

APPROVED 1/11/05

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING**

APRIL 21, 2004

PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL

6:30 P.M.

Present: Chairman Bob Layton, Vice Chairman Cicero Lewis, Jean Pecunies, Lynne Langley, William Thorpe, Russ Van Billiard, Nancy Emerson

Absent: Paul Staples (called), Dani Rooney

Staff: Cindy Hayden, Deputy City Manager; David Moore, Program Manager

Chairman Layton opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and took up the first item of business, which was approval of both the public hearing and regular meeting minutes of March 24, 2004. Ms. Langley made one editorial correction. Vice Chairman Lewis moved that the minutes be accepted as amended and Ms. Langley seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Van Billiard abstained because he was not present for the two meetings.

Chairman Layton then turned the meeting over to Ms. Hayden to discuss items related to the CDBG program. She provided the CAC with a recent article highlighting the Atlantic Heights neighborhood and noted that its author, J. Dennis Robinson, was himself a resident of the neighborhood. The article appeared in the March/April 2004 edition of Accent Magazine.

Ms. Hayden also provided the CAC with a slightly revised budget for FY 2004-2005. The new budget was necessary because of a clerical error affecting the general administration line item. This line item increased by approximately \$10,000 and it was compensated for by decreasing the contingency line item by the same amount. In another change, the administration of the Portsmouth Economic Development Loan Program was altered to reflect an increase in PELP staff hours. The funds to make up for this increase were taken from the amount available for PEDLP loans in FY 2004-2005. Ms. Hayden said that the CAC would consider the Annual Plan and the revised proposed budget during the public hearing. Since the public comment period extends until April 29, Ms. Hayden said that any comments received by the department at that time would be forwarded to the CAC for its consideration.

Ms. Hayden reported to the CAC that she and David Moore had met with Lenore Bronson-Weiss who is President of the Frank Jones Farm neighborhood association. The Frank Jones Farm neighborhood is situated in a new CDBG eligible tract where at least 51% of the households earn low- and moderate-incomes. Ms. Bronson-Weiss was interested in learning more about what this designation could mean for the neighborhood. In the meeting, Ms. Hayden explained the CDBG program and some of the projects underway within the tract. CDBG funds have already been expended to fund a feasibility study, which assessed options for improving accessible routes of travel from Betty's Dream to Woodbury Avenue and its intersection at the Market Basket shopping center. Betty's Dream, a foundation for the physically handicapped, is located within the new

eligible tract. Recommendations from this study were incorporated in the City's neighborhood road resurfacing project, which is being completed in the area and is funded by City of Portsmouth general funds. Ms. Hayden reminded the board that CDBG loan and grant funds are planned to be used in the rehabilitation of the 24-unit facility on Longmeadow Lane. Ms. Hayden explained the timetable for the budget process to Ms. Bronson-Weiss and said any ideas the neighborhood had for CDBG funded projects would be brought to the CAC for consideration.

Ms. Hayden also reported that the CDBG program had been monitored by two HUD representatives on Wednesday April 14, 2004. She indicated that the department had not been similarly reviewed in ten years. The monitoring was particularly focused on the eligibility and national objectives targeted for the projects undertaken by the department. The HUD monitors, Roslyn Block and Richard Hatin, also visited Atlantic Heights and Osprey Landing where a large amount of CDBG funds have been targeted over the years. The HUD officials said that the Community Development Department would receive no "findings" as a result of their monitoring and they provided very positive feedback on the Department's procedures and overall performance.

Ms. Hayden also followed up on a question from Mr. Lewis raised at the last CAC meeting regarding funding associated with Mariner's Village. Ms. Hayden said that in 1988 the Housing Trust Fund was established at the Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation (GPCF) for the purpose of meeting the affordable housing needs of low and moderate income residents. Per the terms of an agreement between the City and GPCF, these funds were to be returned to the City in 1998 if they had not been expended for the purpose for which the fund was established. Per mutual agreement between the City and GPCF in 1998, these funds were returned to the City and used to pay down the CDBG Section 108 Osprey Landing redevelopment loan, thereby freeing up CDBG funds to be used for other eligible purposes.

Ms. Hayden concluded her update to the CAC and Chairman Layton recognized Mr. Van Billiard for a question. Mr. Van Billiard asked how the general administration cap of 20% is calculated. Ms. Hayden explained that the calculation is 20% of the upcoming year's CDBG grant allocation and the projected program income from loan repayments. Ms. Hayden said that the 20% cap is a very strict requirement and the budget reflects conservative program income estimates.

Ms. Emerson asked how Ms. Hayden's salary affected the administrative cap now that she has been appointed to the position of Deputy City Manager. Ms. Hayden explained that 50% of her salary and benefits are paid for through the City's general fund, and 50% is paid for by CDBG.

Ms. Hayden also discussed a change to the Public Service Agency Grant program eligibility requirements, which the CAC may wish to consider. Currently, any service agency who provides services to Portsmouth residents is eligible for the grant funds. In the past, agencies which do not have places of business in Portsmouth have also applied for funding. Ms. Hayden, noting the increasing demand for the program and the decreasing amount of funding available every year, suggested that the CAC may want to restrict applications to social services who have places of business in Portsmouth from

which they provide services. Ms. Hayden said one factor that was considered in staff deliberations is that there are few or no gaps in services in Portsmouth. Ms. Hayden said that the CAC may not wish to make any changes, but that she wanted to bring it up as the grant round was still fresh in the memories of staff and CAC members.

A discussion ensued and Mr. Thorpe noted that perhaps the committee could require agencies to report to the CAC what percentage of their budgets go to support the Portsmouth clients served. Mr. Thorpe said this would be a way of justifying the expenditure of these funds to services with agencies outside of the City. Ms. Hayden pointed out that the application does ask how many Portsmouth clients are served.

Mr. Thorpe proposed that the CAC accept applications from agencies outside of the City if they provide unique services not available within the City of Portsmouth. Ms. Hayden thanked the CAC for their input and suggested that staff draft language to reflect the CAC's comments and report back to the committee before the next grant round. The committee agreed to consider new language defining eligibility for the program.

Chairman Layton adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.