

MINUTES
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of the City Planning Commission meeting held June 10, 2021 in the City Council Auditorium, City Hall, 212 SW 9th Street, Lawton, Oklahoma.

The agenda for the meeting was posted on the bulletin board in City Hall in compliance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act.

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chairman David Denham.

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Denham
 Ron Jarvis
 Dave Davison
 Shelli Fox
 Deborah Jones
 Paula Bowen (arrived at 1:40 pm)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Neil Springborn (excused)
 John Jones (excused)
 Darren Medders (excused)

ALSO PRESENT: Richard Rogalski, Deputy City Manager
 Christy James, Director Community Services
 Greg Gibson, Assistant City Attorney
 Tammy Anderson, Recording Secretary

REVIEW FUNDING REQUEST APPLICATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED THROUGH THE HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE FOR THE UPCOMING 2021 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN/2021-2025 CONSOLIDATED PLAN, RECEIVE PRESENTATIONS FROM NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE SUBMITTED A FUNDING REQUEST APPLICATION, AND PROVIDE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATOR TO INCLUDE IN THE DRAFT PLAN.

Chairman Denham asked do you have the exact number or does that come later.

James responded yes; we have exact numbers.

Chairman Denham stated so we are working with \$107,000 for these 9 potential applicants and we are going to hear from them today. We are going to do our homework, make notes and find out what you plan on doing with your allocation. If that generates questions, then so be it, if not, we will discuss it at the next meeting.

Chairman Denham declared the public hearing open. He stated first up is Lawton Support Services.

Jarvis Jackson of Lawton Support Services gave a presentation on the services his program provides for the citizens of Lawton through homelessness resources and prevention.

Chairman Denham asked how many people the funding helped last year.

Jackson answered last fiscal year, we helped 30 people through this public service grant. For the overall program, 326 families.

Chairman Denham stated thank you sir. Returning is the Christian Family Counseling Center.

Tim Diley of Christian Family Counseling Center gave a presentation on the services his program provides for the citizens of Lawton through mental health and youth services. Christian Family Counseling Center uses the CDBG funds to subsidize the cost of counseling services for families, marriages and individuals.

Chairman Denham asked if there are any questions for Mr. Diley and stated thank you very much. Next is the Grady Brewer Foundation.

Grady Brewer of the Grady Brewer Foundation gave a presentation on the services his foundation offers. They are seeking money to open facilities to provide funding for youth that cannot afford the cost of playing sports traditionally, an organization similar to the YMCA.

Sarah, an advocate for the Grady Brewer program also spoke. She stated that she has worked with youth for most of her career and she has seen countless kids end up in juvenile detention centers with no outlet for their anger. That physical outlet and support is what they are aiming for.

Chairman Denham asked how many people their organization plans to help with this funding.

Brewer answered they would like to start with 15 kids, meeting 3 times per week with them for 1 hour. Eventually though, they would like to help as many as possible.

Commissioner D. Jones made a recommendation for Mr. Brewer to speak with Onreka Johnson about funding for at-risk youth. She also stated that there should be money in the 2020 CIP bond for at-youth risk.

Chairman Denham stated this is a big priority for the mayor as well, he is a big advocate for at-risk youth.

Commissioner Bowen stated that Onreka Johnson is the chairman on that committee. She also asked Mr. Brewer if he had assistance with staffing to help him run the program.

Brewer responded yes, he has friends that have been helping him get the program up and running.

Chairman Denham stated thank you very much we appreciate it. Next up is Center for Creative Living.

Loreen Miller of the Center for Creative Living gave a presentation on the services her organization offers. She stated that her organization is a place where senior citizens come for health and wellness, education needs, exercise classes, bible study, grief support and more all targeted for improving the quality of senior citizens' lives.

Chairman Denham stated he is very familiar with her organization through United Way and to keep up the good work. Number 5 to present is Marie Detty.

Latricia Kippers of Marie Detty New Direction gave a presentation on the services her organization offers. These services include things like a 24-hour hotline, a 26-bed shelter, counseling services, a court advocate, a sexual assault response team and more.

