

CITY OF URBANA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, June 27, 2000, City Council Chambers

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

Commission Members Absent: Jon Liebman

Others Present: April Getchius, Michael Loschen, Randy Burgett, and Connie Eldridge, Grants Management Division; Lester Pritchard, Citizens for HOMES; Barbara Pritchard, PACE, Inc.; Jerry White, Champaign County Advocacy and Mentoring Resources (CCAMR); Alan Douglas.

Call to Order: Chairperson Cobb called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes: *Chairperson Cobb asked for approval or corrections to the April 25, 2000 minutes. Commissioner Silvis moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Diana seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Chairperson Cobb inquired if the Neighborhood Improvement Fund (NIF) Committee considered the impact of this fund on the buyer and seller of the property. Ms. Getchius answered the City of Urbana has no control over property transactions or the housing market. The underlying philosophy of this program is to improve property values in this area.

Commissioner Vidoni requested that a copy of the letter to former Commissioner Carol Westfield be provided to commissioners.

Chairperson Cobb asked for approval or corrections to the May 23, 2000 minutes. Commissioner Vidoni moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion. Chairperson Cobb believed the commissioners' discomfort with purchasing the property at 906 West Eads for \$33,000 was not reflected in the minutes. Ms. Getchius stated she relayed the commissioners' concerns to the City Council. Commissioner Vidoni also felt the depth of the commissioners' concerns was not reflected in the minutes. Commissioner Diana remembered that he had requested staff preplan subdivision closeouts. Ms. Getchius suggested the minutes be revised for review at the July meeting. Commissioner Vidoni withdrew the motion and moved to postpone approval so the minutes may be modified. Commissioner Paquin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Silvis suggested a summary statement be added to the May 23, 2000 minutes. Commissioner Lewis moved to modify the earlier motion that the May 23, 2000 minutes be clarified to reflect the Community Development Commission's concern with the increased cost of these properties. Commissioner Diana seconded the motion. Commissioner Silvis felt the concern was not with the increased costs because these reflected the increased property values. She believed the concern was with the increased cost of finishing subdivision projects. Discussion continued on how best to phrase the commissioners' concerns. Commissioner Diana

preferred the Recording Secretary review the recording and revise the minutes accordingly. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Report: Ms. Getchius noted the City Council approved acquisition of 906 West Eads Street. Commissioner Vidoni asked about the City Council's opinion of the Eads Street property acquisition. Although there was not much discussion, Ms. Getchius believed they agreed with the Community Development Commission that this was an opportunity to complete the Eads at Lincoln subdivision despite the higher cost.

Craig Grant, Building Safety Division Manager, has met with Mr. Severns and Mr. Pritchard regarding the Visitability Ordinance. Ms. Getchius believed the technical issues have been worked out; only the additional costs need to be worked out.

The candidate for the Grants Management Division (GMD) Manager did not accept the city's job offer. Ms. Getchius is re-evaluating the situation. The consultant will re-advertise the vacancy and not charge the city any additional fees.

Petitions and Communications: Lester Pritchard summarized the details of his meeting with the City of Urbana staff and the architects for HomeBuild. They discussed an alternative design to reduce the need for long ramps outside a house. There was unanimous consensus on the design and construction for visitability. He distributed a draft copy of Minimum Design and Construction Requirements for Visitability. Community Development staff came up with a design to meet all necessary criteria, such as water. Mr. Pritchard said the issue is whether or not this design is more cost effective than a ramp. John Severns is developing a cost structure. Mr. Pritchard requested Visitability Ordinance be placed on the Community Development Commission's agenda for the July meeting.

Ms. Getchius asked if the categories removed the need for the waiver process. Mr. Pritchard answered he would still want a waiver process. Barbara Pritchard added they do not want the waiver process to be used a lot.

Old Business: None.

New Business: **Acquisition of Property at 1107 West Fairview Avenue** – Mr. Loschen stated this vacant dilapidated property is almost across the street from King School. Building Safety Division has condemned the property, and the court has ordered it demolished. The property owner has decided to sell the property to the City of Urbana for its appraised value of \$5,500 plus two years of delinquent taxes (estimated \$815). The property will be donated to Illinois Center for Citizen Involvement for use in their HomeBuild Program.

Commissioner Paquin wondered about building on a lot only 59 feet wide. Ms. Getchius answered this is a legally nonconforming lot. It may be built upon as long as setback requirements are met. Chairperson Cobb asked the homeowner was happy with the arrangement. Mr. Loschen answered yes.

Noting the lot is next to school property, Commissioner Lewis asked if staff had contacted the Urbana School District about the lot's availability. Mr. Loschen answered no; there is a lot or

two between this property and the school's parking lot. Discussion continued about the school district's possible interest in the lot.

Commissioner Silvis moved to recommend to City Council acquisition of the property at 1107 West Fairview Avenue. Commissioner Diana seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Intergovernmental Agreement Concerning Administration of a Champaign/Urbana/Rantoul/Champaign County HOME Investment Partnerships Consortium FY2001-2004

– Mr. Loschen stated that two agreements need to be approved to operate the HOME Consortium. The first agreement is the intergovernmental agreement with the City of Urbana, City of Champaign, Village of Rantoul, and Champaign County. This determines internal operations. The second agreement is with the Department of HUD. On July 1, 2000 the HOME Consortium will enter its sixth year. These agreements represent the three-year recertification of the HOME Consortium. Annually the Consortium receives \$850,000 to \$890,000 for affordable housing issues.

Commissioner Lewis asked how the Village of Rantoul's other funding was impacted by joining the Consortium. Mr. Loschen was not aware of any issues. When Rantoul joined last year, the HOME Consortium's funding increased by \$40,000-\$50,000.

Commissioner Vidoni moved to recommend to City Council approval of the Intergovernmental Agreement Concerning Administration of a Champaign/Urbana/Rantoul/Champaign County HOME Investment Partnerships Consortium FY2001-2004. Commissioner Paquin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Age Requirement for Elderly/Disabled Junk Pickup – Mr. Burgett noted the Community Development Commission had set 55 years as the age requirement for junk pickup for elderly and/or disabled persons during Neighborhood Cleanup. Mr. Burgett is requesting this be changed to 62 years or older. All other programs in Grants Management Division classify elderly as 62 years or older. By having one age limit Mr. Burgett hopes to avoid confusion with older citizens for program eligibility.

Chairperson Cobb asked if raising the age limit would result in more junk being left in the City of Urbana. Mr. Burgett replied there are not many citizens who will be affected and those that were would find a way to get their junk to the drop-off site. Commissioner Diana wondered why the age limit was set at 55. Mr. Burgett did not know—it was set several years ago.

Chairperson Cobb suggested changing the name of the program to distinguish it from other programs for the elderly. He would like the program to serve persons aged 55 and above. Mr. Burgett felt it would not affect many persons. Commissioner Lewis asked if the other Grants Management Division programs classified elderly as 62 years old by statute. Mr. Burgett responded the Rehabilitation Manual has always defined elderly at 62 years or older. If this age was set by statute, Commissioner Lewis preferred to make this program consistent. If the age was not set by statute, he suggested 55 years as a starting point for all Grants Management Division programs.

Commissioner Diana asked how many persons were over 55 years but under 62. He was concerned that persons who qualified under the 55 age limit might be excluded with the new higher limit. Mr. Burgett responded that the age of the cleanup participant is not recorded.

Commissioner Silvis said lowering the age limit to 55 for all programs might create more problems than staff could handle. Commissioner Lewis felt the amount of funding would limit the number of participants. Commissioner Silvis did not feel 55 is elderly and preferred to keep the limit at 62.

Mr. Loschen left the meeting to check HOME and CDBG regulations.

City of Urbana Housing Rehabilitation Program Manual Program Years 2000-2004 – Mr. Burgett noted earlier Rehabilitation Manuals were created every two years. He changed the program years to match the City of Urbana's Consolidated Plan and added HOME program guidelines. Gross Monthly Income was changed to Gross Annual Income in the Definitions section. Since both CDBG and HOME regulations use Section 8 income guidelines, these guidelines were added to the Rehabilitation Manual. Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) trust funds were used in past year's Grant/Deferred Loans and Grant/Installment Loans. These funds have been expended, and there are no additional funds for the coming year. Mr. Burgett anticipated staff applying for IHDA funds in the next few years.

Commissioner Vidoni asked if the Whole House Rehabilitation Programs are the only programs that require money to be paid back to the city. Mr. Burgett summarized payment of deferred loans. He explained the mortgages reflect both IHDA and the city's deferred loan requirements. \$2,500 of the original \$5,000 IHDA grant funds are forgiven after five years; \$12,500 remains on the mortgage.

