



City of
GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

**COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Roxann Wedegartner
Mayor

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Minutes of CDBG PUBLIC HEARING
July 22, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.
City Hall, Room 203, 14 Court Square

Lindsay Rowe (CDA) opened the public hearing at 5:36 with the following people in attendance:

Lindsay Rowe, CEDD
Philip Elmer, City Council and SGIC Member
George Touloumtzis, Planning Board and SGIC Member
MJ Adams, CEDD and SGIC Member
Carole Collins, Energy Director and SGIC Member
Hannah Rechtschaffen, SGIC Member
Nancy Hazard, SGIC Member
Laurie Didonato, SGIC Clerk
Donna Festing, resident of Greenfield
Sandy Kosterman, resident of Greenfield
Charles Kosterman, resident of Greenfield
Ellen Thompson, resident of Greenfield
Sean Thomas, resident of Greenfield
Ryan Whitney, resident of Greenfield
Stephanie Duclos, resident of Greenfield
David Louis, resident of Greenfield

LR read notice of public hearing (see above), explained the historical origin of CDBG funds, explained that Greenfield is a Mini-Entitlement Community receiving State allocation of CDBG funds. Usually about \$825K/year. Since 2008, the City has used over \$11 million in CDBG funds to support projects and programs to support low and moderate income people. SGIC serves as our CDBG Advisory Board and receives quarterly updates of CDBG activities and hosts the CDBG public hearings.

Greenfield has submitted to DHCD that we are intending to request funds for West St Phase II and social services. LR explained history and background of West St Project - it is to satisfy Greenfield's Inflow/Infiltration DEP Consent Decree. CDBG19 used for design; CDBG20 funds phase 1 (section east of Elm St) – (cost of phase 1 is \$617K-came in substantially under cost estimate). Seeking CDBG21 to fund phase 2 (west of Elm St).

Recommendations to Mayor for social services to be funded; not finalized yet.

Other items listed in notice of public hearing: we listed a range as we had to publish the hearing notice 2 weeks ago and final decision on what submitting for CDBG was not yet finalized.

The other items listed including Court Square redesign, housing rehabilitation, commercial improvements will not be requested in our CDBG21 application.

Open for questions/comments/feedback

Ellen Thompson - don't do Court Square

Ryan Whiteny – asked about cost for Fiske Ave –heard it was \$800K; MJ Adams shared the prelim cost estimate is \$282K to be funded with MassDOT Shared Streets –not CDBG

Stephanie – expressed concerns about disability access to Town Hall with the Court Square pilot project

Phil Elmer - suggests folks explore running for City Council – election this fall

Sandy – Court Square pilot make it hard to get to Town Hall, what about ADA; she believes it's ok to block Court Square for celebrations but not permanently

Phil Elmer – Court Square Pilot has been a failure – not used very much

Other comments – have seen folks at Court Square – need to give it sometime –why aren't we using pavilion at Energy Park –

Donna Festing - how are people notified of these public hearings?

LR – all CDBG hearing have to be posted in the paper two weeks in advance, additionally they're on the City's board in Town Hall and on the calendar on the City's website.

Stephanie – can CDBG be used for helping the homeless? MJA – yes eligible expense; State has resources to provide homeless shelters and services; City works with providers and agencies to coordinate services.

Stephanie – concerned about flooding on Chapman

Moved on to present update of other CDBG activities:

Lindsay Rowe presented the update and answered questions along the way.

FY18 Activities:

1) Housing Rehabilitation/Code Compliance

- a. Code Compliance - During this quarter, the code compliance assistance included some follow up with some property owners and banks on vacant/abandoned/distressed properties. The next major step is to assist the city with implementing 40U which will enhance the City's enforcement of the Vacant, Foreclosed, and Abandoned Property registration regulations.

Question was asked about these regulations. Lindsay Rowe explained the City's registration regulations; MJA explained receivership process.

Question about who funds projects in receivership. MJA explained the contractor fronts the funds and places a lien on the property.

- b. Substantial Housing Rehabilitation: Multi-Family – The City added this activity to leverage Gateway Housing Rehabilitation funds. Two projects, representing 5 units were identified. Both have had lead and HQS inspections. One has been bid and is waiting on guidance from the Gateway Housing program before closing.

Question was asked if this was like LIHTC. MJA explained that no, this was not the same.

Question about if this was a grant. LR explained that they are loans with forgiveness. The 18 program forgives the lead rehabilitation portion of the loan, as many landlords would not take the extra expense of deleading, and it increases the number of lead safe units in the City.

2) Commercial Improvements

- a. Sign and Façade Program - The City moved one project through to completion and had two applications this quarter. The City is waiting on the PNF from MassHistoric before moving the other two projects forward.

Question about if this was a grant. LR explained that they are liens.

FY19 Activities:

- 1) Housing Rehab Program – Looking to pair remaining funds with Gateway Housing funding for multifamily rehab.
- 2) Social Services
 - a. Center for Self Reliance: Food Pantry – partial quarter - served 627 Greenfield residents (369 households); distributed 62,685 pounds of food; average of 29 meals per person per month. - COMPLETED

FY20 Activities

- 1) Public Facilities /Infrastructure Program Delivery:
 - a. West Street: Staff worked with DPW staff to contract and start pre-construction activities for West Street construction. Contractor plans to begin in July 2021.
- 2) Social Services:
 - a. Center for Self Reliance – This initial shortened quarter the Center served 544 Greenfield residents representing 303 Greenfield households. The Center distributed 41,011 pounds of food. Those individuals received an average of 33 pounds of food per person per month and an average of 28 meals per person per month. This quarter the Center distributed 14,113 pounds of fresh produce, 34% of total distribution.
 - b. LifePath - Continued the congregate meals program and served 696 meals in a “Grab and Go” style due to the ongoing pandemic.

CDBG-CV Activities:

This is an additional award of CDBG funds through the CARES Act to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City took the lead on a regional request for \$600,000 to offer income-eligible microenterprises forgivable to Franklin County businesses (minus Rowe, Monroe, and Ashfield) to mitigate COVID losses. The program received 63 applications funding and has so far approved 37 applications; expending \$389,091.83 total. Most activity was in advertising the additional funding opportunity and issuing awards amendments to applicants who could demonstrate additional need.

Sean Thomas asked if there is a list of which businesses received funding? LR did not have one on hand and will look into if this is public record.

Dave Lewis asked about availability of GCET at Weldon. LR said the Weldon was beyond the scope of the CDBG grant. LR noted the desire for residents to have more access to broadband.

Folks expressed appreciation to LR for all the information and her patience.

Public Hearing adjourned at 6:56pm.