



*APPROVED with corrections by CDC 8-24-04*  
**MINUTES**  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Tuesday, July 27, 2004, City Council Chambers**

**Call to Order:** Chairperson Cobb called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Connie Eldridge called the roll. A quorum was present.

**Commission Members Present:** Fred Cobb, Robert Lewis, Theresa Michelson, Nancy Quisenberry, Anne Heinze Silvis, Umesh Thakkar, Dennis Vidoni

**Commission Members Absent:** Chris Diana, Joanna Shisler

**Others Present:** Bob Grewe, Erin Bullok and Connie Eldridge, Community Development Services.

**Approval of Minutes:** *Chairperson Cobb asked for approval or corrections to the June 22, 2004 minutes. Commissioner Thakkar moved to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Quisenberry seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Petitions and Communications:** None.

**Staff Report:** Commissioner Thakkar provided copies of the National Building brochures for commissioners.

Mr. Grewe distributed a staff briefing memorandum and National Night Out Celebration flyer. He announced that the City of Urbana was working with the City of Champaign on the National Night Out event. There will be many demonstrations for the public.

Mr. Grewe introduced Erin Bullok, who is the new HOME Grants Coordinator for Grants Management Division.

Under continuing items, staff is preparing the Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER). The HOME Consortium is working on the American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI) Program, which is a national Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program. Staff will attend a Federal Home Loan Bank workshop in Springfield, IL on August 25. The Cities of Urbana and Champaign worked together to get additional funds to supplement the housing rehabilitation programs.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:** **An Ordinance Approving and Authorizing the Execution of an Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization Developer Agreement – Urban League of Champaign County Development Corporation – Lease-**

**Purchase Program FY 2004-2005** – Chairperson Cobb asked about the impact to the to the city budget. Mr. Grewe answered that this was already budgeted in the FY 2004-2005 Annual Action Plan. The agreement terms are nearly identical to the previous programs since the programming has not changed recently.

Noting the Champaign County Statistical Abstract referenced a different maximum purchase price, Commissioner Vidoni questioned whether the agreement was based on national or local statistics. He wanted to make sure the agreement referenced the correct number. Mr. Grewe replied that the HUD HOME website is linked to a data source, which provided the national average. He noted that this price was greater than local statistics and would double-check it. Commissioner Lewis asked how much latitude the City of Urbana had. Mr. Grewe indicated that the City must use the median purchase price for the metropolitan area as defined by the Single Family Mortgage Limits under Section 203(b) of the National Housing Act.

*Commissioner Quisenberry moved to recommend approval, subject to clarification of the maximum purchase price, to City Council of the Ordinance Approving and Authorizing the Execution of an Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization Developer Agreement – Urban League of Champaign County Development Corporation – Lease Purchase Program FY 2004-2005. Commissioner Thakkar seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Outline for the Preparation of the Urbana HOME Consortium and City of Urbana Consolidated Plan for Program Years 2005-2009** – Mr. Grewe reviewed the framework for preparation of the Consolidated Plan. He used HUD’s guidelines for preparation and inserted the City of Urbana’s comments. The future plan will not be much different from the current Consolidated Plan FY 2000-2004. However, the biggest change is that HUD is challenging the cities to consider performance measurements when investing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding in programs. The City of Urbana will incorporate performance measurements.

Mr. Grewe reviewed the timeline for the Consolidated Plan, which is due at HUD in May 2005. The HOME Consortium has reviewed and accepted the timeline. Also, the City of Urbana’s Annual Action Plan (AAP) is on a parallel track with the Consolidated Plan. AAP applicants will make their presentations to the Community Development (CD) Commission later in the fall. Staff plans to dovetail events and have target area mailings. The CD Commission will comment on the AAP in January 2005 with editing in March 2005. April 2005 will be for final approval and incorporating any final changes.

Commissioner Lewis asked if the fair housing data would be updated during this process. Mr. Grewe noted there is a fair housing focus group that could possibly be tasked with updating the Analysis of Impediments (AI) to Fair Housing Choice as part of their mission. Commissioner Lewis felt it would be helpful to update the AI to keep it current.