Chairman Denham asked if they would help victims who need to be transferred to other areas because of safety issues in Lawton. Do they coordinate with other agencies to help them, if needed.

Kippers answered yes, we coordinate with other domestic abuse agencies all over the state of Oklahoma.

Chairman Denham asked if there are any more questions, then stated you did good, thank you very much. Teen Court is next.

Marsha Frazier of Teen Court gave a presentation on the services her organization offers. Teen Court is a delinquency prevention program. She said CDBG funds would help with educational programs. Said their program has a 92% success rate. They expanded their program in 2012 to include education to give their teens the tools and resources they need to make better life choices.

Commissioner Davison asked if the teens have to go through the court process first.

Frazier stated everyone has a choice to go through the program unless they are a criminal offender in which they would be required by the court, in their sanctions, to attend the program. If they complete the program, their records get expunged, if they don't complete the program, they may get juvenile sentencing from the court.

Chairman Denham asked how long the organization follows up with the juveniles.

Frazier answered the program follows up with them for a year to make sure they stay on the right path.

Commissioner D. Jones asked if she is receiving any assistance from the City with the CIP bond for at-risk youth.

Frazier stated no and she heard it get brought up earlier when you were speaking about it.

Commissioner D. Jones stated Richard if I may make a suggestion, I think there needs to be some outreach to the agencies in this category. I think the outreach should go through United Way; it should not just go to governmental institutions. We need to get the word out, that there is a lot of money here folks.

Frazier stated there are also a lot of at-risk kids in our community. Every horrific story you could imagine, our youth are going through. Our kids are angry about their circumstances.

Commissioner D. Jones asked Commissioner Bowen if she is involved with the at-risk youth committee.

Commissioner Bowen answered that she has been asked.

Commissioner D. Jones stated this is tax-funded through the community with the sales-tax. There is no doubt the community wants to support the at-risk youth.

Frazier stated she has been doing this for 25 years and she had no idea that they would be eligible to apply for the CIP funding.

Chairman Denham stated proven, effective programs tend to rise to the top. The Mayor talked about how we have had these things in the past, and crime numbers started dropping, and then we stopped funding them, and low and behold it's coming back up.

Rogalski stated I don't believe any of that CIP money has been spent at all, it's just gearing up.

Frazier asked can you tell me where to begin.

Chairman Denham stated Onreka Johnson, or Mayor Booker.

Frazier stated okay, I know there is only \$100,000 to go around with all of these agencies. They are all amazing, but there is never enough money and so because of that, the \$22,000 we got last year was only able to help 213 kids when we've got an outcry out there from thousands of kids.

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Commissioner D. Jones stated I was just handed a note that states Onreka Johnson is the Chairman of the CIP committee. The application process is to begin soon. A lot of agencies don't even get the newspaper, so we need to get something posted on the City's website or find some other means Richard. Maybe through United Way. We need to find some way to reach out to these agencies that work in this area and make sure they are aware of this funding.

Rogalski stated he will coordinate with Councilperson Johnson and see what their plan is. We'll also work with our community relations folks to make sure they publicize it. The amount of money is 6 million dollars over 15 years. We also have 8 million dollars we're putting into a youth sports center.

Frazier stated that would be wonderful. She raised 3 of her children in Lawton and there has never been enough for the youth in Comanche County.

Chairman Denham stated he bets the kids in California say there isn't enough to do there as well.

Frazier stated yes probably, but anything like a sports complex would help tremendously. Like I said, you all are more than welcome to come visit my courtroom.

Chairman Denham stated congratulations on that. Thank you, Marsha. Next is Family Promise.

Tiffany Escoe, Nina Tucker, and Sarah Gardner gave a presentation on the services her organization offers. Family Promise of Lawton is a family only shelter/program. They are one of three family shelters in the state of Oklahoma. She stated that it doesn't matter what your family looks like, we accept everyone; we do not separate families at all, we keep them together. That means they have their own rooms, dressers, nightstands, and even their own area in the kitchen, so they get to be individuals and families. They provide life-skills education which covers all the basic life skills down to owning a pet.

