

City of Clearwater

Main Library - Council Chambers
100 N. Osceola Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33755



Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 9, 2024

9:00 AM

Main Library - Council Chambers

Neighborhood and Affordable Housing Advisory Board

Roll Call

Present 7 - Chair Robyn Fiel, Vice Chair Lindsay Dicus-Harrison, Board Member Camille Hebing, Board Member David Harder, Board Member Linda Byars, Board Member Charessa Doty, and Board Member Christine Bond

Also Present – Jesus Niño - Interim Economic Development & Housing Director, and Rosemarie Call - City Clerk

To provide continuity for research, items are listed in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

Unapproved

1. Call to Order – Chair Fiel

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

The Chair introduced and welcomed new members Christine Bond and Charessa Doty to the Board.

2. Approval of Minutes

2.1 Approve the May 14, 2024, NAHAB Meeting Minutes

Board Member Hebing moved to approve the May 14, 2024, NAHAB meeting minutes. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

3. Citizens to be Heard Regarding Items Not on the Agenda

Beth Davis encouraged NAHAB to ask the City Council to include a separate Housing Director or a Housing Liaison in the budget and to allocate general revenue funds for housing in the North Greenwood CRA.

Kathleen Beckman supported separating the Economic Development & Housing department into two departments and expressed concerns with the anti-camping legislation that goes into effect on October 1, 2024. She encouraged the Board to be more active and to advocate for code changes that support missing middle housing and accessory dwelling units.

4. New Business Items

4.1 Recommend City Council approval of the City of Clearwater's FY2024/2025 Annual Action Plan, which is the fifth and final Action Plan of the FY2020/2021 - FY2024/2025 Consolidated Plan, to implement the goals and objectives set forth in the Consolidated Plan and authorize the appropriate officials to enter into agreements with HUD and organizations approved for funding, together with authorization to execute administrative adjustments to same as needed.

On July 16, 2020, City Council approved the 2020/2021 - 2024/2025 Consolidated Plan (Consolidated Plan) identifying the city's goals and objectives with respect to the city's administration of HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program funds. Under the Consolidated Plan, the City is required by US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to create and implement a plan each year to identify the sources and uses of these funds for housing, community programs, and economic development. This plan, referred to as the Annual Action Plan, provides HUD with the City's Housing Division budget and proposed expenditures based on the entitlement funds and estimated program income that the City will receive in the upcoming fiscal year to meet the goals and objectives established in the Consolidated Plan.

Funds will be used to develop viable communities and sustain existing ones. In addition, the funds will be used to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing to assist extremely low- to moderate-income households. This year's Annual Action Plan allocates federal funds to provide housing opportunities to extremely low- to moderate-income households for new and existing homes, construction and/or renovation of public facilities, and to fund public services programs.

The Annual Action Plan serves as a budget for planned projects and identifies unallocated funds available for additional project(s) throughout the budget year. Staff requests authorization to make administrative adjustments during the budget year to fund additional project(s), including shifting funds between projects within budgetary segments.

The FY2024/2025 Annual Action Plan is due to HUD on August 16, 2024. All organizations that will be receiving an allocation will have agreements prepared and executed by October 1, 2024. Staff performs compliance monitoring with funded organizations on an annual basis.

On June 5, a notice of 30-day comment period and public hearings was published in the Tampa Bay Times. On July 9, 2024, the City's Neighborhood and Affordable Housing Advisory Board (NAHAB) hosted the 1st of the 2 required public hearings and passed a motion recommending City Council approval of the FY2024/2025 Annual Action Plan.

Grant Application Process for CDBG Program

The City partners with several non-profit agencies to implement the goals and objectives established in the Consolidated Plan. To obtain these partners, the

City annually publishes in February a Notice of Funding Availability in the local newspaper and on its website. This notice informs the public of the resources the City will make available and the eligible uses of those resources. It also informs them of the 30-day application period for requesting funds. The applications were due on March 15, 2024. The city received 32 completed and qualified applications.

A Technical Review Committee (TRC) comprised of a professional in the social service and grants community, a member of the NAHAB, a representative of the Homeless Leadership Alliance, and the City Clerk reviewed and ranked the applications. Applicants were provided an opportunity to present their proposed projects at the April 9, 2024, NAHAB meeting. City Housing staff also reviewed each application to ensure it met HUD's baseline requirements. With guidance from the TRC and NAHAB and based on available funding, City staff prepared recommended funding allocations. The NAHAB met on May 14, 2024, and approved the recommended allocations. NAHAB approval is subject to City Council approval of the Annual Action Plan.

Recommended CDBG Grant Allocations (Competitive)

The City may allocate up to 15% (\$141,072) of its CDBG entitlement funds for Public Services activities. This year the city received thirteen requests for funding subject to the 15% cap. Staff recommends allocation of funding based on TRC scoring. Requested funding from the three highest-ranked applicants combined narrowly exceeded the \$141,072 cap. The staff recommendation is to distribute available Public Service funds to these three organizations.

The city received twelve requests for funding of Public Facilities improvements. The TRC reviewed each application and recommended funding of the four highest scoring projects. Staff is recommending funding of all eligible components of these four requests (plus project delivery costs paid by the city including inspection fees, environmental review record and other fees). The total staff-recommended allocation for the four projects is \$448,080. These investments will help daily operations of each public service provider with improved facility functionality, efficiency, and safety features.

