



MINUTES
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, May 28, 2002, Second Floor Conference Room

Commission Members Present: Chris Diana, Alice Englebretsen, Robert Lewis, Anne Heinze Silvis, Dennis Vidoni

Commission Members Absent: Fred Cobb, Michael Holly, Gigi Paquin

Others Present: Joanna Shisler; Bob Grewe, Randy Burgett, Connie Eldridge, Annalise Fonza, Libby Tyler, Community Development Services; Robert Freeman, Housing Authority of Champaign County.

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

Approval of Minutes: *Acting Chairperson Lewis asked for approval or corrections to the March 26, 2002 minutes. Commissioner Diana moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Vidoni seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Acting Chairperson Lewis asked for approval or corrections to the April 23, 2002 minutes. Commissioner Silvis moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Vidoni seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Report: Mr. Grewe distributed copies of the staff report. He announced that future Community Development (CD) Commission meetings would be televised on Urbana Public Television. Acting Chairperson Lewis felt this would improve the grant process by educating social service agencies. Noting that both the Zoning Board of Administration and the Community Development Commission provide input to Urbana City Council, Ms. Tyler stated this is part of the movement toward more open government.

Mr. Grewe introduced Joanna Shisler, who will be a new member of the CD Commission.

The Federal Home Loan Bank accepted a joint application from the Cities of Champaign and Urbana. Mr. Grewe anticipated the City of Urbana would receive \$31,000 in additional funds for owner-occupied housing rehabilitation.

Mr. Grewe distributed information on the transition of Illinois Center for Citizen Involvement (ICFCI). John Johnson, ICFCI, is planning to spin-off the housing component to a new non-profit organization. Mr. Grewe reviewed the background, issues and timeline for the transition. The transition activities, agreement and documentation are being staffed as a legal matter.

Ms. Tyler referenced a HOME Consortium meeting on May 25, 2002. As lead entity, the City of Urbana was directed to draft a mutual release between the HOME Consortium and ICFCI.

Attorneys for the City of Urbana and ICFCI have met to start the process. The CD Commission will receive a draft of the agreement, and Urbana City Council will approve. The HOME Consortium directed the City of Urbana to initiate contact with other CHDOs.

Acting Chairperson Lewis asked what the mutual release will mean to both parties and asked about the impact. Ms. Tyler responded that the objective is to limit damages on both sides. ICFCI has been very cooperative, and the attorneys are making good progress. She mentioned protecting the city from liability and that the project may or may not go forward. Also, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) may require payback of grant funds. Acting Chairperson Lewis asked if the Department of HUD is leaning toward other CHDOs. Ms. Tyler replied that the choices are to either transfer the program to another CHDO or to stop and re-evaluate the program. Any future agreements must meet homebuyers' expectations.

Referencing the City of Urbana's May 2 request for funds from the Department of HUD, Commissioner Vidoni asked about repayment of grant funds and the Department of HUD's interpretation. Ms. Tyler said there is a possibility that repayment may be required. She noted that staff from the Department of HUD would be at the City of Urbana in early June. Mr. Grewe added that federal regulations require funds to be repaid if a project is not completed. If the HOME Consortium completes the project, then funds may not have to be paid back. However, if the subrecipient does not pay back the funds, the city must pay the funds.

Commissioner Vidoni noted the CD Commission recommended the Annual Action Plan to City Council on April 23, 2002 and asked about standards of quality assurance. Mr. Grewe said due to other considerations, the issue has not been further staffed. Ms. Tyler added the CD Commission recommendations still stand, and she agreed that more oversight of CHDOs is necessary. She mentioned presenting future amendments to City Council.