Commissioner Diana asked if the lead based paint requirement would affect all properties receiving assistance, not just properties newly receiving assistance. Mr. Burgett anticipated that all programs will be affected by the new regulations which take effect September 15, 2000. These requirements are based on the amount of money spent per project. The new regulations require projects that cost over \$25,000 to have total lead paint abatement. Mr. Burgett suggested a maximum limit of \$25,000 for the Whole House Rehabilitation Programs. For Emergency and Access Grants, Mr. Burgett suggested reducing the amount of funding to \$5,000. This puts Emergency and Access Grants into Required Approach Number 1: Do Not Harm. Small projects that do not disturb a certain amount of square footage will not need a risk assessment by a lead based paint risk inspector. However, projects that cost more than \$5,000 will need this risk assessment. The amount of surface area disturbed and the project cost determine the amount of lead paint hazard reduction.

Mr. Burgett described the upcoming training session for staff from the City of Urbana, City of Champaign, Village of Rantoul, Champaign County, Urban League and Illinois Center for Citizen Involvement. The City of Urbana will have two staff members licensed to provide lead based paint assessment. This should eliminate the cost of contracting for this service.

In response to Commissioner Lewis, Mr. Burgett said if the funding limit for an Emergency or Access Grant is not reduced, the city runs the risk of not being able to pay for the actual emergency repair. For example, once the project cost goes over \$5,000, a total risk assessment

on the entire property is required. If there is a lead based paint deterioration hazard, regulations require the entire problem be corrected. There may not be funds left to correct the original problem. Ms. Getchius added staff anticipates most grant applications will fall below \$5,000. She is concerned that fewer households will be helped because of the escalated price. Commissioner Lewis asked about risk analysis and abatement. Mr. Burgett replied projects that cost less than \$25,000 will require lead hazard reduction, not abatement. Projects over \$25,000 will require full abatement.

Mr. Burgett discussed grant applications for lead based paint reduction and abatement programs. Commissioner Lewis wondered why asbestos abatement was not also included in future grant applications. Ms. Getchius said asbestos abatement is an issue only during house demolitions. Mr. Burgett explained the demolition procedure when asbestos was used in house siding. Commissioner Lewis noted most older homes have a non-friable asbestos paneling inside old furnaces and asbestos in tile floors. He felt a risk analysis should be done for housing interiors. Commissioner Diana anticipated that demolition regulations concerning lead based paint might be coming in the near future and asked if an effective date had been set. Mr. Burgett said the HUD training sessions did not mention this. Staff is working with the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) to pay for contractor training on lead based paint.

Mr. Burgett described Emergency and Access Grant projects over the last two years. Commissioner Vidoni asked if the seven projects that cost over \$5,000 had a risk analysis. Mr. Burgett answered no; the lead paint abatement program is not effective until September 15, 2000.

Chairperson Cobb asked if the government has done an analysis of the harmful effects of lead based paint in this area. Commissioner Lewis replied that federal regulations started in 1986. The government was looking to the local health departments to monitor the regulations. The regulations have been on the books; however, they have not been enforced. The federal government is now requiring the health department to monitor the children in the community. He noted health departments in the larger cities are finding children affected by lead based paint. Ms. Getchius added the local public health district did not have a policy or mention lead based paint testing, analysis or treatment in its five-year plan. Without proper documentation and additional staff time there is no way to justify a grant application.

Chairperson Cobb questioned the three-year residency requirement for Whole House Rehabilitation applicants. He suggested giving priority to long-term homeowners rather than making it a requirement. Mr. Burgett explained the current prioritization for Whole House is based on the homeowner's age, income and condition of the structure. He suggested a residency requirement because of the growing trend for future homeowners to plan to buy a house in the target area and request the city repair it through the Emergency Grant program. Mr. Burgett speculated that realtors are using the city's repair program to encourage home sales. He felt the buyer and seller should address the condition of the house at the time of sale. Commissioner Vidoni clarified that staff would use the rehabilitation manual to discourage this practice. Although he understood staff's concern, Commissioner Diana questioned the three-year requirement and asked if statutory regulations prohibited a waiting period. Mr. Burgett was not aware of any federal regulations. He had checked on waiting periods with other cities and noted the City of Champaign has a one-year waiting period. Commissioner Diana suggested a one-

year waiting period to be consistent with Champaign. Commissioner Lewis discussed contractor availability and project completion.

