

MINUTES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HEARING

**Two Civic Center Plaza – 2nd Floor
City Council Chambers**

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Jim Welshimer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rocio Hinojosa
Ana Duenez
Billie Brown
Joseph Nevarez
Jim Welshimer

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Doering
Annette Stone
Miguel Grijalva

STAFF PRESENT

Bill Lilly, Director
Anthony Shaar, Deputy Director
Judy Sarabia, Senior Grant Planner
Judy Emmons, Grant Planner
Pat White, Home Program Manager
Rhoda Tillman, CDBG Contract Administrator
Isela Robison, Empowerment Zone Planner
Yolie Cedillo, Recording Secretary
Susie Morales, Recording Secretary

Jim Welshimer, Chairperson – Mr. Welshimer introduces the Steering Committee Members to everyone in attendance and explains the role of the Steering Committee which is to serve as an advisory group to City Council for the Community Development Block Grant program. He explains that the purpose of the meeting is to receive citizen comments and proposals about the way the City should spend the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds it will receive from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The prime objective of all CDBG funds is to benefit low and moderate income individuals in CDBG eligible areas throughout the City of El Paso.

Mr. Welshimer also adds that the City expects to receive approximately 9 million dollars for the 34th Year Community Development Block Grant Program. Approximately 2.5

million dollars will be available to spend on new projects. Mr. Welshimer advises the audience on the deadlines for submitting applications for Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), Social Services, Housing, Economic Development, and Public Facilities.

1. Hector Barraza and Miguel Barraza, 1514 Wyoming, 2413 Tremont/Dakota:

In 1993, landowner Miguel Barraza applied for and received a permit to build homes on his land. However, after installing plumbing and other utilities, he was “red-tagged” because a neighbor requested that a \$20,000, 22-foot wall to be built separating his property from Mr. Barraza’s. The City is also requesting that he extend and pave Tremont Street to accommodate his lots. Mr. Barraza is requesting answers as to why he was granted a permit in the first place. He is also requesting funding to extend the street. The committee referred him to his City Representative, Beto O’Rourke, and to inquire with the City Engineer.

2. Marianne Fleager, El Paso Lighthouse, 200 Washington:

El Paso Lighthouse is seeking to rehabilitate their existing workforce area and parking lot to better accommodate the disabled workforce, and to add a unisex bathroom for public use. Ms. Fleager will be requesting \$133,000 to \$160,000 in CDBG funding and stated that the agency is willing to pay 25% of the cost, exceeding the 20% match required by CDBG.

3. Maliza Cox, El Paso Children’s Daycare, 510 S. Oregon:

Ms. Cox will be requesting \$68,000 for an energy-efficient central heating and cooling system for the entire building that will replace the window air conditioners and portable heaters they are currently using.

4. Martha Andrade and Norice Lee, El Paso Public Library- Armijo Branch, E. 7th Avenue:

Armijo Branch Library will be requesting \$414,000 to expand the computer room from its current 144 square feet to about 1,200 square feet. The expansion project will also include networking and telecommunications wiring.

5. Miguel Rodriguez, Chihuahuita Neighborhood Association, 470 Charles Road:

Mr. Rodriguez is requesting funding for the extension of the Chihuahuita Community Center because its current capacity is very limited, replacement of the old playground at Chihuahuita Park with a new playground covered by a canopy on the City-owned lot across from the Chihuahuita Community Center, and the addition of a mini-skateboard park next to the existing basketball court. No cost estimates have yet been obtained.

6. Bill Bennett, ADA Coordinator for the General Services Dept., 2 Civic Center Plaza:

Mr. Bennett is requesting funding for the Curb Cut program that will provide 300 more ramps to accommodate disabled persons, baby strollers, bicycles, etc. He is also requesting funding to install audio pedestrian signals at 10-12 intersections that assist visually impaired persons to cross the street.

7. Susan Austin, Coalition for the Homeless, 6501 Boeing, H2:

Ms. Austin reviewed the various CDBG funding the coalition has received in the past and how it has been used. This year the coalition will be submitting an application for funding to offset the costs of the Homeless Management Information System. This system tracks the homeless population and provides CDBG required information to operating grantees. As the lead entity for the Continuum of Care, the Coalition for the Homeless is the only agency that operates this system in El Paso.

8. Blake Barrow, Rescue Mission, 949 W. Paisano:

Mr. Barrow will be requesting \$400,000 to fund expansion of the Rescue Mission to add a 12-15 bed respite and hospice care center for the homeless. When asked what other sources would be assisting with funding, he stated that local hospitals will be approached for assistance since they regularly discharge homeless patients who require convalescing after discharge.

9. Sister Helen Santamaria, El Paso Villa Maria, 920 S. Oregon:

Sister Helen introduced herself and described the services provided at Villa Maria, which houses poor, homeless, single, elderly, and childless women. Younger women may receive assistance if they have been emancipated. These women receive help in developing a plan that will move them from crisis to self-sufficiency.

10. Jesus Lopez and Aida Banuelos, Montoya Heights Neighborhood Association, 301 Ruby:

The Montoya Heights Neighborhood Association is asking for sidewalks to be added to streets that are currently being improved in that area. The committee referred them to the Engineering Department for a copy of the blueprints to see if the plans include sidewalks.

11. Joe Wilson, P.O. Box 4652:

Mr. Wilson is requesting that sidewalks to be placed at the McKelligon Canyon entrance to William Beaumont Hospital on Alabama Street. He stated that it is currently very dangerous for pedestrians who walk to and from William Beaumont Hospital.

12. Elva Villagran, 7121 Dale Road:

Ms. Villagran is requesting pavement and sidewalk street improvements in her neighborhood. She stated that many pedestrians, especially children and the elderly, walk in that area. The streets that need repairs are Stiles, Sycamore, and Santini. She is also requesting that a ponding area to be built as Butcher and Dodge accumulate a lot of water when it rains.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.