Mr. Grewe briefly reviewed the variety of focus groups, as prescribed in HUD guidelines. City staff will meet with these organizations in August and September to document their needs. The City’s existing Consolidated Plan addresses these areas. HUD has a category of special needs,

but Mr. Grewe felt some focus groups could be put in common areas. There is some overlap with providers, for example, mental health, addictions, etc. Some focus groups would be internal, for example, coordinating with other city departments.

Commissioner Thakkar mentioned exploring the issue of a resource center with a youth component. Mr. Grewe said this would be under public facilities. Commissioner Thakkar commented if the City wants to address the workforce in the future, there is a need to address the needs of youth now.

Mr. Grewe briefly reviewed the data sources and how staff will use available resources. For example, Karen Rasmussen just completed the 2004 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) grant submittal for homelessness. Also, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) will soon be available and will provide information on that population. Mr. Grewe also referenced the Champaign County Statistical Abstract. Chairperson Cobb asked if there was more current information. Mr. Grewe said that unless there is on-going data collection, the City will use this information, which is census-driven.

Mr. Grewe said the data collection would rely on focus groups to provide information on the different populations. Referencing youth as an example, Commissioner Michelson asked for clarification. Mr. Grewe explained that staff would convene a meeting of people involved with youth issues. They would identify strategies from the previous Consolidated Plan and ask (1) what has changed, (2) is there more current data, and (3) what pressing needs are in the community that would further youth development. The City uses the Consolidated Plan when making funding decisions for each AAP. The City considers whether potential projects are consistent with the Consolidated Plan.

Commissioner Lewis remarked that there are many sources of funding in the community. It is important to link with others and ask about future plans. This helps gain specific resources later.

Chairperson Cobb asked if there were any plans to include credit repair. He noted that many people have bad credit, which affects their ability to buy a house. Different areas of the country include credit repair as a community development activity. Mr. Grewe said this would be a very big priority based on past comments from Affordable Housing providers. He felt the focus groups would bring out the biggest hurdles—homebuyer counseling and credit repair.

Noting that credit repair was not designated, Chairperson Cobb suggested making it a subgoal. Mr. Grewe mentioned placing it under affordable housing, although credit repair encompasses many areas. Money management was another option. Commissioner Lewis wondered about targeting this. Mr. Grewe remarked that most Consolidated Plans from other communities were open-ended and very broad, while the City of Urbana's Consolidated Plan is very definitive. The question is what level of detail does the City of Urbana want.

Chairperson Cobb noted there are grant funds to help with credit repair. Mr. Grewe believed that CDBG funds could be used for such a program. Because Urban League has a HUD-certified credit counseling program, it has received funding. Chairperson Cobb expressed his concern with unqualified organizations offering credit repair.

Mr. Grewe reviewed the Framework for Preparation of the Urbana HOME Consortium and the City of Urbana Consolidated Plan for Program Years 2005-2009. Statutory program goals are decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities. He noted that the submittal section required consultation using focus groups, surveys, e-mails, etc. The City of Urbana is the lead entity for the Consolidated Plan submittal.

Commissioner Lewis inquired about prioritizing ideas. Mr. Grewe indicated that, when there are different needs, HUD will ask the City of Urbana to rank them high, medium or low. The last Consolidated Plan ranked community facilities as a high priority; however, homelessness seemed to be a higher priority. The mission is to determine priorities.

Noting there were many categories, Commissioner Lewis asked what were key priorities. Mr. Grewe remarked that one issue would be to consider what has been done to address priority needs. Commissioner Lewis asked if City Council would determine the priorities. Mr. Grewe stated that City Council would make the final determination. The City of Urbana may have as many high priority items as it wants.

Commissioner Lewis wondered about spreading funding over a large base. If funds are diminishing, he suggested focusing one year on funding a certain priority and then choosing a different priority the next year. Mr. Grewe said that some cities take that approach to target a category and do broad budgeting. It can be done although it is not common. Commissioner Lewis preferred to identify a critical area and then focus on funding it to produce a good impact. Mr. Grewe noted that every year the City of Urbana must create the AAP, which must be consistent with the Consolidated Plan.

