



COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Councilor Marianne LaBarge, Chair

Councilor William H. Dwight

Councilor Eugene Tacy

MINUTES

Monday, February 11, 2013

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street

Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building, Northampton, MA

1. Members present/absent: Councilor Marianne LaBarge, Councilor Gene Tacy, Council President Bill Dwight
2. Meeting Called to Order: 5:00 pm
3. Announcement of Audio/Video Recording of Meeting: Councilor Marianne LaBarge. This meeting will be one hour in length due to previous room booking. Ruth McGrath is videotaping the meeting for Adam Cohen, Winning Writers.
4. Approval of Minutes of November 19, 2012 and January 14, 2013. Approved: Councilor Eugene Tacy, Councilor Marianne LaBarge, and Councilor Bill Dwight. Vote was Unanimous.
5. Peg Keller, Housing and Community Development Planner, City of Northampton spoke on the following:
 - Status of CDBG Funding Award
 - City Action Plan priorities
 - Scheduling Public Services Interviews

Peg handed out information on CDBG funding. This information will be attached to these minutes.

There is a Public Notice attached to these minutes which contains the following information:

1. Request for Proposals (RFP)
 - RFP for the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the program year beginning July 1, 2013.
2. Deadline for Submission of RFP
3. Notice of Public Hearings
4. Draft Annual Action Plan

Interview committee is not yet selected, different individuals were discussed. Peg will let the Councilors know who is selected.

SCHEDULED DATES:

March 11, 2013 Monday 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM or 9:00 PM Fire Station Community Room

March 12, 2013 Tuesday 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM or 9:00 PM Fire Station Community Room

March 13, 2013 Wednesday 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM or 9:00 PM Hearing Room City Hall

Peg handed out three booklets to the City Councilors on the Committee. These booklets contained the following information:

A. Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report:

1. Executive Summary
2. Affordable Housing
3. Addressing Homelessness Narrative
4. Housing and Homeless Priority Needs
5. Housing and Homeless Collaborative Efforts
6. Northampton Housing Authority Activity
7. Public Facilities Priorities
8. Public Infrastructure Priorities
9. Economic Development Activity
10. CDBG-R
11. Leveraged Resources

Project Summaries:

1. Infrastructure/Public Facilities/Economic Development/Housing/Public Services/Planning and Administration
2. Geographic Distribution
3. Fair Housing Activity/Lead Paint Abatement
4. Institutional Structure
5. Homeless Count Summary, Financial Summary Reports, Census Map, Legal Ad

The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report Booklet will be kept in the Office of the Council Clerk.

Councilor Marianne LaBarge asked Peg Keller to explain what was happening in Amherst with CDBG funding. Councilor Tacy had mentioned concerns to Councilor LaBarge, and Councilor LaBarge notified Peg his concerns and of an article that was in the Gazette about Amherst's CDBG funds.

Peg explained that Amherst is in a different category. They have ebbed and flowed, as has Easthampton, over the years, they go directly to the state for the federal funds, and we still don't know why. We get it directly from the Feds, probably because we're a county seat, although usually it's for a population of 50,000 and over. Councilor Tacy found the articles extremely confusing, even after talking to the auditors. Peg responded that it's a formula based thing, and they always have. It's based on poverty levels and per capita income. Councilor Dwight added that Amherst is an abnormality due to the student population and the way they average into the income levels, making Amherst seem much poorer than they actually are. Councilor Tacy asked about the administrative costs coming out of the CDBG funding. Peg responded that many of those costs are no longer coming out. Many of the salaries are not CDBG funded any longer. There is a cap for administrative but no minimum. The FY13 CDBG award was \$588,403.00. The anticipated FY14 award is \$529,562.70, but this amount is not definite yet. For FY13 the Senior Center payment was \$311,621.00 and next year it will be \$145,613.00 and then it is off. The Senior Center was supposed to be 5 years but actually became 8 years.

Peg talked about Solder On and their project to construct units for Veteran's on the Veteran's Administration Campus in Leeds. The development will contain 60 units, 44 of those will be SRO's with a cooperative form of ownership. The remaining 16 units will be for women Veterans with children. The lease from the VA was granted for the maximum time period allowed – 65 years. Construction is anticipated to commence spring of 2013. Soldier On has completed a similar project in Pittsfield that won a "Door Knocker" award from HUD.

Peg brought up the home repair funding formerly available at the Senior Center. Councilor Tacy was one of the vendors who supported and worked as a contractor on this program. Councilor Dwight stated that this was not money that this committee has discretion over. The reason he stated that, is that

if Councilor Tacy is a contractor for these allotments, it's not like he's voting on the money, there is no conflict there. What the Committee is deciding is what's left over, what is given out to Social Service Programing. There are several organizations that may be able to make use of that CDBG funding in the future but there may be no funding available in the future for this effort. Councilor LaBarge stated how great this program was and that it is a shame that the program is not funded anymore because so many could use the help now.

Councilor Marianne LaBarge asked Peg when the interviewing packets would be ready. Peg responded by the end of February, and she would deliver them, Councilor LaBarge told her they would pick them up at City Hall.

6. Peg mentioned that Lynn Wallace, Chair of the Housing Partnership and Audrey Easter, who is the new Vice-Chair of the Housing Partnership are booked for our Committee for the month on May 20, 2013.
7. City Councilor Marianne LaBarge, Chair, talked about the agenda for the Month of March 2013:
8. Public Comment: No Public Comment
9. NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business
10. ADJOURN: 6:00 pm. Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Eugene Tacy and seconded by Council President Bill Dwight. Vote was Unanimous.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2013 at 5:00 pm.

Submitted by,
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge