



**TOWN OF GREENWICH
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
CDAC Public Hearing
March 12, 2020 (Thursday)
6:00 p.m., Town Hall Meeting Room, Greenwich Town Hall**

MEETING MINUTES

CDAC Members Present: Debbie Appelbaum, Alan Gunzburg, Lucy Krasnor, Wilma Nacinovich, Sam Romeo, Vick Sandhu, Sharon Shisler, Lisa Stuart, Lucy von Brachel, Alexis Voulgaris

CDAC Members Not Present: Bill Drake, Christine Edwards, Mary Flynn, Icy Frantz, Judy Goss, Victoria Goss, Rachel Khanna, Tom Petrone, Allison Walsh, David Weisbrod

Town of Greenwich Staff Present:

Tyler Fairbairn, Jill Foster

1. Call to Order

Community Development Advisory Committee (“CDAC” or the “Committee”) Chair Alexis Voulgaris called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2. Introduction of CDAC Members

Town of Greenwich (the “Town”) Community Development/Grants Administrator Tyler Fairbairn and members of the CDAC introduced themselves.

3. Coronavirus/Public Hearing Process Update/Housekeeping Notes

Tyler Fairbairn thanked CDAC members and CDBG applicants for coming, and explained that the Town is statutorily required to hold a public hearing in connection with the approval of its Consolidated Plan. Mr. Fairbairn said that he contacted the HUD Hartford Field Office seeking guidance on holding public hearings in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, but had not received any by the time/date of the meeting and thus thought it best to proceed with the meeting so as to not jeopardize funding/Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan approval. Mr. Fairbairn announced that in addition to the public hearing residents, businesses, service providers and other stakeholders could take an online needs assessment survey on the Town’s website and offer comment through a citizen input form on the Community Development page of the Town’s website. Finally, Mr. Fairbairn noted that the Town will be updating its Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing and that the comment period for that portion of the Consolidated Plan was open as well.

4. Explanation of Public Hearing Rules/Process

Alexis Voulgaris explained that each applicant would have three minutes (plus additional time if an applicant has more than one application) to present their proposals, with unlimited time afterward for questions from the CDAC. Alexis Voulgaris reminded applicants that the CDAC had copies of their

applications, and that it might be beneficial to discuss details of the project outside of what was included in the application.

5. Presentations by Program Year 2020 CDBG Applicants

- a. **River House Adult Day Center:** Donna Spellman from River House explained that this year River House was replacing the Saturday Night Lights Program with a Sunday respite program for caregivers that was better suited to the needs of all involved.
- b. **Community Centers, Inc.:** Gaby Rattner presented CCI's Comprehensive Youth Programs which offer free programming to 100 children per week from elementary through high school.
- c. **Pacific House:** Rob Lockhart presented two applications from Pacific House. Mr. Lockhart explained that the entrance and emergency ramp in front of the emergency shelter are crumbling and need to be replaced. He said that in addition to shelter, Pacific House offers outreach and connection to services, and currently has three Greenwich residents staying in the shelter. On the service application, Mr. Lockhart said that Pacific House operates an Emergency Meals Program providing breakfast and dinner 365 days per year. Alan Gunzburg asked if Pacific House is applying for funding from the City of Stamford and Mr. Lockhart said that they were. Alexis Voulgaris asked for a cost breakdown on the capital project and Mr. Lockhart said that he would provide one. Sam Romeo asked if Pacific House would get multiple bids for the work, and Mr. Lockhart said that they would.
- d. **Old Greenwich Riverside Community Center:** Sue Clarke presented an application to provide scholarships to income-eligible families for afterschool children's programming.

Tyler Fairbairn, by inclusion in these minutes, is disclosing that the Community Development Office had submitted an exception request to the HUD Hartford Field Office with respect to Old Greenwich Riverside Community Center's PY2020 CDBG application and Ms. Clarke's status as a Town Board of Education employee and a paid staff member of OGRCC.

- e. **Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich:** Megan Sweeney and Ryan Accurso presented two proposals put forth by the Boys and Girls Club, and began by thanking Lucy von Brachel and Christine Edwards for their recent site visit. Mr. Accurso said that the Friday Night Teen Program fills a void in the community, and added that the Boys and Girls Club offers a free SAT program and college visits. Megan Sweeney discussed the swimming pool proposal, stating that it was updated in 2013, but the liquid chlorine system eats away at pool tiles. Lisa Stuart asked how many kids use the pool and Ms. Sweeney said that there are 340 kids using the pool for free swim lessons and other programs. Debbie Appelbaum asked if all three pieces of the pool project need to happen at once, and Ms. Sweeney said that they do not necessarily have to. Ms. Sweeney added that the chlorine system replacement would be a one-time cost, with powder chlorine being safer and less expensive. In response to Alan Gunzburg, Ms. Sweeney said that the Club would get three quotes for the pool project if funded.

