

MINUTES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HEARING

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

Wednesday, October 11, 2006

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

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Welshimer
Billie Brown
Barbara Esparza
Miguel Grijalva
John Doering
Ana Duenez

MEMBERS ABSENT

Elias Torrez
Felipe J. Luna

STAFF PRESENT

Nathalie Prise, CD Director
Anthony Shaar, CD Deputy Director
Eleanor Love, Senior Grants Planner
Judy Emmons, Grants Planner
Kevin Pitts, Grants Planner
Soraya Ayub, Neighborhood Relations Coordinator
Yolie Cedillo, Recording Secretary

Jim Welshimer, Chairperson – Mr. Welshimer introduces the Steering Committee Members to everyone in attendance. He explains the purpose of the meeting is to receive citizen comments and proposals about the way the City should spend the Community Development Block Grant it will receive from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The City expects to receive approximately 8 million dollars. Projects are normally done in phases so a portion of the 8 million dollars is already pre-committed. Approximately \$2.5 million will be available to spend on new projects for the period of September 1, 2007 to August 31, 2008 for the 33rd year. The prime objective of all CDBG funds is to benefit the low and moderate income population.

The Planning Process: Mr. Welshimer explains the role of the Steering Committee which is to serve as an advisory group to City Council for the Community Development program. Once all applications have been submitted and reviewed by the Steering Committee a recommended budget is submitted to City Council on April 13, 2007. He

reminds the audience of the deadline to submit all citizen, neighborhood and representative requests which is Friday, December 8, 2006. The deadline to receive application packets from agencies and departments is January 12, 2007. City Council will hold a public hearing on May 8, 2007 to adopt a proposed budget which will then be published for 30 days for public comment. On June 26, 2007 the City Council will hold another public hearing to adopt a final budget. The final budget is then submitted to HUD and the funds will become available on September 1, 2007.

- 1. Sergio R. Vasquez, Program Coordinator for the Border Fair Housing & Economic Justice Center:** The Border Fair Housing & Economic Justice Center was created in March, 2004 and received funds from HUD. It is a private not-for-profit organization that provides assistance to individuals who believe they have been victims of housing discrimination. The Center will be submitting a housing application this year.

Maria Perez, Master Social Worker at Volar and Board Member of Border Fair Housing & Economic Justice Center: Ms. Perez was a tester for the Border Fair Housing & Economic Justice Center and asked for housing applications at two different properties. She felt she was discriminated against due to her disability. She is an advocate against housing discrimination.

- 2. Tom Moorehead, Manager Ysleta Library:** The Ysleta Library computer lab currently serves 120 people but the demand has increased to 186. The lab is also used for training purposes. In the previous funding year CDBG funded the construction of an expansion to the library that will expand the capacity of the computer lab to add more computers.

John Doering: If the library spent money on remodeling the Downtown Library, why was money not allocated for this expansion?

Tom Moorehead: Money was used to expand and open other libraries.

Jim Welshimer: You are looking for computer lab money?

Tom Moorehead: Yes.

- 3. Raul Ramirez, 10101 Castletown:** Requests an explanation on how the money is reduced from \$8 million to \$2.5 million.

Jim Welshimer: \$8 million dollars is reduced to \$2.5 million for the year 2007-2008 because \$2,178,224 is committed for the 33rd year which is the present and for the 34th year we have pre-committed \$2,193,895. Some projects are quite lengthy and it is required to spend the funds in a certain amount of time so the projects will be broken down into phases such as design one year and then construction the following year.

Raul Ramirez, 10101 Castletown: The area lacks streetlights. There are only 2 streetlights within an 8 block radius from Castletown Drive to Limerick Road and

north of Edgemere Boulevard. Adding more streetlights would help deter crime in the area.

Jim Welshimer: You can submit an application but please contact your City Representative as they sometimes allocate monies for these types of requests.

- 4. Michael Zamora, President of Loma Linda Belltower Watch and President of Loma Linda Neighborhood Association:** Mr. Zamora requests improvements for Loma Linda Park. The park is in need of a walking path, park benches, a canopy, trees, a picnic and playground area, a ½ pipe ramp and a dog run.

Jim Welshimer – In the park plan dedication ordinance there is a grid on top of the City’s grid. All monies dedicated for park land is in an account and must be spent within that grid or an adjacent grid for park improvements. Saratoga Homes should have leveled, turfed and added sprinklers to the property. Contact Richard Garcia with the City of El Paso Parks and Recreation Department for more information.

Ana Duenez – Also contact Mark Alvarado and Bill Lilly for information on funding.

- 5. Zeke Galvan, 5221 Marietta, President of Roberts Neighborhood Association:** The neighborhood is 50 years old and it has poor lighting, no sidewalks or curb cuts and “No Parking” signs. There are currently 2,500 children under the age of 18 in the area. The Sandoval Housing Community is also located there. The area would also greatly benefit from an inter-generational community center.

John Doering: You came to us last year with the same requests.

Sandra Flores, Secretary -Roberts Neighborhood Association: We are requesting the same projects because no improvements have been made. We hope to obtain discretionary funds that Representative Lilly has available for the smaller projects.

Jim Welshimer: There are inter-local agreements with the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) so you might be able to use their facilities for meetings.

- 6. Marina Rios, Vice-President San Juan Neighborhood Association:** Glenwood Street needs sidewalks and street and lighting improvements from El Paso Drive to Tamburo Street.
- 7. Bill Bennett, City of El Paso General Services:** Mr. Bennett requests that the Curb Cut Program & Audible Pedestrian Signal Program continue to be funded for the coming year as he is working off of a list of sites that still need curb cuts throughout the city. The Audible Pedestrian Signal Program was funded in 2 phases. The next requests for the Audible Pedestrian Signal Program will also be in phases.
- 8. Christina Rosales, 466 Chapel Street:** Speaks on behalf of the residents of Chapel Street. The area is in need of sidewalks and street and drainage improvements. The residents do not belong to a Neighborhood Association but they are asked to contact Mark Alvarado to inquire which Neighborhood Association serves their area.

They are also asked to Contact their city representative as they sometimes make requests to Community Development for funding.

9. Julio Norman, Spokesman for El Paso High Neighborhood Association: Mr. Norman represents a newly formed committee of 7 neighborhood associations. The associations would like to use the Friendly Center to provide services such as nutrition classes for the elderly and an after school program for the children to include computer training that will enhance their technical skills. The associations all agree that the area needs more green space. Mr. Norman believes that he can obtain financial support for some of the services.

Elva Villagran, 7121 Dale Road: Requests that sidewalks and street and drainage improvements be done to the following streets: Bucher Road, Stiles Road, Orgain Way, Warnock Way, Sycamore Way, Santini Way and Carey Way. Bucher Road and Stiles Road are the priority streets for improvements in her area.

Aurelia Roque, Ramona Street: Has talked to Representative Lozano regarding the problems with the drainage.

10. Lucinda Cuellar, President of Borderland Community Association: Thanks the Steering Committee and the City of El Paso for the improvements done to the Borderland area.

11. Martha Maldonado, President Chamizal Neighborhood Association: Requests that the building located off of Paisano Drive that was once an environmental center and is owned by the City of El Paso, be remodeled to serve as a community center for meetings and trainings on educational programs.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:00 p.m.