorities.

The group discusses how difficult it will be for agencies to implement large scale coordination or collaboration for this year. An educational initiative will be needed to bring everyone up to speed. Jon recommends that we have full implementation of all recommendations for the following year. The \$20,000 limit should wait to be implemented until next year.

Anna says that we will take time. For this year we should stick to a similar point system as last year, but include the new priorities and principles.

Jon recommends that after this is adopted we hold a series of information and workshops to help implement it. Amy suggests that some version of this task force assists staff in the implementation process. Many nod their heads in agreement.

Rachel Talbot Ross says this is public education, but it is also capacity building. The applicants don't know the city plans, development plans, the transportation plan, etc. They could not possibly implement the entire recommendations for this year.

Larry says we could fund a demonstration project for this year. That could be a model for others to follow. He suggests a set aside of \$100,000 – \$200,000.

Denis is uncomfortable with designing the implementation of the program on the fly. You could say there is a transition and we don't know what it looks like or you could come with it all written out and presented on Monday. It is a continuum. We could present that we need a transition on X, Y, Z.

Jon recommends that whatever we do this year, we can see this fully implemented by next year. We can spend our time figuring out what needs to happen to get to full implementation for the following year.

Jon recommends that Amy and staff work on how some of this would be implemented this year, recognizing that it will be limited. Next year we would like this to be fully implemented.

Denis makes a motion says there is a limited application for this year including X, Y, Z. There is a sustained release for total implementation for this year.

Wendy asks about child care. Can we get them to have the same measurable impact or comparable data? She stresses the importance of day care providers being able to report comparable data, along with food providers. Amy says that as part of the transition, she will work with those service providers to try to get their reporting data aligned.

Denis asks are we comfortable with implementing a small amount of changes this year, calling the X, Y, and Z. Then we will figure out what X, Y, and Z are. They all agree except Wendy who voices concern about agencies providing the same or similar services that do not track units similarly.

Denis asks Amy to repeat her recommendations for implementation for this year. She explains:

X = Incorporate the newly adopted goal, principles and priorities

Y = Re-arrange the points to reflect the newly adopted goal, principles and priority. Also projects that address more than one priority receive more points

Z = Questions will reflect principles and priorities.

Kyra voices concern to as to rewarding people who collaboration/ coordinate.

Jon says that this year it will be somewhat muddled this year. We can attach something to this RFP for next year.

Denis makes a motion to adopt X, Y, and Z, stated above. All vote for X, Y, Z, except Kyra. She wants it to be clear to the applicants that the collaboration or coordination will be weighted

heavier. Larry suggests having different scoring systems for this year and next year and presenting applicants with both so they can see the difference.

Other Issues:

The Task Force discusses two issues that have been voiced throughout the process.

- Brick sidewalk
- Investments around the project cannot be developers

Preparation for October 20

Denis to present the recommendations and the Task Force will be there and support. The items for the presentation on October 20 are : Present the amount of public process and input, Goal, Principles, Priorities, and Examples. Plus provide a handout of the list of participants.

Report

Amy reviews the report and its sections. She also recommends that the goal be amended to include “The primary goal of the CDBG program is to build strong, self-sustaining neighborhoods through coordinated location based investment.”

Anna says that this report is great, but would like to expand upon the recommendations on page 8 and 9. These can include examples in action. It would help to describe each principle and priority that explains the problem we tried to address and why we are addressing this way and an example of how it is implemented. It would explain what we are trying to address. Denis says we need the why. Anna says we need a deeper analysis.

Jon says that less is more. Maybe a sentence or 2 would be sufficient. We don’t need more than we need to. If we do paragraphs then it would be too much. He states that he doesn’t disagree, but stresses that we keep it short.

Denis says the audience would be the next task force. He has some examples.

Jon is favor of the outline of including an “in action” for each principle or priority. However, he does not want to add new principles, stick with what we have and elaborate on them.

Larry agrees, if we keep it short and a few little words. If you say that these are what the principles are and explain them a bit that’s fine.

Denis says that the writing committee can write the in action stuff. Anna says that we hear that some of the substance is different but the group is in favor of adding “in action” as long as its concise. They discuss recommendations.

Denis also recommends that in the process p7. Almost Every decision was adopted by consensus and majority. Discussion always voiced varying voices but ultimately agreed. Except in adopting consensus model.

Denis is requesting a true executive summary. P 8&9 as is, expanded within. Including model, goals, principles and priorities.

Add implementation section to executive summary.

The task force discusses the parts of the model and how it aligns with the guiding principles. They revise the model to reflect all of the guiding principles- Denis to adjust.