

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
TELECONFERENCE**

February 8, 2022 | 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Lynn Bittel, Jaime Carolina, Vince Chowdhury, Demetra English, Erica Howard, Teri Marquantte, Brittany Noble, Hayley Reddish, Jason Schneider, Charlene Wisher-Howard

Members Absent:
***Excused**

**Late Arrivals/
Early Departures:** Marcella Barnett (connectivity issue)

Staff Present: Jessica Prosser, Barbara Abbots, Jeff Hancock, Jacquelyn Bayard, Billye Williams

Guests Present: N/A

Roll Call

Chairperson Teri Marquantte called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. and roll call followed.

Approval of Agenda

Lynn Bittel motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Vince Chowdhury seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Lynn Bittel motioned to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2022 meeting as presented. Vince Chowdhury seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

None.

Committee Member Briefings - open

Teri stated this will resume in March.

Communications from Staff

a. CD Information – Barbara Abbots and Jeff Hancock

- **City of Aurora Boards and Commissions (flyer)**

Barbara discussed the current vacancies on CHD and the recruitment efforts being made. She explained that Janel Anderson, who applied to CHD and was ready to be recommended for approval to City Council, does not live within city limits and therefore is ineligible. There are currently four (4) vacancies on CHD. There is only one representative from Ward I and none from Ward II (which is the largest). Barbara referenced a flyer produced on February 1, 2022 to attract new members. They have also been working with Julie Patterson, the city's Senior Communication Strategist, to have her reach out to Ward I and Ward II via NextDoor to solicit applications.

Charlene suggested asking City Council members to add committee/board information to their Ward meeting agendas. Barbara mentioned reaching out to the Council Members for upcoming town hall meetings that maybe they can let constituents know that CHD is looking for more members. Lynn suggested sharing information in the Aurora Water bill and NextDoor. Jason will look into whether the civic engagement academies have started again since that's how he got involved via Lynn. Charlene encouraged CHD members to connect with their circle of influence and share the flyer. Vince added that members of other boards may be willing to serve on CHD so they could also be potential candidates that could be solicited by email.

- **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Funding 101 (PowerPoint)**

Jeff provided an overview of HUD funds and how they relate to the Community Development (CD) division. In a normal year, CD is about 99.5% funded with federal grants from HUD. The city gets grants every year as what is called an "entitlement community" of Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) funds, HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds, and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) funds. HUD determines how much money Aurora and other cities throughout the country who receive funds get based on a formula that considers factors like population, poverty rates, and age of housing stock. Grants can change from year to year depending on budgets passed by Congress, but Aurora usually receives approximately \$2.8 to \$2.9 million of CDBG funds annually.

The goals of the CDBG program include:

- Providing a suitable living environment for citizens of Aurora by improving the safety and livability of neighborhoods, increasing access to facilities and services, and revitalizing deteriorating neighborhoods
- Providing decent housing by assisting homeless persons to obtain affordable housing, preserving existing affordable housing, increasing the availability of permanent housing that is affordable to low-income persons as well as supportive housing

- Expanding economic opportunities for community by creating jobs accessible to low-income persons and providing access to credit for community development that promotes long-term economic viability
- The purpose of CDBG (and all CD grants) is to help low- to moderate-income families who need assistance

CDBG funds can be used for a variety of purposes, but projects must meet one of the following national objectives:

- Benefit low- and moderate-income persons at or below 80% of the area median income (AMI)
 - A minimum of 70% of the CDBG grant must be used for this purpose
 - Jeff said the city's programs are primarily focused on benefiting low- and moderate-income persons
- Prevent or eliminate slum and blight
- Urgent need

In addition to meeting one of the national objectives, a project must be considered an eligible activity. Eligible activities include acquisition, economic development, housing related public improvements, or public service. HUD places limitations and caps on the program. Aurora and all grant recipients cannot spend more than 20% of the grant on administrative costs (ex: staff salaries, training, office supplies) and no more than 15% on public services (ex: food banks). CDBG funds cannot be used to supplant existing programs or projects that the city already pays for with General Fund money, nor can they be used to construct buildings (ex: for the conduct of government to build a new city-owned building).

The city has funded several projects using CDBG funds including assisting businesses, particularly in northwest Aurora, through the commercial storefront renovation program to make the area more attractive. Lynn stated he was part of a subcommittee that used to review applicants who wanted storefront renovations and asked who reviews them now. Jeff said it is done internally by CD staff. He explained that funding for this program may be discontinued and reallocated to other areas, including housing. This is due to investors and business owners doing their own improvements, indicating there may no longer be a need.

