



Community Development Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**NH Community Development Finance Authority
14 Dixon Avenue
Concord, NH 03301**

Thursday August 8, 2024
2:00 PM

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRESENT: Benjamin Gaetjens-Oleson, *Chairman*; Elizabeth Fox; Nancy Merrill; Matthew Walsh; Carmen Lorentz; Anne Duncan Cooley; Ignatius MacLellan; and Matt Sullivan.

STAFF: Katherine Easterly Martey, *Executive Director*; Mollie Kaylor, *Director of Housing and Community Development*; Molly Donovan, *Director of Economic Development*; Melissa Latham, *Director of Communications and Policy*; and Maureen Quinn, *Board Relations Manager*.

Mr. Gaetjens-Oleson called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. He offered an announcement, stating that Ms. Carmen Lorentz has been appointed to CDFA's Board of Directors. She has elected to vacate her seat on the Community Development Advisory Committee. The Committee expressed their appreciation to Ms. Lorentz for her contributions. Mr. Gaetjens-Oleson noted there were no members of the public in attendance. No public comment was offered.

Agenda

Mr. Gaetjens-Oleson reviewed the meeting agenda and called for any questions or comments. None were offered. He called for a motion.

Motion – 2:00 PM

Mr. MacLellan moved to approve the meeting agenda, as presented. Ms. Lorentz seconded, and the motion passed by a unanimous vote of the Committee.

A. Consent Agenda

Mr. Gaetjens-Oleson reviewed the consent agenda, which included the minutes from the June 6, 2024, Community Development Advisory Committee meeting. He called for questions or comments; the Committee requested the following amendments to the June 6, 2024 minutes:

- Page 3, third paragraph; correct the typographical error 'itit' to 'it'; and
- Page 3, third paragraph; correct the spacing and add a period between 'funds' and 'Ms.'

Mr. Gaetjens-Oleson requested further questions or comments. None were offered. He called for a motion.

Motion – 2:02 PM

Ms. Lorentz moved to approve the consent agenda, as amended. Ms. Fox seconded, and the motion carried by a unanimous vote of the Committee.

B. CDBG Housing and Public Facilities Funding Round – July Application Summary

Ms. Kaylor updated the Committee on applications received for Program Year 2024, Round One of funding and provided an overview of the review process. She noted eight (8) applications were received; CDFA staff is in the process of completing preliminary reviews of each application, which include things like:

- Thresholds
- Eligibility Requirements
- Financial Reviews
- Compliance Plans

After thresholds are reviewed, and any issues are addressed with applicants, lead reviewers from CDFA are assigned applications and complete a comprehensive review of each. In September, site visits will be conducted; after site visits are completed, CDFA staff will finish the process of scoring each application, final write-ups and recommendations will be drafted, and in November, all recommendations to fund or decline applications will be brought forward to the Community Development Advisory Committee.

Ms. Kaylor noted that eight applications were received in the round. Four (4) housing applications requesting \$2M and four (4) public facilities applications requesting approximately \$1.9M were received. She noted there is good geographic distribution, with applications from the North Country, Lakes Region, southwest New Hampshire. Ms. Kaylor noted CDFA will engage long-time consultant Glenn Coppelman as a lead reviewer. Additionally, Ericka Cross McDonald – a long-time employee of the Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter – will work alongside Ms. Kaylor to assist as a reviewer in this round and gain experience to become a lead reviewer in the future. Ms. Kaylor noted that there is one repeat applicant whose application was not recommended for funding in a previous round due to the application scoring below the line of available funding.

Mr. Sullivan joined the meeting at 2:12 PM

C. Community Development Block Grant Program Material Project

Ms. Kaylor informed the Committee that CDFA staff have continued to develop an RFP for a Project Consultant to update existing and create new CDBG program and outreach material. She noted suggestions made by the Committee have been incorporated into the updated RFP. The Committee was asked for additional comments and questions.

The Committee thanked staff for the update and asked whether an increase in applications would exceed CDFA's staff capacity as well as the capacity of grant writers. Ms. Kaylor noted that CDFA does have the capacity and will continue to work to expand the pool of trained grant writers and administrators. A key component of this project will be to create and distribute a training calendar and to revise and develop training materials for this purpose. The Committee discussed the availability of materials in languages other than English, citing the need to ensure these funds are more broadly accessible. It was noted CDFA used a language translator function for the Community Navigators program, and that resource was available on CDFA's website and resource hub.

It was suggested that the RFP be disturbed as soon as reasonably possible. The Committee offered to help review material created as part of this project. They asked that it be shared well in advance of the regular packet materials, to provide ample time for review and suggestions.

D. Small Business Task Force

Ms. Donovan updated the Committee on the Small Business Task Force. She reported that she has identified and is asking people to join the Task Force. It is anticipated the first meeting will be in the latter part of August 2024, with subsequent meetings taking place in September, October, and November. The Task Force will use results from the NH Small Business Ecosystem Analysis along with learnings from the Community Navigator program to develop a set of best practices to further develop and enhance resources for the small business sector, which comprises a very significant percentage of employers in the State.

Ms. Donovan noted additional updates will be provided to the Committee as the work of the task force starts to produce guidelines and best practice recommendations.

E. CDBG 50th Anniversary

Ms. Easterly Martey noted for the Committee this is the 50th year of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. She noted that there are trends in the program which warrant monitoring. The federal allocation of funding has been occurring later and later each year over the last several years; this makes it more challenging for states to make awards that are not 'contingent'; contingencies typically slow projects and can create compliance and timing issues critical to bringing a project to fruition. Ms. Easterly Martey noted it is anticipated all HUD funding resource pools are to be reduced by 1%, which will have an impact of the CDBG program.

The Committee discussed the CDBG program and observed that the program has not had any significant updates made over the past 50 years to better align with changes in communities. It was noted that some areas which qualify as entitlement communities have changed significantly and those designations may not necessarily represent the current economic conditions of those communities. In some cases, the entitlement designation has resulted in a community having access to smaller CDBG amounts. The Committee suggested greater advocacy for HUD is important to ensure continued support and funding for the program. The Committee agreed that CDBG may be the most significant Federal program as it allows States and communities to establish their own priorities. It is a program which is critical and impactful.

F. Adjourn – 2:48 PM

Ms. Lorentz moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. MacLellan seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous vote of the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,



Maureen Quinn, Board Relations Manager



Benjamin Gaetjens-Oleson Committee Chair