Commissioner Thakkar inquired about HUD-sponsored conferences or meetings where cities can share and understand the issues. Mr. Grewe responded that HUD offers a conference in Chicago every other year. A number of organizations are supposed to be involved, many at the policy level. However, staff is still searching for practical conferences and resources. Commissioner Thakkar suggested the City of Urbana share its Consolidated Plan as a resource.

Chairperson Cobb recommended changing the wording on page 6, third submittal, from “can provide continuity of management” to “will provide continuity of management.” Another wording change was page 6, fourth submittal, from “The City of Urbana Mayor, City Council and Community Development Commission are very involved...” to “The City of Urbana Mayor, City Council and Community Development Commission will continue to be very involved...”

Mr. Grewe reviewed the section on public participation and added that HUD wants the cities to enhance this. In the past the City of Urbana has conducted three public hearings, social service agency meetings, and CD Commission meetings. Interpreter services are available as are accessible meeting areas. Mr. Grewe hoped that having the neighborhood public hearings in October would encourage attendance.

Commissioner Thakkar stressed encouraging participation by minority and non-English speaking persons. He mentioned motivating diverse populations to attend meetings and making them feel

comfortable. Commissioner Thakkar felt that Urbana could do a better job on diversity issues and noted that neither the City Council nor the persons attending Council meetings represented diverse groups. Mr. Grewe indicated that staff would continue to look for opportunities. Chairperson Cobb suggested using stronger language. Commissioner Thakkar added that it was hard for non-English speaking persons to attend meetings. Mr. Grewe asked about resources on how to motivate these populations. Commissioner Lewis suggested substituting the word “involved” rather than “encourage.” Mr. Grewe indicated that staff plans to meet with organizations representing different groups. Commissioner Michelson suggested including English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and parents of their students. Commissioner Lewis mentioned inviting the principal of King School. Commissioner Thakkar agreed, noting that King School has children from different parts of the world.

Mr. Grewe had talked with staff from the City of Champaign about attending standing meetings of neighborhood groups. This is one way to get immediate feedback.

Mr. Grewe discussed meeting notices and availability of the Consolidated Plan for public review. Commissioner Michelson inquired about the cost of renting a billboard. Commissioner Quisenberry suggested the Lincoln Square electronic billboard. Mr. Grewe mentioned the struggle to get the word out because many people are not in the mainstream. There used to be an African American newspaper, and the City of Urbana placed ads in it. He mentioned the Grants Management Division’s newsletter or a separate postcard mailing. Commissioner Lewis mentioned having door prizes or raffles. Mr. Grewe responded that did bring people to meetings; however, there are budget considerations.

Mr. Grewe highlighted the anti-displacement requirement and noted that the City of Urbana has taken steps to minimize displacement. Chairperson Cobb asked about the need to monitor displacement. Mr. Grewe indicated there is monitoring; however, the City of Urbana has not displaced anyone since he has been there. Referencing Lakeside Terrace redevelopment, Commissioner Lewis said the federal government would require monitoring by the Housing Authority and City of Urbana. Mr. Grewe will add a requirement for monitoring at the end of the year.

Commissioner Thakkar said the City of Urbana’s website was slow when accessing it with a phone line. Because the frames took too long to download, he was concerned about the time needed to download the Consolidated Plan and felt this would discourage people. Commissioner Quisenberry commented there was only so much that could be done when a person used a phone line. Mr. Grewe wondered about different ways to post or format the Consolidated Plan and will check with Information Services.

Mr. Grewe reviewed public notices of meetings and availability of the Consolidated Plan. The City would publish a display ad in *The News-Gazette* 14 days in advance and use the *Neighborhood News* newsletter. He also reviewed the current amendment process, and he recommends continuing with it. Performance reports such as the CAPER are also available to the public.

