

APPROVED

**CITY OF URBANA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, May 23, 2000, City Council Chambers**

Commission Members Present: Fred Cobb, Chris Diana, Robert Lewis, Jon Liebman, Gigi Paquin, Anne Heinze Silvis, Dennis Vidoni

Commission Members Absent: Carol Westfield

Others Present: April Getchius and Connie Eldridge, Grants Management Division; Lester Pritchard, Citizens for HOMES; Barbara Pritchard, PACE, Inc.

Call to Order: Chairperson Cobb called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes for the April 25, 2000 meeting will be available at the June 27 meeting.

Staff Report: Ms. Getchius stated staff would meet with Lester Pritchard and John Severns to discuss visitability on May 24.

Ms. Getchius thanked commissioners who were involved in the interview process for the Grants Management Division Manager. After receiving input from those involved, she will make a decision.

The Committee of the Whole forwarded the city's budget and Consolidated Social Service funding to the City Council. Since the Committee determined the Consolidated Social Service funding details, staff will bring the amended CDBG budget to the CD Commission in June.

Ms. Getchius distributed the completed grant application for the Supportive Housing Program Renewal of Homeless Families in Transition. The application was approved by City Council and forwarded to HUD. The Urbana HOME Consortium and the City of Urbana Consolidated Plan for Program Years 2000-2004 was also submitted to HUD.

Ms. Getchius thanked staff, volunteers and Commissioner Paquin for helping with Neighborhood Cleanup. Many CD Target area residents participated to make this another successful cleanup.

Petitions and Communications: Lester Pritchard updated commissioners on his meeting with Barb Pritchard and John Severns on visitability. Their goal is to make visitable homes look similar to nonvisitable homes. The photos submitted at the last meeting are examples of houses built by other contractors, not houses built under HomeBuild. At the May 24 meeting with city staff, they will discuss lowering a house's entrance yet keeping appropriate protection from termites and water. Ms. Pritchard added the meetings have been very fruitful and hope to have a concrete proposal next month. Chairperson Cobb wondered how visitability changes will impact the cost of a house. Mr. Pritchard mentioned the costs of additional concrete for the sidewalk and connectors between the support joist and the sidewalk. Ms. Pritchard mentioned that

lowering the house would not require as steep a grade of sidewalk and therefore less concrete. In response to Commissioner Lewis, Mr. Pritchard clarified the proposal is to lower one side of a house's joist structure to better accommodate the grade.

Old Business: **Letter to Carol Westfield** - Chairperson Cobb asked for commissioners input regarding the draft letter to Carol Westfield. Ms. Westfield has been unable to attend commission meetings due to conflicts with her employment. Commissioner Vidoni asked about similar letters to past commissioners. Discussion continued on the need for a quorum and the commission's by-laws. Commissioner Diana supported the action, and Commissioner Silvis suggested wording changes. Ms. Getchius reminded commissioners to suggest potential commissioners to the mayor. It was the consensus of the Community Development Commission to forward the letter to Ms. Westfield.

New Business: **Property Acquisition of 906 West Eads** – Ms. Getchius noted this is one of the last lots on Eads Street that does not have a newer Eads at Lincoln subdivision style house. In the past dilapidated or uninhabitable properties in the neighborhood were purchased at low cost. However, with the development of the Eads at Lincoln subdivision, property values have increased. Staff recommends purchasing the property at its appraised value of \$33,000. The house would be demolished and an Eads style house would be built.

Commissioner Lewis asked about lot size and the excess right-of-way. Although the city had earlier dedicated access to the owners on the excess right-of-way, Ms. Getchius said the property would be considered one zoning lot. In response to Commissioner Diana, Ms. Getchius stated the vacant lots to the west are committed in the final phase of Eads at Lincoln subdivision. Chairperson Cobb questioned the cost of acquisition and demolition and then asked about rehabilitation. Ms. Getchius responded there is a difference between habitable and marketable housing. Staff must consider the cost of rehabilitating a house to make it marketable. Commissioner Lewis inquired about the availability of the corner property to the east. Although he saw the greater good in building an Eads style house, Commissioner Vidoni was concerned with demolishing a habitable house. Ms. Getchius felt there was an obligation to subdivision residents to finish the subdivision as well as protect the City's investment. Discussion continued on cost of acquisition, relocation, asbestos abatement, and demolition. Commissioner Diana was concerned with eliminating lower-cost housing. He also requested a better exit strategy on future developments. Ms. Getchius answered staff must consider availability, timing, and potential relocation costs when considering property acquisition. They also discussed closing out subdivisions, the need for vacant lots, and replacing antiquated housing stock. Ms. Getchius explained staff was following standard procedures for acquisition.

In response to Commissioner Liebman, Ms. Getchius summarized the concept of the Eads at Lincoln subdivision to completely redevelop a distressed area. Although Commissioner Lewis understood the need for continuity in the Eads Subdivision, he was concerned about setting a precedence for higher cost acquisitions, for example, in economic development. Ms. Getchius replied that although economic development in target neighborhoods is not a current goal of the CD Commission, the commission could set that goal.

Commissioner Diana proposed the city seek options on property at the beginning of projects. To complete the Eads at Lincoln Subdivision, Commissioner Silvis felt the city should demolish this rental property and build a single-family residence. Commissioner Lewis agreed. Noting the importance of Lincoln Avenue to the University of Illinois campus, Commissioner Lewis

suggested staff acquire the adjoining property to the east. Chairperson Cobb requested staff provide additional information, architectural alternatives and more notice on property acquisitions. Commissioners discussed appraisal and market values.

Commissioner Lewis moved to recommend to City Council (1) the acquisition and demolition of the property at 906 West Eads Street, and (2) that staff consider acquisition of the property at 1207 North Lincoln Avenue. Commissioner Paquin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment: Chairperson Cobb adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Recorded by Connie Eldridge _____

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