Referencing the Eads Street Development Corporation's application to become a new CHDO, Commissioner Diana asked about the organization's past projects that would qualify it to become a CHDO. Mr. Grewe believed the organization did not operate for a number of years when it was a part of ICFCI. The organization must contact the Secretary of State to recreate or re-activate. In response to Commissioner Diana, Mr. Grewe replied that staff was not aware if the organization was viable. Commissioner Silvis remarked the organization, even if active, must meet certain criteria to become a CHDO. Acting Chairperson Lewis added the Eads Street Development Corporation was dormant and would need to lobby for reinstatement based on prior experience. Commissioner Diana commented that this transfer appeared to take the experience from ICFCI to Eads Street Development Corporation. He asked why ICFCI was closing its affordable housing program. According to Mike Doyle of ICFCI, Mr. Grewe explained that ICFCI is spinning off its housing component. ICFCI has taken in other groups and then spun off the unit when it was ready to become independent. Commissioner Diana asked if ICFCI only consisted of a housing component. Acting Chairperson Lewis believed that to be true. Commissioner Silvis stated this was not an appropriate time to spin-off the housing rehabilitation. It is inconvenient and did not make sense. Acting Chairperson Lewis said the decision must have been internal to the organization.

Mr. Grewe stated the Urbana HOME Consortium, which includes the Cities of Champaign and Urbana and Champaign County, will revisit the consortium agreement and create an improved framework for decision-making.

Concerning Neighborhood Cleanup, Mr. Grewe distributed the final summary for Spring 2002 and included summaries of past cleanups. Despite the changes Spring Cleanup went smoothly. Mr. Burgett discussed reinstating landscape recycling. He remarked that cleanup costs fluctuate, with spring cleanups usually more costly. He mentioned that costs are kept down due to the good turnout of volunteers. Commissioner Diana and Commissioner Vidoni commented on the higher number of participating households.

Mr. Grewe briefly reviewed the bond cap allocation, a certificate of consistency with the Consolidated Plan, Get the Lead Out, and the Federal Home Loan Bank funding for Emergency and Access Grant Programs. There may be a need to invest more time and effort with families participating in the Transitional Housing Program. Mr. Grewe mentioned continued dialogue with Nigel Austin concerning King Park Neighborhood Center.

In response to Commissioner Vidoni, Mr. Grewe discussed expansion of Peter Pan Day Care. The lot was included with the Community Development (CD) Plan Review and CD Engineering. He is researching the city's decision that the lot could accommodate only one house. The property, which is included in the closeout of Eads Subdivision, is being appraised.

Acting Chairperson Lewis asked if the neighborhood committee for the King Park Community Center has a relationship with the Urbana School District 116 or the Urbana Park District. Mr. Grewe believed the committee felt their project was independent of the two entities. Commissioner Silvis remarked that the renovation of Leal School included public space. Acting Chairperson Lewis stated that King School deserved the same consideration. He said King School needs equivalent services and classroom spaces. Mr. Grewe mentioned a neighborhood survey. Acting Chairperson Lewis encouraged the committee to involve many community members such as the local hospitals. Mr. Grewe noted that Councilperson Hayes felt there should be a project coordinator.

Petitions and Communications: Robert Freeman, Housing Authority of Champaign County, discussed the Champaign County Group Work Camp 2002. 569 youth from the United States, Korea and Japan will participate in housing rehabilitation in Champaign County, western Vermillion County, Paxton and Tuscola. 37 contractors will work with the youth as they replace roofs, floors, build ramps, test for lead, and work on mobile homes. In response to Mr. Grewe, Mr. Freeman described past involvement and how this area was selected. Group Publishing Company has sponsored this event over the past 18 years.

Old Business: **Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing** – Mr. Grewe distributed an Urbana Census Tract Summary for 2000 and a census tract map. He requested feedback from the CD Commission. Annalise Fonza presented a summary on fair housing analysis based on census information released May 16, 2002. She summarized the basic demographics for the City of Urbana with an emphasis on Census Tracts 51-60. Urbana is mostly renter-occupied with the

largest population group ages 20-24. Census Tract 59 includes dormitories, while Census Tract 60 includes married student housing. All census tracts that are predominantly owner-occupied are also predominantly female. She will compare data from Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) to census tract characteristics.

Ms. Fonza stated the information shows the relationship between the different races and noted the lack of diversity in neighborhoods. She then compared Champaign and Urbana by racial diversity. For example, the Asian population is higher in Urbana than in Champaign. She considered the impact of Urbana's human rights ordinance and landlord/tenant relationships. Commissioner Diana stated the high number of renters and Asian population in Census Tract 60 was probably more related to the impact of the University of Illinois married student housing rather than the human rights ordinance. Discussion continued on the distribution of owner-occupied properties.