Mr. Burgett requested this waiting period be effective for all programs. Chairperson Cobb restated the applicant must have resided at the residence for one year prior to applying for assistance. Commissioner Silvis asked if the requirement concerned residence or ownership. Mr. Burgett replied the Whole House Rehabilitation Program requires ownership. Emergency Grant applicants may be owners, contract buyers or trust deed recipient; Access Grant applicants may even be renters. While CDBG regulations allow this, HOME regulations do not allow contract for deed or trust deed recipients to apply for Whole House Rehabilitation funds

Commissioner Diana asked if there was a benefit to do a lead based paint risk assessment even if it was not required. He referred to a complete roof project costing \$4,000 done on a \$25,000 house that needs \$50,000 worth of lead based paint abatement. He questioned the viability of a project on a house that may not be saleable. In response, Mr. Burgett reviewed the following new requirement to the rehabilitation manual. During an Emergency Grant assessment, staff has the option of asking the homeowner to complete an application for the Whole House Rehabilitation Program. If the property would require a whole house rehabilitation to bring it into compliance with codes, the project would be prioritized on the Whole House Rehabilitation waiting list. Commissioner Diana agreed.

Mr. Burgett has also added a new section on the Senior Repair Service to the rehabilitation manual. This program is available to low-income seniors (age 62 and older) and disabled persons and offers \$550 worth of home maintenance. To date 40 projects have been completed. Mr. Burgett was concerned with lowering the age limit to 55 since the program was so popular.

Ms. Getchius stated Mr. Burgett did an excellent job pulling together many programs with different funding sources and regulations in the rehabilitation manual. She reminded commissioners they may amend the manual at any time. Chairperson Cobb and Commissioner Lewis concurred.

Mr. Burgett said minor wording was changed to make the rehabilitation manual consistent. The Section 8 income requirements came directly from HOME regulations. Previous programs considered an applicant's assets as part of the qualification process. Now interest income for assets above \$5,000 is added to the applicant's income; there is no limit on the amount of assets. Chairperson Cobb asked if a car was considered an asset. Mr. Burgett said no, only bank bearing accounts were considered assets. He added that very few applicants have assets over \$5,000.

Commissioner Diana moved to recommend to City Council the proposed changes to the Housing Rehabilitation Manual for Program Year 2000-2004 as written with the exception of the applicant qualification section which would be changed to one year prior residency for all programs. Commissioner Vidoni seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Age Requirement for Elderly/Disabled Junk Pickup (continued)– Mike Loschen reported to commissioners that HOME regulations are concerned with income level rather than age. Mr. Loschen skimmed the CDBG regulations but did not see a specific definition for elderly. Fair Housing regulations may define elderly persons.

Commissioner Vidoni asked what was the downside of keeping the limit at 55 versus 62 years. Mr. Burgett stressed consistency with other programs. Ms. Getchius remarked that a consistent definition of elderly would reduce confusion. Commissioner Lewis recommended the age limit for elderly be 62 years. Commissioner Diana believed this program was flexible enough so residents of any age may dispose of their junk during Neighborhood Cleanup. Chairperson Cobb asked how a participant's age was checked. Mr. Burgett said staff asks the telephone caller's age but does not verify it. Chairperson Cobb asked when and how age was mentioned. Mr. Burgett replied the newsletter article had offered the program to elderly persons age 55 or over or disabled persons. Chairperson Cobb suggested deleting the reference to age and using only the term elderly. Ms. Getchius preferred the Community Development Commission provide guidance. Chairperson Cobb did not want to lose any participants and proposed not publicizing the age limit. Ms. Getchius thought this might cause more confusion among older residents.

Commissioner Vidoni commented there seems to be some rationale for having the limit at 55 and keeping the program as accessible as possible. Chairperson Cobb said the program must be helping some people if they call in and argue about their participation. After reviewing the number of participants and the amount of junk, Mr. Burgett expressed concern that there may not be enough volunteers to collect the junk during cleanup. Also Ms. Getchius said many participants have several pickup truck loads of junk at one address. Commissioner Silvis felt the city might lose more goodwill by confusing people and making them feel they are losing out on other programs since they are not 62. She preferred to keep it simple and have the 62 years as the definition of elderly across the board.

Commissioner Paquin suggested changing the wording so that (1) elderly and disabled persons are offered free junk pickup, and (2) if you are between the ages of 55 and 62 and have difficulty getting junk to the site, volunteers will be available to help. Thus elderly is defined as 62 years and over; however, the volunteer service is still available for persons age 55 to 62. Chairperson Cobb agreed. Mr. Burgett felt adding another option would be more confusing. Commissioner Diana asked at what point are limits placed on the program. Commissioner Vidoni noted the problem is not only one of confusion but availability of service. He felt there was a lot of rationale for increasing the age.

For continuity of administrative purposes, Commissioner Lewis moved to set the age limit for elderly persons at 62 years for the Elderly/Disabled Persons Junk Pickup. Commissioner Vidoni seconded the motion. The vote was four ayes, one no.

Adjournment: Chairperson Cobb adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

Recorded by Connie Eldridge