

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
(CDAAC)

November 8, 2018

*Minutes*

**Community Room, City Hall  
241 West South Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007**

Members Present: Bill Wells, Dana Underwood, Tami Rey, Margaret Wilson, Annie Sprague

Members Absent: Amina Shakir, Candice Howell, Jennette Tarver, Ken Nichols

City Staff: Dorla Bonner, Community Investment Manager; Venessa Collins-Smith, Compliance Specialist; Beth Cheeseman, Code Administration Clerk/Cashier

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Margaret Wilson (with permission from the Vice Chair, Ms. Annie Sprague) called the meeting to order at approximately 6:38pm.

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Cheeseman conducted roll call of CDAAC members and determined quorum existed.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Ms. Margaret Wilson, supported by Mr. Bill Wells, moved to accept the November 8, 2018. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Ms. Dana Underwood, supported by Ms. Margaret Wilson, motioned to approve the September 20, 2018 minutes. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed.**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Homelessness and ESG**

Ms. Sprague asked how the process works for the disbursement of ESG funds. She thought the funds went through CDAAC at one time, and now they do not.

Ms. Bonner stated they were distributed through CDAAC years ago. She said approximately 6-8 years ago a federal mandate was created that said ESG funds needed to go through the Continuum of Care. Ms. Bonner explained there is an application process for those funds and the Continuum of Care is the organization which makes the decision of which applications get funded. If the allocations committee decides money comes from ESG, then the City manages it.

Ms. Sprague and Ms. Wilson asked for more information about the Continuum of Care and the ESG funds. Ms. Bonner let them know the Continuum of Care is a combination of people who fund homeless activities and providers. She said there are two committees – one for allocations and another with mostly providers. The Continuum of Care staff is the persons who organize, submit, and do the follow-up for ESG funds. Ms. Bonner shared that the Continuum of Care's geographic area is the county, but the ESG money stays within the City. She said the Continuum of Care gives millions of dollars to various organizations, for example: Catholic Charities, Kalamazoo County Mental Health, Y, and they give money for homelessness prevention, and rapid rehousing. Ms. Collins-Smith shared that last year Catholic Charities and HRI were funded.

Ms. Sprague expressed interest in attending a Continuum of Care meeting. Ms. Bonner suggested she call LISC to find out the schedule.

Ms. Sprague asked why HRI didn't receive funding in 2018. Ms. Bonner stated that the reporting process is so staff intensive/administrative heavy, there was not enough money in the CBDG administrative fund. She said Ms. Collins-Smith absorbed that job and the workload was too heavy.

Ms. Sprague stated that she hears little things in community – people wondering about the management of different funds. She gave the example of the City receiving Housing First funds. Ms. Bonner shared that the City does not receive Housing First funds. She cautioned them throughout the meeting to be careful with what they hear in the community. She encouraged them to ask questions because there is a lot of misinformation.

Ms. Wilson sought clarification that the majority of the work of addressing homelessness goes through the Continuum of Care and is at a county level. She said the ESG funds come to the

City and are given to the Continuum of Care. Ms. Wilson stated that the City only acts for a fiduciary for the ESG monies and the county is dealing with the rest.

Ms. Bonner clarified that the Continuum of Care is a non-governmental entity. It is run and staffed by LISC. Its service area is Kalamazoo County, but it is supposed to be an independent group. LISC was the volunteer to step up and pay a large portion of salaries, but they don't direct the Continuum of Care's activities. Ms. Bonner said organizations who work with homelessness have to put in an application to the Continuum of Care and they send it to the MSHDA. When they do a budget the ESG money is a line item. Ms. Bonner stated they did not get ESG money this last year. She said the City came in about 1% under the calculation.

Ms. Wilson asked about the Continuum of Care being an elected body and being accountable at the state level. Ms. Bonner responded that they are under MSHDA and they don't have an immediate elected body. Continuum of Care has a couple of governing bodies within it – one that goes through the grants and the other is more programmatic.

Ms. Bonner offered to have Ben, Continuum of Care Coordinator, come and talk to CDAAC members.