- f. **Housing Authority of the Town of Greenwich:** Anthony Johnson thanked the CDAC for past support of Housing Authority projects and explained that Wilbur Peck is home to 110 families who are among the lowest income residents in Greenwich. Mr. Johnson explained that the walkways at the development are in disrepair, and that the Housing Authority has tested a new product that is expected to last approximately ten years. He added that the repairs proposed through the CDBG grant would increase curb appeal and give residents a sense of pride in where they live. Alexis Voulgaris asked if the project can be funded/implemented in phases, and Mr. Johnson said that it could, as there are three buildings at the site. Ms. Voulgaris asked about a transition to market rate housing at the Housing Authority, and Mr. Johnson said that public housing would remain public housing, but the Housing Authority is pursuing the RAD conversion program in order to generate additional funding for operations/maintenance. Debbie Appelbaum asked if there was a cost savings by doing all of the work at once, and Mr. Johnson responded that there likely would not be, but it would be less of an inconvenience to residents to do all of the work at once.
- g. **Family Centers:** Bob Short and Karissa Payero presented three applications: 1) the RITE Program, which provides job skills training, job retention training and workshops, 2) Armstrong Court Preschool Program which provides full-day, year-round childhood education for income-eligible families, and 3) flooring replacement at the Grauer and Gateway preschools. Lucy von Brachel asked if the Armstrong preschool was at maximum capacity, and Mr. Short said that spaces were determined by licensing, and that they were at full capacity. Wilma Nacinovich asked if Armstrong Court Preschool was for Armstrong Court families only, and Mr. Short said that it was. Alan Gunzburg asked if there were plans for expansion with the YMCA no longer having childcare, and Mr. Short said that they did plan to absorb some of the students who were not moving on to kindergarten. Sam Romeo added that Armstrong Court runs a great program. Alexis Voulgaris asked which would be the priority between the two service programs, and Mr. Short said that it would be the preschool program. On the capital proposal, Mr. Short said that there are 55 kids at Grauer preschool and 56 kids at Gateway preschool. The schools operate five days a week, 50 weeks per year. Alan Gunzburg asked about the lifespan of the materials, and Mr. Short said that the current vinyl surface was installed in 2011, so approximately eight to ten years. Lisa Stuart asked if the current materials were sufficient, and Mr. Short said that the planking has worked well.
- h. **Greenwich United Way:** David Rabin presented two public service proposals. The Early Childhood Achievement Gap Solutions Program serves 40 families, all from Greenwich, and includes wrap around services. Alexis Voulgaris noted that the Town had been working on this program for a while, and asked if the United Way can secure other funding if the entire \$50,000 requested of CDBG cannot be granted. Mr. Rabin said that the United Way would turn to other fundraising sources. Lisa Stuart asked if there would be outcome measurements available prior to five years, and Mr. Rabin said that there would, as it is a data driven program. Mr. Rabin said that the Reading Champions Program features approximately 150 volunteers and includes a mentorship component.

- i. **Greenwich Library:** Barbara Ormerod-Glynn presented the Library’s proposal for public facility funding to expand the children’s programming room. Ms. Ormerod-Glynn said that all 100,000 square feet of the Library are being renovated, and that they are planning to double the size of the children’s programming room. Alan Gunzburg told Ms. Ormerod-Glynn that he thought the entire renovation project was already funded, and Ms. Ormerod-Glynn replied that if this CDBG request is not funded the Library will have to find funding elsewhere.

- j. **Young Artists Philharmonic:** Maria Stich and Rainer Busch presented their scholarships for young musicians proposal, noting that their organization was founded 60 years ago and serves to educate and inspire young people through music. They said that they serve approximately 65 musicians and tuition covers approximately 50% of the costs of operating the program. Alan Gunzburg asked how the organization handles income determinations for participants, and Ms. Stich replied that they use free/reduced-price lunch determinations from the public school system. Mr. Gunzburg asked if all low-income children from Greenwich are welcome to participate (as opposed to a specific geographic area) and Ms. Stich said that they were. Alexis Voulgaris asked what impact partial funding of the CDBG request would have, and Ms. Stich replied that they would fundraise, adding that they do not turn anyone away.