CDBG funds have been used to rehabilitate homes throughout the city and the Emergency Repair Program has replaced sewer lines, windows, roofs, and performed other maintenance on older homes. Funds have also been used for the rehabilitation of public facilities including the Little Flower Assistance Center, Ability Connection Colorado, and Aurora Interfaith Community Services, as well as agencies that operate food banks. Funds have also been used to improve street lighting in northwest Aurora and rehabilitate existing rental housing units. Jeff said funds were also used for alley paving in the past, but aren't this year so the money will be directed into other areas.

Another source of funding is the ESG program which aims to:

- Engage homeless individuals and families living on the street
- Improve the number and quality of emergency shelters for homeless persons
- Help operate these shelters
- Provide essential services to shelter residents
- Rapidly re-house homeless persons
- Prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless

ESG is a relatively small grant with an award of roughly \$250,000 per year. ESG has funded programs including the Comitis Crisis Center Shelter, Gateway Domestic Violence Shelter, and the East Metro Detox Shelter. They have also partnered with the Salvation Army and Aurora Mental Health Center to run rapid re-housing and homeless prevention programs. HUD stipulates that a maximum of 60% can be spent on shelters and a maximum of 7.5% can be spent on administrative costs for staff running the program. The remaining 32.5% goes towards rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention programs.

The city also receives HOME funds which are used to increase homeownership and affordable housing opportunities. Programs run using HOME funds include tenant based rental assistance, housing rehabilitation, down payment assistance to homebuyers, and new construction of affordable housing. HOME funds serve low- and very low-income families. For rental housing, funding requirements are (1) at least 90% of the families benefited must have incomes at or below 60% of the AMI, and (2) the remaining 10% of families benefited must have incomes at or below 80% of the AMI. For homeownership, assistance can go to families with incomes at or below 80% of the AMI.

HOME grants vary depending on budgets passed by Congress. The average annual award is \$1.1 to \$1.2 million. Program administrative costs are capped at 10% of the annual grant amount. There is also a matching requirement of 25% from participating jurisdictions (ex: the city matches 25% of \$1.1 million to increase funding to almost \$1.3 million). 15% of funds must be set aside for Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO) to provide affordable housing to the community. Recent affordable housing projects funded with HOME funds include Peoria Crossing (82 units located at 12101 East 30th Avenue), Residences at Hoffman (85 units located at 1348 Xanadu Street), and Nine Mile Senior Housing (50 units located at 12251 East Cornell Avenue).

There are also several one-time grants including the Emergency Solution Grant-COVID (ESG-CV), Community Development Block Grant-COVID (CDBG-CV), and Home Investment Partnership American Rescue Plan (HOME ARPA). ESG-CV and CDBG-CV were received approximately a year and a half ago when the federal government made money available to help combat COVID. ESG-CV funds are used to help homeless persons and must be related to COVID. The city is assisting shelters who have seen an increase in demand for services (ex: job loss due to COVID or purchasing personal protective equipment to prevent transmission

of COVID). Like ESG-CV, CDBG-CV follows regular program rules and must be tied to COVID activities (ex: food bank programs experiencing high demand due to job loss or reduced hours from COVID). The city will be receiving the HOME ARPA funds to help individuals or households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The city is working to get this grant program running this year and eligible activities may include rental assistance, non-congregate shelter, and supportive services.

Haley asked if more funding can be requested in other areas if the city doesn't pursue additional CDBG funding. Jeff explained that CDBG, ESG, and HOME funds are given to the city on an annual basis, and that funding levels are roughly the same each year, but may vary depending on the budget passed by Congress. Hayley asked what factors determine the funded amount. Jeff explained Congress decides how much they are going to fund, and HUD runs a formula to determine how much each jurisdiction receives. Hayley asked for confirmation that the city doesn't have to actually apply for funds so long as they're following HUD's rules. Jeff confirmed it's not a competitive application process. The city is an entitlement city, which means funds are received almost automatically. HUD does require an annual action plan which includes program information and how the money will be spent. Jeff added that as far as compliance, it's the city's responsibility to make sure the projects are eligible for funding and managing them properly.