Other Recommended Allocations (Non-Competitive)

Staff recommends funding of the following additional activities/programs:

- Small business/microenterprise, childcare, and façade improvement activities (\$490,560),
- New Construction, Rehabilitation, Purchase Assistance (f/k/a Down Payment Assistance), Tenant Based Rental Assistance and Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) set aside funds (\$6,075,506)
- Homeownership Education & Counseling (\$55,000)
- Property Acquisition & Demolition (\$100,000)
- Program administration (\$247,608)

BACKGROUND:

Anticipated Resources

In FY2024-2025, the City will receive \$940,482 in entitlement funds for the CDBG Program and \$400,222 in entitlement funds for the HOME Program. The City is also reprogramming: \$4,325,451 in prior year HOME entitlement and program income funding; \$172,000 in anticipated FY2024-2025 HOME program income; \$374,797 in prior year CDBG entitlement and program income funding; \$11,448 in anticipated FY2024-2025 CDBG program income; \$1,047,867 in CDBG Revolving Loan Program funds for housing infill and rehabilitation; and \$230,560 in Revolving Loan Program funds for economic development activities.

Funds provided through the CDBG Program may be used for housing, community and economic development, public services and facilities, acquisition, relocation, and administration. Funds provided through the HOME Program are limited to housing-related activities and administration.

Staff will present this item at the City Council Meeting scheduled for August 1, 2024.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

Objective 2.4 - Supports equitable housing programs that promote household stability and reduces the incidence of homelessness within Clearwater.

Community Development Coordinator Dania Perez provided a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Perez said staff received two comments regarding LIFT and read them into the record (see pages 9-18).

In response to questions, Ms. Perez said, since the last board meeting, We Care spent their allocated funds. She said not using the allocated funds does impact scoring. Housing Coordinator Terry Malcolm-Smith said most of the households planned to receive assistance in the action plan are via homebuyer education programs. Staff's goal is to assist those in the very low area median income.

Staff was requested to provide information regarding the number of households actually assisted in the 80% and 120% AMI categories.

One individual suggested that consideration be given to modeling the Tallahassee housing dashboard, expressed concerns with the allocation of CDBG funds to LIFT School, which is a private school, and suggested allocating general fund revenues to supplement the

PROSPERA allocation.

One individual supported using some of the carry over monies to supplement rental assistance.

In response to a question, Ms. Perez said the CDBG public services program requires recipients to be a non-profit. The LIFT School is a 501c(3) non-profit organization.

Board Member Harder moved to recommend City Council approval of the City of Clearwater's FY2024/2025 Annual Action Plan, which is the fifth and final Action Plan of the FY2020/2021 - FY2024/2025 Consolidated Plan, to implement the goals and objectives set forth in the Consolidated Plan and authorize the appropriate officials to enter into agreements with HUD and organizations approved for funding, together with authorization to execute administrative adjustments to same as needed. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

5. Director's Report

Interim Economic Development and Housing Director Jesus Niño said staff will ensure the Board is invited to groundbreakings and ribbon cuttings for affordable housing projects. He said he is working with staff to identify funding and partnership opportunities and building teams to tackle housing projects, initiatives, and data collection. He said the CRA will be considering a residential improvement grant program that, if approved, would benefit individuals in the North Greenwood area who are in the 120% or below AMI. The grant program is a matching grant and allows individuals to use volunteer services as the match.

In response to questions, Mr. Niño said he is also the Clearwater Downtown Development Board (DDB) Executive Director. The DDB is a special taxing district and most of the revenue is used to promote the Downtown through events. He said staff is looking at other ways the DDB's revenue could be used.

6. Board Members to be Heard

Board Member Byars suggested that more effort be given to increasing citizen participation. She said many citizens are not aware of the programs available via the City and suggested holding education

programs on downpayment assistance, rehabilitation, and acquisition/new construction with other agencies at different city facilities. She requested information regarding the 30 available properties identified in the plan and the restrictions associated with accessory dwelling units.

Board Member Hebing said the Board last year discussed in detail the Live Local Act, which impacted how commercial parcels could be used for affordable housing in certain areas; she requested an update on the inventory of potential affordable housing sites, under the Live Local Act, within Clearwater city limits. She said there may be an opportunity to identify specific parcels for affordable housing and market the sites for affordable housing developers. She said Zachary White, HEP Executive Vice President, passed away last week and offered condolences to his family.

The Board observed a moment of silence in honor of Mr. White.

Vice Chair Dicus-Harrison suggested a tour of past and upcoming housing projects for the new board members.

Board Member Harder said he was encouraged to see additional funds were allocated in the next fiscal year for the senior owner-occupied and owner-occupied programs. He said these programs are critical for the many families who are one mistake away from losing their home.

In response to a comment, Ms. Malcolm-Smith said funds are available for demolition/reconstruction, but it is a delicate matter as staff works with the families to ensure property taxes and property insurance are not barriers to housing. Staff is considering an educational session that informs the community owners how to maintain their home, wills, probate, and other similar topics. She said there is funding to hold those sessions, but the issue is gauging interest to attend.

Board Member Bond said it is important for individuals in the community to know and understand the services that are available. She said Saint Vincent de Paul has eight conferences in upper Pinellas County and the organization provides \$50,000 per month for rent and utility assistance and furniture. The organization is seeing many individuals who have been living in mobile homes who are at risk of losing their homes due to lack of maintenance.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Attest:

Chair
Neighborhood & Affordable Housing Advisory Board

City Clerk