- k. **Greenwich Botanical Center:** Meg McAuley Kaicher presented three proposals from the Greenwich Botanical Center (“GBC”). Of the public service proposal, Ms. McAuley Kaicher said that the GBC currently does outreach at six senior facilities and will have to scale back if not fully funded through CDBG. On the public facility/capital proposals, Ms. McAuley Kaicher said that there are accessibility issues at the GBC, which averages 2,000-4,000 visitors per year. Alexis Voulgaris noted that the funds request were a heavy lift for CDBG and said that CDBG likely cannot fund landscaping costs that were included in the GBC’s estimate. Ms. McAuley Kaicher responded that the GBC can look into having those costs provided pro bono. Alexis Voulgaris asked if it was possible to complete the proposed projects in phases due to the size of the request, and Ms. McAuley Kaicher said possibly. Alan Gunzburg asked who owns the building that GBC occupies, and Ms. McAuley Kaicher said that they lease it from the Town. Mr. Gunzburg asked if a smaller scale project would be effective in raising rental revenue for the GBC, and Ms. McAuley Kaicher said that temporary ramps have not been an effective solution in the past. Mr. Gunzburg followed with a question about ADA/CHRO complaints against the GBC, and Ms. McAuley Kaicher said that there had not been any she was aware of. Alexis Voulgaris asked how the GBC knows that the people they are serving are low-/moderate-income, and Ms. McAuley Kaicher said that they are working to capture that data, while serving many seniors who automatically meet HUD’s LMI definition. Wilma Nacinovich asked what responsibility the Town has as far as ADA access, and Ms. McAuley Kaicher said that the Town does not have the budget for it and that this building is grandfathered from ADA compliance. Sam Romeo asked if this is something that would come up with the First Selectman’s Disability Advisory Committee, and Alan Gunzburg responded that there are many other priority buildings discussed by that committee.

- i. **Abilis, Inc.:** Jennifer Flatow and Tim Murtha presented two applications submitted by Abilis. Ms. Flatow said that a home currently owned by Abilis at 12 Sioux Place would be demolished and rebuilt in order to accommodate more clients for respite care. She added that the home is currently occupied by a client and a health aide, and that the client would be welcome back to the home once construction was completed. Mr. Murtha said that the new home would be fully ADA accessible and have four bedrooms, and Ms. Flatow added that building new was cheaper than building with modular construction in this instance. Wilma Nacinovich asked how Abilis acquired the property and what costs for care were for clients. Mr. Murtha said that Abilis purchased it, and Ms. Flatow said that clients are not charged if they are currently in the Abilis network. Alexis Voulgaris noted that it could be disruptive for the current occupant to be relocated during construction. Ms. Flatow said that Abilis was aware of this but needed to rebuild the home in order to use it to its full capacity. Debbie Appelbaum asked how long a typical respite care stay was and how many clients are served per month, and Ms. Flatow replied that the number served varies and a stay can be anywhere from one afternoon to one week depending on the client and the situation. Ms. Appelbaum asked what Abilis would do if only a portion of the request could be funded, and Ms. Flatow said that they would seek funding from the grant arm of Abilis. Ms. Voulgaris said that the Town had to be concerned with timely expenditure of CDBG funds, and Ms. Flatow said that Abilis will have a better idea of how the project could proceed by April. Ms. Appelbaum asked for more information about potentially phasing the project.

Tim Murtha said that the second request from Abilis for ceiling/lighting renovations at 50 Glenville Street would result in \$13,800 in annual energy savings through improved fixtures and smart lighting technology. Mr. Murtha noted that because of the age and prior use of the building there is no insulation in the ceilings. Ms. Flatow added that the project could be phased if necessary. Vick Sandhu asked if there was a cost breakout for the lower and upper levels of the building, and Ms. Flatow said that she would get that and send it to Tyler Fairbairn.

- m. **YMCA:** Elaine Grant presented the YMCA's applications for swimming pool renovations and a Parkinson's program. Ms. Grant said that the current pool dehumidification system does not work. She added that Pathways sends 25 people to use the pool daily free of charge, and that none of the funding would go toward the separate Olympic pool that the YMCA uses for other, paid swimming programs. Ms. Grant added that the YMCA had raised \$1.5 million to date as part of a \$3 million capital campaign. Ms. Grant said that the Parkinson's program would include boxing, as exercise has shown promise in helping to treat Parkinson's patients. Alexis Voulgaris noted that this would be one of the few Parkinson's programs in Town, and asked if the YMCA could work with others at places like Nathaniel Witherell to promote it. Ms. Grant said that the YMCA is not able to offer transportation, but if people can get to the YMCA's building they are welcome to participate.
- n. **Neighbor to Neighbor:** Margaret Goldberg from Neighbor to Neighbor noted that Wilma Nacinovich and Icy Frantz had recently met with her as part of their CDAC site visit. Ms. Goldberg said that the Summer Supplement application was an existing program, while the Family Care Closet application was for a new program. Alan Gunzburg asked how to

make up for a food shortfall during school shutdowns associated with the Coronavirus. Ms. Goldberg said that the schools were working on it, and that Neighbor to Neighbor was open. Alexis Voulgaris asked if Neighbor to Neighbor could pack bags of supplies and bring them to schools, and Ms. Goldberg said that was an option. Ms. Goldberg added that the Family Care Closet proposal would allow for essential non-food items to be provided to clients.

6. Public Comment

No comments offered from members of the public.

7. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

8. Adjournment

Alexis Voulgaris adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.