Mr. Grewe mentioned access to records and providing technical assistance for grant applications. Commissioner Vidoni asked about the level of technical assistance. Mr. Grewe answered that some organizations could consume a great deal of staff time if there was no restraint. Staff time cannot be used for one group to the detriment of others. Commissioner Vidoni preferred that city staff give more assistance to groups, especially neighborhood organizations. He felt there should be a balance. Some organizations are in need and worthy of funding consideration; however, their application is thrown out because it did not make sense. Commissioner Vidoni encouraged more staff involvement with the understanding that there are limits. Chairperson Cobb added “reasonable limits.” Commissioner Thakkar agreed and referenced his experience with the federal government. Because the federal government wants to encourage new applicants, it was important to have assistance to create successful applications. Mr. Grewe mentioned hosting a grant application workshop, having a library of samples, and seed funding an organization. Noting there are many different sources of grants, Commissioner Lewis stressed helping the applicants determine which grants to apply for. Mr. Grewe said that staff has tried to help all applicants; however, there is a need to be more proactive.

Commissioner Michelson suggested sending postcards to different social service agencies about the availability of different funds and notices of the grant workshop. Commissioner Vidoni agreed. Commissioner Thakkar asked about planning grants to help organizations develop and submit grant applications. Mr. Grewe noted that the City of Urbana likes to see completed applications and there may be resources to help.

Concerning the complaint process, Chairperson Cobb asked if there was a sign or collection point for filing complaints. Mr. Grewe answered that this could be included in the application packet. Commissioner Silvis was concerned with diverting city staff from the real work of community development. She felt part of the CD Commission’s role is to protect staff so that staff can do what is important. Commissioner Silvis said organizations should have some responsibility. Chairperson Cobb felt there should be a structured complaint procedure and it should be publicized.

Noting the executive summary was 20 pages long, Mr. Grewe mentioned the challenge of condensing it since HUD wants pertinent information in it. Commissioner Silvis suggested creating a shorter abstract or forward and then following with an executive summary.

Mr. Grewe discussed priority needs and the geographical investment. Staff is looking at other areas outside the Community Development Target Area that may qualify based on the number of low-moderate income households. Mr. Grewe asked if there was interest in expanding the target area or reducing other parts. He suggested using the target area for some programs with perhaps a different target area for others. He cautioned that expanding the target area would have budget implications.

Mr. Grewe mentioned special needs populations, homelessness, and prioritizing housing needs as high, medium and low. Other issues were lead based paint needs, barriers to affordable housing, anti-poverty strategy, non-housing community development, strategic vision for change, and mapping.

Referencing Tables 1A and 1B, Commissioner Thakkar asked about including persons with physical disabilities in the Homeless Population of Table 1A. Commissioner Quisenberry asked why a category should be added to the table since HUD had not included it. Commissioner Vidoni inquired if there was a need for it. Mr. Grewe will check with Karen Rasmussen about this and HUD's nomenclature for homelessness. Commissioner Silvis noted that Table 1A addressed the needs of homelessness first and believed this was the focus. She agreed with Commissioner Quisenberry and felt it was designed to look at the need for housing rather than other needs. The other tables considered other types of disabilities. Commissioner Quisenberry commented that if a person was homeless and disabled, he/she would be included in one of the listed disabilities or in the "Other" category. Chairperson Cobb felt the main issue was whether or not a disabled homeless person would be excluded from the table. As long as the person was included in a program, the category did not really matter.

Referencing the Action Plan Projects Table, Mr. Grewe noted that the City of Urbana provides this information to HUD and would add additional information to be consistent with the format.

The City of Urbana will work with the Housing Authority to gain consensus on completing the table on Priority Public Housing Needs.

*Commissioner Vidoni moved to recommend to City Council the Framework for the Preparation of the Urbana HOME Consortium and City of Urbana Consolidated Plan for Program Years 2005-2009. He clarified that the favorable recommendation would include any corrections and additional information. Commissioner Thakkar seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Commissioner Vidoni felt the focus group listing was useful and helped consolidate and organize a lot of information.

**Adjournment:** Chairperson Cobb adjourned the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Recorded by Connie Eldridge

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