

APPROVED ON \_\_\_\_\_ April 7, 2005 \_\_\_\_\_

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
CAC MEETING MINUTES**

**MARCH 31, 2005**

**PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL**

**6:00 P.M.**

Present: Chairman Bob Layton, Vice Chairman Cicero Lewis, Dani Rooney, Jean Pecunies, Lynne Langley, Barbara Driscoll, and Stephen Lichtenstein

Absent: William Thorpe, Nancy Emerson (notified staff)

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

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Chairman Layton opened the meeting and moved to the first agenda item, which was approval of the meeting minutes from February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Ms. Driscoll made a revision to the minutes. Ms. Driscoll moved to accept the minutes as amended, it was seconded by Mr. Lewis and was passed unanimously.

Ms. Hayden was then recognized to give an update on the Preble Way and Crescent Way project. Ms. Hayden said that two bids had been received and that Northeast Earth Mechanics of Pittsfield, New Hampshire was the low bidder. She said that work is expected to begin around April 19<sup>th</sup> and that the first phase of construction would extend half of the project length beginning at the Ranger Way end. She said a press release and letter to the residents would be sent in the next week and that the neighborhood association had already been notified.

Chairman Layton then moved on to the next agenda item, which was the selection of the FY 2005-2006 Public Service Agency Grant recipients. Ms. Hayden was recognized to provide some background on the process and to explain the funding scenarios developed by staff and presented to the committee.

Ms. Hayden said that all agencies had submitted applications for eligible activities and worthy programming; not funding any particular agency does not mean the CAC does not support the agency, just that the resources are very limited. She said that the funding limit of \$120,000 is determined by HUD regulations and is not affected by funding recommendation for other projects. She said 24 agencies had requested funding for a total of \$218,390. Ms. Hayden pointed out that if the committee chose to fund the agencies currently funded in the FY 2004-2005 year, then each agency would receive a 10% cut in funding. She also reminded the committee that its decision on funding the agencies would constitute a recommendation to the City Manager. She said that most CAC members had provided input to staff over the last week as to which agencies they wanted to recommend for funding and at what grant level.

Ms. Hayden then began to explain the funding scenarios provided to the committee and developed by staff. Scenario 1 provided funding for each of the currently funded agencies (FY 2004-2005) with a 10% cut, reflecting the decrease in funds available for the program. Scenario 2 provided for funding for all existing agencies, with necessary decreases in funding to accommodate two new programs, including the Dental Center at Families First (\$5,000) and the Portsmouth Housing Authority Foot Care Clinic (\$5,000). Scenario 3 provided for funding for each of the currently funded agencies, plus \$10,000 in funding for New Heights.

Scenario 4 provided grant funding to all of the currently funded agencies, with a 25% funding reduction to each, to permit new programs including, New Heights, Families First (Dental Program), and the Portsmouth Housing Authority (Foot Care Clinic) to be funded.

Ms. Hayden said that several agencies were not shown as being funded in any the scenarios and that this reflected the clear consensus of opinion of CAC members who submitted their recommendations to staff. Those agencies not shown to receive funding included Operation Blessing, Inc., Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, CASA of NH, NH Community Loan fund, NH Small Business Development Center, and NH Legal Assistance. Ms. Hayden said that staff believed it would be appropriate to fund the NH Legal Assistance's (NHLA) Fair Housing Project every other year. Ms. Hayden said CAC members input showed clear support for funding three new agencies including Portsmouth Housing Authority's Foot Care Clinic, the Families First Dental Program, and New Heights.

Mr. Lichtenstein asked if future CDBG funding would likely be similar to this year's funding level. Ms. Hayden said that while initially the federal budget process proposed to eliminate CDBG in the next federal fiscal year, it now seems likely that the CDBG program will remain intact. Ms. Hayden added that a possible formula change affecting all entitlement communities nationally could threaten the amount of funding received by communities in the Northeast. She said, in general, our CDBG entitlement grant has been decreasing even without the current changes being discussed at the federal level. She suggested that the committee may choose to modify the Public Service Agency Grant program next year by granting funds of a set and equal amounts to each agency selected .