Sarah Gardner came to the podium to speak about the new feeding ministry program and the holistic approach of assisting their families.

Escoe stated that they are in very close contact with the Homeless Liaison of Lawton Public Schools and many other community organizations that assist them with helping their families in the program.

Chairman Denham stated you have your own facility now so you're not as dependent on sheltering these families in churches, you have your own location.

Escoe stated that yes, we are located in the old J. Roy Dunning building which was actually built to be a shelter. As you all may know, it is an old building, the county owns it and it has a lot of issues. We are trying to get them handled right now. We have been a static shelter, which means not rotating to the churches, since the pandemic started. With

my education, I know the chaos and turmoil that can be brought on by constant shuffling around.

Chairman Denham stated I did notice one thing on the prior years' funding. Maybe the reporting is just a little behind because it says here that you have not spent the funding from last year.

Escoe stated that yes, her treasurer had her hold off because they also got PPP funds. Because those PPP funds were similar to the amount of the CDBG funds, they had me wait on turning them all in because it helps for her board to be a little more concerned. Otherwise, everyone gets a little complacent when looking at the financials.

Commissioner D. Jones asked if she intends to spend that money.

Escoe stated yes, it's already spent.

Chairman Denham and you'll get that documentation into Christy soon correct.

Escoe responded I was going to take it yesterday, yes.

Escoe stated I would like to add that we are very different from other shelters. We have a 3-month-old baby waiting for us at the day center right now. We get really close to our families. Some of them don't have any type of support at all, so we become their family in many ways, and they keep in touch.

Chairman Denham stated thank you very much. We have 2 more presentations, but I'm not seeing anyone in here. Great Plains Improvement Foundation and Roadback have been long time CDBG recipients. Any additional questions or comments before moving onto the next agenda item.

Chairman Denham stated as Christy has indicated we will need to go through our packets.

James asked would you like me to elaborate on the criteria that we are evaluating these organizations on.

Chairman Denham responded sure, sure.

James elaborated on the various aspects of the scoring process. She went over the presentations, the paperwork requirements, and other requirements imposed on these organizations to be in compliance.

Chairman Denham asked for the two organizations that did not show, does that automatically strike them from being eligible for funds.

James responded I'm going to leave that up to the City Planning Commission. I've gone through these applications myself. I have questions on all of them, so I will leave that grading up to you all and how you want to assess that.

Chairman Denham stated I would recommend that we tackle it fairly quickly.

James stated she is available for assistance anytime.

Chairman Denham asked if you could have Tammy Anderson email the 987 entities.

James stated yes, I will do so.

Chairman Denham stated moving on to item number 4.

NO VOTE REQUIRED FOR THIS ITEM.

DISCUSS THE POSSIBLE ROLE OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION REGARDING DEVELOPMENT OF THE 5 YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN AND ANNUAL ACTION PLANS THAT ARE REQUIRED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO MAINTAIN THE CITY OF LAWTON'S CDBG AND HOME GRANTS, AND PROVIDE DIRECTION FOR STAFF ACCORDINGLY.

Commissioner D. Jones asked if they have asked the Councilperson that represents the wards for these low to moderate income areas to form some kind of input committee.

James answered I have not. I have gone with Onreka Johnson to some meetings that she does, but that's about it.

Commissioner D. Jones stated I ask this because originally, when legislation like this was passed, each of the low to moderate income areas that could receive CDBG had what they called a PAC, a participation committee. It had members from that particular neighborhood because they have an intimate knowledge of key concerns like the neighborhood has at risk youth, the neighborhood has lots of dilapidated houses etcetera. I don't know any other way to do it now besides obviously target the low to moderate income areas and then go to the Councilperson and ask about their thoughts on generating a committee.

James responded an item had been drafted to come to council regarding if they would want to have a subcommittee for this project. It happened to fall in a City Council meeting where they were discussing getting rid of lots of committees, so Richard and I decided that may not be the best time to present that.