Ms. Fonza said the distribution of age categories for the Cities of Champaign and Urbana were similar. The State of Illinois had the largest percentage of persons aged 25-34.

Ms. Fonza discussed the list of impediments and recommendations based on interviews with key persons and agencies involved with housing issues. Noting the earlier Analysis of Impediments considered the economics of housing, Mr. Grewe said he had not appreciated how the language barrier affected purchasing a home. Some impediments concerned the Tenant Union: its limited enforcement authority, persons' lack of awareness, and the process being too slow to provide effective relief. Ms. Fonza stated that housing vouchers must be used within a certain timeframe. Because many persons must find a place to live, they abandon the process of complaints. Persons with disabilities may encounter a landlord's refusal to accommodate them. There are also ambiguities about who removes accommodations for persons with disabilities. Noting the 1991 analysis had a strong focus on race, Ms. Fonza said that race is still an issue but there are also other issues in this community. She also said there are also a lot of good things happening in Urbana.

In response to Commissioner Vidoni, Ms. Fonza discussed discrimination based on sources of income, such as Section 8 vouchers. For example, a landlord required a tenant to pay rent with his/her own money and not a voucher. Mr. Grewe mentioned a subsidy being problematic to some landlords. Ms. Fonza raised the issue of child support, alimony, disability checks, etc. According to the Vacellia Clark, Human Relations Officer for the City of Urbana, many people do not file complaints. Ms. Clark believed the estimates to be higher than the actual numbers of complaints.

Mr. Grewe mentioned how the demolition of housing affects the cost of rent. Acting Chairperson Lewis stated the Department of HUD is not focusing on one-for-one replacement. Commissioner Diana said the housing pool is demolished from the bottom up. Older housing gets demolished and replaced with higher cost units rather than rehabilitated.

Discussion continued on parking requirements and occupancy standards. Mr. Grewe mentioned that different ethnic groups have extended family living arrangements. Ms. Fonza stated that

occupancy limits are the hottest item now and mentioned respecting different ethnic issues. Urbana's zoning ordinance allows any number of occupants related by blood. However, the Property Maintenance Code, which overrides the zoning ordinance, allows four persons per 80 square feet. She questioned whether the ordinance lined up with the FHA. Acting Chairperson Lewis remarked there is the same dilemma with federal and state codes. The Housing Authority had to enforce the federal codes.

Ms. Fonza stated the HMDA data only identifies those who have submitted mortgage applications. It does not include information about inquiries or the pre-application process.

Ms. Fonza requested commissioners consider the issues and other impediments to fair housing. She requested possible solutions and recommendations. Mr. Grewe added the data is used to identify impediments and to create a plan with strategies for remedies.

New Business: **Contract for Technical and Advisory Services with the Urban League of Champaign County** – Mr. Burgett noted this agreement was similar to last year's agreement which provided services for the Whole House Rehabilitation Program. This program, which will begin July 1, 2002, will rehabilitate 4-5 homes. The money is already budgeted, and the program may receive additional funding. Mr. Burgett stated the City of Urbana has contracted with Urban League since 1999-2000. The contract and the prices have remained the same.

Noting Urban League receives \$2,000 for each completed project, Commissioner Vidoni asked how hours and costs varied on each project. Mr. Burgett stated the agreement is based on 80 hours of actual staff time. Urban League receives \$25/hour for projects that do not go forward. The case notes document site visits, contractor and client contacts, creating a work description, inspections, etc. In response to Commissioner Vidoni, Mr. Grewe said that most agreements are based on a project rather than hours. Mr. Burgett added the number of hours is based on several years of housing rehabilitation experience. Acting Chairperson Lewis remarked this agreement was similar to government contracts for on-site advisory inspections. Commissioner Vidoni inquired if each project took 80 hours and about any variables. Mr. Burgett responded the project hours vary with the contractors and the homeowners. The hours average out. Commissioner Diana commented the goal is a number of rehabilitated houses for the contract amount.

Commissioner Englebretsen moved to recommend approval of the Contract for Technical and Advisory Services with the Urban League of Champaign County and to forward to the mayor for his signature. Commissioner Diana seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Recorded by Connie Eldridge