Ms. Rooney then said that she would like to see the committee choose not to recommend funding for the Child Advocacy Center. She said funds that were awarded last year produced an informational and training video for the agency. She said that while the work this agency does is very important, it does not depend on CDBG funds for operating costs. Ms. Driscoll agreed.

Chairman Layton said that he was supportive of funding New Heights and that it is not advisable to allow agencies to expect or rely on CDBG funding year after year because funding is decreasing.

Mr. Lewis moved to not fund the Child Advocacy Center in Scenario 2 and to move funds to the New Heights program. Ms. Rooney seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Driscoll stated that she felt Child and Family Services had the ability raise funds and has a national affiliation, which helps support the agency. Ms. Rooney stated that she felt the Seacoast YMCA would survive without CDBG funding. Ms. Hayden pointed out that both Child and Family Services and the Seacoast YMCA provide direct services to persons who earn low or moderate incomes. Chairman Layton said that he agreed that the Seacoast YMCA would survive without CDBG funding.

Ms. Driscoll moved to not fund the Seacoast YMCA in scenario 2 and to shift the funds to the New Heights program. Mr. Lichtenstein seconded the motion.

Ms. Rooney asked if Community Child Care's grant funding is spent entirely on subsidies to families. Ms. Hayden said yes and added that the Community Child Care Center appears to be growing stronger as an agency, they must provide deeper subsidies to fewer families.

Mr. Lewis said that he would be willing to recommend not funding the Seacoast YMCA entirely and provide those funds to other agencies.

Ms. Rooney stated her preference to give more funding to the New Heights program. Several members said that they were under the impression that the program was new. Mr. Moore clarified New Heights is seeking funding for an existing program they operate, not a new program, which they wish to enhance with increased staffing levels. Mr. Moore explained that the presenters for the agency had spoken about a variety of programs at New Heights. He said this may explain why many thought the New Heights program was new.

Ms. Rooney then asked the maker of the motion on the table to agree to an amendment. Ms. Rooney said she wished to decrease the grant to Seacoast YMCA by \$1,500 (for a new total of \$5,000) in scenario 2, and shift \$1,500 to New Heights for a new total of \$6,500 in funding. Ms. Driscoll agreed to the amendment as proposed by Ms. Rooney, as did Mr. Lichtenstein who seconded the original motion.

Chairman Layton called for a vote and the motion passed 5 to 1 with Ms. Langley voting against the motion as amended.

Other general discussion about the funding levels in scenario 2 ensued. Ms. Pecunies said that she wanted to fund the Dental Center and Foot Care Clinic. Mr. Lichtenstein and other members agreed. Ms. Rooney suggested revisiting the funding level for Child and Family Services. Ms. Langley stated that they could limit the grant amounts to \$10,000. Ms. Rooney said that higher amounts of funding were important for agencies like Aids Response and Area Homecare.

Mr. Lichtenstein said he felt it was very important for grant amounts to be at least \$5,000. Mr. Lewis said that he was supportive of scenario 2. Mr. Lichtenstein moved that the committee focus its consideration on scenario 2 and not consider any grant amounts below \$5,000. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis. Mr. Moore clarified it appeared to be the CAC's intent that the motion would allow for future adjustments to the scenario.

Ms. Langley then moved to fund the Seacoast YMCA at \$6,500 and fund the New Heights program at \$5,000. Ms. Rooney seconded the motion. Ms. Langley said that the CDBG funds for the YMCA program were more critical than they were for the New Heights program. She also pointed out that the New Heights program is not new. Ms. Rooney said that she was uncomfortable with the previous deep cut to the YMCA grant. Chairman Layton called for the vote and the motion passed 4 to 2.

Mr. Lichtenstein moved to recommend to the City Manager scenario 2, as amended, for the FY 2005-2006 Public Service Agency Grant Program. Ms. Hayden clarified that this would fund all of the agencies currently funded in this fiscal year, at reduced amounts, except for the Child Advocacy Center; and would provide \$5,000 grants each to the Foot Care Clinic, Dental Program and New Heights. Ms. Langley seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Layton adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.