Charlene asked if partner agencies can apply using one application that lists all the different funding sources and then the city determines which source is most appropriate, or if they have to apply for each individually. Jeff responded that funding depends on what type of project the partner agencies are looking to do. The Community Investment program accepts applications twice per year (typically in January and June/July) from developers and agencies looking to build new affordable housing or rehabilitate existing affordable housing. Additionally, when the city received CDBG-CV funds in late 2020, they asked community agencies to apply and explain what they would use the funds for. Application windows open periodically and the city makes sure they align with HUD requirements. Jessica added that with the COVID money, they were able to put more funds towards public services because HUD normally has a cap. Several nonprofits and some faith-based organizations applied. She also mentioned the homelessness NOFO that went out last year.

Although ARPA funds are not through HUD, they are still part of the recovery dollars. There is a \$2.5 million for nonprofit that is very general and the city is working through the criteria and application. Applications will hopefully be open by mid to late March. Jessica shared some of the projects City Council selected for ARPA funds. Council funded \$3 million for behavioral and mental health that will be a competitive process. They also did some funding for restaurants and businesses. They funded \$5.2 million for additional money for the community investment process and approximately \$1 million for ongoing winter sheltering needs. They also selected three (3) transformational projects: new overnight

homeless shelter and day resource center with some possible permanent supportive housing on the Fitzsimons campus; Ridgeview Academy Project for rehabilitation and addiction services by the Aurora Reservoir; and funding for Aurora Mental Health safety net campus on Potomac and Mississippi.

Loan Write-Offs – Jeff Hancock, Finance Supervisor

Jeff Hancock presented the write-off report. There were no loan write-offs in January. He explained program income comes from grants (HOME and CDBG), which are used to fund loan programs. When the city receives payment from those loans, it becomes program income and is used for future projects. In January, HOME had \$85,000 of program income from repayment of down payment assistance loans or rehabilitation loans. CDBG had approximately \$6,000 in program income from repayment of commercial storefront loan program. The overall total of program income in January was about \$91,000.

Communications from Committee

The group discussed the CHD bylaws, Resolution R2013-03, and the member roster. This is in response to an effort being led by the City Clerk's office to make sure this information is updated and consistent with other boards. The aforementioned documents were provided by the City Clerk's office and CD is working with them on this project. The most recent CHD bylaws are from 2017 and no changes have been made since then.

The bylaws do not include term limits, but Resolution R2013-03 outlines set term limits. Lynn expressed concern about term limits, especially given the current vacancies. He asked why they're necessary for volunteers willing to serve. Teri responded that term limits allow new people with different perspectives to join. Teri theorized that updating the bylaws would give members more information so they can make an informed decision about applying to CHD. The location information in the bylaws also needs to be updated as the board no longer meets at the Martin Luther King Library (MLK). Teri asked if the bylaws must list a specific meeting place. Jessica explained that the information is included for the public if they choose to attend. She suggested adding the following verbiage: "within the city limits at a specified city facility or other public gathering place or held virtually." Teri authorized Barbara to update the bylaws and they should be presented at the next meeting.

The group discussed the member roster. Four members terms have expired and additional documentation was not submitted in 2020. Bill Moran is no longer on CHD. Jaime lives in Ward V. Billye will investigate and update accordingly.

Jessica shared that the Aurora Municipal Center is reopening on Monday, February 14, 2022 and offered the use of the facility for CHD to meet in-person in a few months.

Adjournment

At 7:49 p.m. Teri Marquantte read a text message from Marcella Barnett that said, "I move for adjournment" and Lynn Bittel seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Minutes taken by:

Billye Dee Williams 03/09/2022
Billy Williams Date
Administrative Specialist
Housing and Community Services Department

Minutes reviewed by:

Barbara Abbotts 3/9/22
Barbara Abbotts Date
Interim Community Development Manager
Housing and Community Services Department

Minutes approved by:

Teri Marquantte 3/8/2022
Teri Marquantte, Chairperson Date

CHD Approved Minutes February 2022

Final Audit Report

2022-03-09

Created:	2022-03-09
By:	Billye Williams (bdwillia@auroragov.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAqmmnU-qYErUlhs4mqugBfYPColuArkoR

"CHD Approved Minutes February 2022" History

-  Document created by Billye Williams (bdwillia@auroragov.org)
2022-03-09 - 7:48:03 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to Barbara Abbotts (babbotts@auroragov.org) for signature
2022-03-09 - 7:49:20 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Barbara Abbotts (babbotts@auroragov.org)
2022-03-09 - 7:56:46 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Barbara Abbotts (babbotts@auroragov.org)
Signature Date: 2022-03-09 - 7:57:30 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2022-03-09 - 7:57:30 PM GMT