



Roxann Wedegartner
Mayor

City of
GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

**COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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Minutes of CDBG PUBLIC HEARING
January 26, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
Remote via Zoom

MJ Adams (Director of Community Development) opened the public hearing at 6:30pm with the following people in attendance:

Anna Oltman (Community Development Administrator)

Christian LaPlante (Grant Program Assistant)

Nancy Hazard

Judith Roberts

Goerge Touloumtzis

Amos Johnson

Joshua Freund

Kim Boas

Deb McLaughlin

Louise Amyot

Keleigh BenEzra

Alyssa Larose

Robert Williford

Joannah Whitney

Rose J

Crispin Youngberg

Amy Clarke

Kennedy Strakose-Hagen

MJ read the public hearing notice and gave background information on CDBG and Greenfield's mini-entitlement status. Greenfield receives funding every year, typically \$825,000. Downtown Greenfield was designated as a slum and blight district. This year's grant is due March 2023 and is a double grant for 2022 and 2023 amounting to \$1.65 million.

Accept community input on Greenfield's 2022-2023 Mini-Entitlement Program application

MJ stated that \$200,000 is planned to be allocated to the Wells Street shelter project. Shelter is expanding with additional units. Funding could be used for relocation during the project.

Second project is sidewalks – reconstruction including ADA. \$200,000

Third project is Main Street infrastructure design and engineering. If Main Street is being dug up for roadway improvements, should also be doing underground infrastructure. Plan is to do both projects concurrently.

Fourth project is design work for Court Square. Community previously did a design process in 2017. Plan is to do design work this summer and fall and potentially do construction in summer 2024. Would hope to complete before Main Street project. Total between Main Street and Court square designs \$375,000-\$500,000

Other part of application is social services. Received 9 applications from RFP and Mayor is currently reviewing recommendations. \$250,000-\$300,000

Administrative budget is \$360,000 including a historic survey.

Numbers are not finalized as of yet.

Comments:

Nancy Hazard – what are exact figures for budget items?

Judith Roberts – brought along student to speak from Literacy Project

Amos Johnson – likes idea of Wells Street shelter expansion. Literacy Project has had great impact. Was lead poisoned as a kid. 1.5 years sober. At the Literacy Project he has learned to reset negative mental feedback pathways. Has successfully passed HiSet and now enjoys math thanks to the Literacy Project.

Joshua Freund – dropout rate for high school students has increased, Literacy Project has closed the gap for when students leave GHS and TFHS.

Louise Amyot – wondering how clash of projects happening all at once has been thought through

MJ Adams – there is a lot good things happening and need to be mindful of how people are impacted. Need to give lead time. Also need to get funding at the appropriate time, so projects are shovel ready.

Crispin Youngberg – interested to know if downtown plans will be linked up with other projects downtown, namely making Main Street and the rest of the town bike friendly

MJ Adams – complete streets program through the Planning and Development Department is the place to look. February 9 is public meeting for Main Street design.

Keleigh BenEzra – director of housing at CSO. Greenfield has limited CDBG funds and is thankful that funds are being used for shelter.

Joannah Whitney – entering a time in history when people with disabilities are being acknowledged. Encourage all projects to take people with disabilities into account and go beyond just ADA requirements. Will have to do things over if not done right up front.

Debra McLaughlin – coordinator of opioid task force. Thankful for role city has been playing in housing like the Wells Street project.

Peg Hall – thankful for online option. In favor of sidewalks. Yes on any housing items including Wells Street. Other grant money cannot be used for the relocation like CDBG can.

Amy Clarke – seeing funds being used for temporary shelter is great. Would like to see tents where fire department currently is be repurposed for housing. Has not parallel parked not one time since getting her license.

Accept community input on the allocation of Program Income funds to complete design work for ADA improvement upgrades to Greenfield City Hall.

Program income funds are funds previously paid out to mostly property owners that are then repaid back to the city. Not part of the upcoming grant but applied to previous grant. ADA improvements are an eligible expense. There is a state earmark for ADA improvements at City Hall which would need architectural plans for improvements. \$25,000 is the estimated amount at this time.

Comments:

Joannah Whitney – thrilled that funds are being used to look at City Hall as the building needs work. Would be an interesting opportunity to see that historic buildings can meet 21st century social values.

Keleigh BenEzra – agrees with Joannah

Update on CDBG activities funded through the 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 awards

MJ gave an update on the grants. Two public hearings are required while a grant is being applied for and when it is running.

2018 funded several activities including public facilities, commercial improvements, housing rehab, and social services. All complete except for one housing rehab case. For housing rehab can spend up to \$40,000 per unit which was coupled with Gateways Housing Rehab funds. Working with compost collective to supply housing to apprentices.

2019 funded housing rehab, commercial improvements (including ADA), sidewalks, design and engineering for west street water and sewer, GCET infrastructure buildout, and social services. Only open activity is the final piece for GCET to get to Leyden Woods. Also able to supply leftover housing rehab funds to Greenfield Housing Authority.

2020 all activities are complete except for Downtown Revitalization Plan update.

CV special CDBG grant provided microenterprise assistance to local businesses (\$650,000 to 47 small businesses) all loans have been forgiven in entirety.

2021 funded West Street improvements which are substantially complete, social services.

Comments:

Joshua Freund – GCET expansion to Leyden Woods helped students connect during covid.

MJ stated that MJ, Christian, Anna are available at 324 Main Street to answer questions. Thanked everyone for feedback.

MJ closed the public hearing at 7:25pm