Ms. Bonner shared that, under the Continuum of Care, the community is looking at looking at how to bring a Housing First model. She said people don't realize how expensive the Housing First model is. It says we will put you in this house, put all the services you need right by you all the time, and hope you participate. Ms. Bonner said there is always a trade-off – if something is more expensive, you serve less people.

Ms. Bonner stated that they met with people of color, mothers, and single women with children and tomorrow they have a meeting with providers. She said they broke the homeless into groups. They met twice as groups and are now taking that information to providers. Ms. Bonner said next week there will be a meeting for resident homeless people collectively.

Ms. Bonner said one of the things they need to tell folks, is that homelessness is not an issue that is going to be solved next week. She said it is physically and financially impossible to have housing in place by winter. Unfortunately, being practical and realistic is being framed as not caring, wasting money and not moving. Ms. Bonner stated that some people say to use money gifted to the City. She said it is worth having conversations with the givers, but that you have to respect their wishes.

Ms. Sprague asked if the meetings with homeless were open to the public. Ms. Bonner said they are open meetings.

Ms. Rey asked where they find the homeless to participate in the meetings. Ms. Bonner said they went to almost every park, Ministry with Community and the Gospel mission. She commented that the needs of the homeless are varied – it is not a one size fits all.

Ms. Underwood made a point that Kalamazoo is a generous community and a lot has been done on the prevention side that is not talked about. She thinks some of the media makes the citizens

out as uncaring. Ms. Underwood stated that there is so much being done that isn't being talked about.

Ms. Sprague asked for examples of what has the City done to help with homelessness. Ms. Bonner responded that they give money to organizations which help. Some of the services are rental assistance, houses built for low-income people, lease purchase programs, down payment assist, roof repair, critical repairs. Ms. Underwood added handicap accessibility, and the community has food banks and after school care.

Ms. Collins-Smith stated that the ESG funds are for shelter operations and homeless prevention. In response to Ms. Sprague's question, she stated that homeless prevention includes those who are not homeless, but one step away – in the process of being evicted. They are able to apply for funds to keep them in an apartment. Ms. Bonner shared that homeless prevention includes doing eviction diversion and rapid rehousing and then there is money for sustaining housing. She encouraged Ms. Sprague to send her an email and tell us exactly what you want and we will tell you what we know and who is doing what. Ms. Collins-Smith said they can break down the federal funds that are coming in and let them know exactly where the money is going.

Ms. Bonner stated that the City does a poor job of telling the story. Ms. Sprague and Ms. Wilson agreed that they want to understand/know more so they can be better at telling the story. Ms. Bonner told them she applied to be a part of a program through Economic Development from MSHDA to come and help tell your story.

Ms. Collins-Smith stated that it is imperative, as members of CDAAC, they are clear in telling their story and are favorable towards the City. She reminded them that they represent the City and CDAAC and any negative language and/or negative people makes the City and themselves look bad. To clarify, Ms. Collins-Smith requested that if anyone is sitting on the Committee and has issues, to please make sure they have a good understanding of the issues. They are on the Committee to make sure everything is being driven appropriately. She stated they get the money and bring it to CDAAC. CDAAC then makes the decisions and she takes those to the City Commission. Ms. Bonner and Ms. Collins-Smith indicated that if Committee members need to know something, they can come and make sure they've been given the correct information. Ms. Bonner stated that she appreciates the questions they were asking.

Ms. Wilson stated that she feels it is important to understand how the City works with the County. Ms. Underwood also stated that she thought housing issues were handled at a county-wide level. Ms. Bonner stated that in the past they have tried to have inter-agency agreements for the City and County to participate together and it hasn't worked.

Ms. Underwood brought up the millage, saying it was for housing for the homeless. She said the first year the money was used for a study. Ms. Bonner said the study identified homeless children. She said for the size of Kalamazoo, the numbers were as high as larger cities. She also stated that the definition of homelessness has changed – if you are couch surfing, you are not considered homeless.

### **The Future of CDAAC**

Ms. Sprague said someone from GARE told her that CDAAC would be decommissioned.

Ms. Bonner stated that as of right now, she doesn't see CDAAC going anywhere. She said that they initially believed that FFE, Shared Prosperity and LISC would duplicate the efforts of CDAAC. However, nothing is changing very fast.