Rogalski came to the podium and stated there has been a direction from council to eliminate some of these committees.

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Commissioner D. Jones asked so does that mean they're not going to form their own committees. That'd be welcome news to me.

Rogalski stated that the first body that sees the plan is this body, so it was just a matter of what existing committee could be used to review this. He also stated he does think that's a great idea. Maybe what we need to do is talk to Councilperson Johnson and see if she wants to sponsor an appointment.

Commissioner D. Jones asked if she is the only Councilperson that has targeted neighborhoods.

Chairman Denham stated no, you have Ward 1 and Ward 2.

James stated there are only 1 or 2 neighborhoods in Lawton that are considered not low income.

Commissioner D. Jones stated I understand your hesitancy. If you form a big committee, you're not even going to get a quorum, let alone any information. You need information from that Councilperson on who will participate and who has that knowledge. I'm a little hesitant to use the Planning Commission.

James stated that's how she feels. I am coming up with everything and having to beg people to come use my funds. My grand plan would be that this application process for federal funding is a competitive bid.

Commissioner D. Jones stated I completely agree with you. I'd kind of like to know the council's ideas on how the CDBG funds will be spent. Is it really going to be based on needs or is the City Council just throwing it out to every ward for sidewalks and things.

James stated that she is happy to report that they got a Community Needs Survey. It's the first one she has been aware of. We did it online, I publicized it on the radio several times and we got less than 300 people.

Commissioner D. Jones asked does HUD allow you to determine your public participation plan.

James stated it seems that way. I inherited the citizen participation plan and it's one we've barely tweaked since it's creation.

Chairman Denham asked about the success of getting out the information for the utility assistance funds. Is there a format utilized for that.

James responded that was what we normally do. We put it in the paper, it was at Lawton Housing Authority and our offices. I think it took off because the need was so great, and it spread like wildfire.

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Chairman Denham stated maybe another thing you can do is send us out those categories with the CDBG funds, percentages etcetera, and it seems like we will always have a member or 2 with comments or ideas on how to spend the money.

Commissioner D. Jones stated another thing the council ought to do is reach out to the churches. I'm just hesitant about us formulating the plan and making all of the recommendations.

Commissioner Fox asked, as far as getting the word out, are you using social media.

James responded I sent it to the community relations at the City and they take care of that. I'm an office at 4 so our hands are pretty tied as far as public meetings and output which is why I usually give it to community relations.

Rogalski stated we are open to any recommendations you may have.

Commissioner D. Jones stated regardless of the number of responses you have a community assessment and it's telling you certain messages from the community like at risk youth and dilapidated buildings.

Chairman Denham stated that no one is working on or addressing the highest scoring item on the assessment, and that's the trash, graffiti and appearance of the city.

James stated the needs assessment was eye opening for her.

Chairman Denham stated well the last one that was done was in the 90's and it was done by United Way. Can the money be used to help with the cost of the trash off.

James responded trash would be difficult because I have to have a name or specific place that the money is tied to.

Rogalski stated we have trash off down like a well-oiled machine now and it's really not that expensive.

Commissioner D. Jones stated why don't we consider forming a committee with the Planning Commission, the Council and leave it up to the council to decide whether they want to bring in 2 neighborhood representatives to give insight into the committee as well, and then draft the plan that way. Also make it an off day from the CPC and Council meetings. I would feel better feeling like we had some input from the ground. So, I'll make the motion that we form this committee. I don't want any formal stuff, just get a good banquet room where we can sit.

MOTION by D. Jones, SECOND by Davison, no vote required by City Planning Commission, but 6-0 consensus achieved.

AYES: Jarvis, Bowen, Davison, Denham, Fox, D. Jones. NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED 6 – 0.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS OR COMMENTS

Commissioner Davison stated there is still trash and debris by people's curbs. The City needs to get word out more quickly.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

None.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

David Denham, Chairman
City Planning Commission