LISC received a lot of the money to do housing, but they are not doing rehab or emergency repairs. Ms. Bonner stated they have 4 buckets of money - new builds, roof repairs; new and sustained single family; new and sustained multi-family. She said LISC is not doing what CDAAC has been doing through Community Homeworks and Senior Services, and they don't include lease purchase.

CDAAC will still do repairs; lease purchase; affordable housing; they will possibly still do habitat, youth development, homelessness - if they get ESG money, and neighborhood enhancement. They are trying to find out what Shared Prosperity will do. Ms. Bonner mentioned the possibility of training and she mentioned that a lot of communities only do infrastructure with HUD funds.

Ms. Underwood said they had money to fund everyone. She believes that can be a bad thing if they don't feel the organization is up to the task of what they are promising to do. She asked about thinking creatively about the types of projects to get different/more agencies. Ms. Collins-Smith stated that can be done when they are developing the applications.

Ms. Bonner commented that they keep talking within the city about how to elevate the small organizations doing good work. Ms. Underwood said that funding a minimum of \$50,000 puts smaller organizations in a bind when they don't have the organizational capacity to handle the large amounts. Ms. Bonner said that is where SPK will come in because it is unrestricted. Ms. Wilson reminded the Committee members that because HUD reporting requirements are so high, the small organizations can't handle that.

Ms. Wilson asked if some of the HUD money could go to City projects. Ms. Bonner said it already does – funding code enforcement in CBDG areas, public safety. She said they are thinking about looking into Public Services activities they could fund.

### **Subcommittees**

Ms. Sprague asked who was on the nominating and application committees. Ms. Rey stated that no one responded to her email. It was agreed that City staff would look at previous meeting minutes and find that information.

### **COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBERS' REPORTS/STAFF UPDATES**

Ms. Bonner stated that Shared Prosperity is in phase of making their comprehensive plan. She invited CDAAC members to join the teams. There are three teams: Strong Families, Children & Youth, and Good Jobs. Ms. Bonner stated she will send out a schedule. She requested they tell Mr. Kevin Ford if they would like to join a team. Ms. Bonner believes it will be really important as CDAAC goes forward to see how things go together and how they can interact. She said HUD is not a funding stream of SPK because of the focus of the population they serve. Ms. Bonner said she could send them copies of the SPK plan, but recommended they get it online and find the objectives and goals from the initial meetings.

Ms. Bonner stated they are trying to do place-based programming. She shared that LISC is thinking of focusing on the empty lots and vacant houses on Ada Street as their housing projects for 2019. Ms. Bonner indicated they are trying to figure out what they can do, for example sidewalks and driveways. She reported that any proposal that goes to the organizing committee will need to be taken back to the community to ask them if it makes sense, if it is what they said they needed and if they will use it if it comes to their neighborhood.

Ms. Bonner referenced a fourth section called Cross-Cutting – where the GARE Grant comes in to try to fight racism. She said discrimination and racism cuts through all of those goals. They have the grant through GARE to get information for housing. She also stated that the Michigan Department of Civil Rights gave them \$10,000 to do cultural competency training in government.

Ms. Bonner congratulated Ms. Rey for a very successful freedom fund banquet.

Ms. Bonner and Ms. Collins-Smith said they are waiting for Caper to be approved, and they are still waiting for HUD to release the money.

Ms. Bonner also informed CDAAC members that KNHS and the City wrote an application for a \$1.9 million grant to HUD to address lead in housing. The requirement is to have school-aged children in the house or someone who keeps children a certain percentage of time. Ms. Bonner said they wrote that they could do 300 houses and conduct a training program to train people to do that remediation. Children in the homes have to be tested, but do not have to test positive. They did include a small percentage of rentals.

The Planning Division will have a new secretary soon.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Liz, student from Western Michigan University, introduced herself. She said she volunteers with the City of Kalamazoo through her Business Ethics class.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Margaret Wilson, supported by Mr. Bill Wells, moved to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken and passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:01pm.**

Submitted by: Beth Cheeseman Dated: 4/24/19  
(Recording Secretary)

Reviewed by: Debi Bonner Dated: 4/24/19  
(Staff Liaison)

Approved by: Patricia Ray Dated: 4-24-19  
(CDAAC Chair/Vice Chair)