



APPROVED with corrections by CD Commission 2-22-05
MINUTES
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, January 25, 2005, City Council Chambers

Call to Order: Chairperson Cobb called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

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

Commission Members Present: Fred Cobb, Robert Lewis, Theresa Michelson, Anne Heinze Silvis, Umesh Thakkar, and Dennis Vidoni.

Commission Members Absent: Chris Diana, Nancy Quisenberry, and Joanna Shisler

Others Present: Bob Grewe and Connie Eldridge, Community Development Services; Darlene Kloeppel and Patti Peek, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (RPC); Sheryl Bautch, Family Services of Champaign County; Teri McCarthy, Greater Community Aids Project (GCAP).

Approval of Minutes: *Chairperson Cobb asked for approval or corrections to the November 30, 2004 minutes. In response to Commissioner Vidoni, Connie Eldridge said the first paragraph on page 12, fourth sentence should read, "Commissioner Lewis did not know the reasons; however, he felt it was due to the number of contractors." Commissioner Lewis agreed. On page 3, fourth paragraph, last sentence, Mr. Grewe clarified that Katrin Klingenberg was referring to student volunteers to help the Ecological Construction Laboratory (E-CO LAB) with design for a larger passive solar development at a later date. Commissioner Michelson moved to approve the corrected minutes, and Commissioner Vidoni seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Chairperson Cobb announced that Community Development (CD) Commissioners should read the meeting minutes before the CD meetings.

Petitions and Communications: None.

Staff Report: Mr. Grewe distributed a staff memorandum and pamphlets from Homestead Corporation and the PACE Homeownership Coalition for People with Disabilities. He announced the public hearing on the Draft Consolidated Plan FY 2005-2009 would be held on Tuesday, March 29, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. This is immediately before the CD Commission meeting.

Commissioner Thakkar mentioned his visit to Center for Women in Transition (CWIT). Kathy Sims, Executive Director, is looking forward to the CD Commission visiting its facility in the future.

Mr. Grewe reviewed current Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects. Due to increased project costs, the Disabled Citizens Foundation (DCF) has delayed a final decision on its Employment Center Project until March 1. DCF is considering alternative sites that might be more cost effective and continues to look for other funding sources. In response to Commissioner Lewis, Mr. Grewe said the biggest impact is DCF considering another facility. Due to rigid standards for food packaging, DCF wants to find a building that is more suitable and may be more easily converted to food service quality.

Mr. Grewe reviewed current Home Investment Partnership Act (HOME) projects. Referencing the four NO-GO Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation projects, Commissioner Vidoni asked if staff had determined any way to make the program more efficient. Mr. Grewe answered that lately many homeowners have such large mortgages that there is no equity to cover the City of Urbana's mortgage for whole house rehabilitation projects. Many projects cannot proceed due to the number of liens on the property. Staff has talked at length about this trend and has referred some homeowners to Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation to clear liens. Ms. Eldridge added that, due to household income, many applicants only qualify for the Grant/Installment Loan Program, and they decide not to proceed with the program. Also, many contract buyers have ownership problems that only become apparent when staff gathers information.

Darlene Kloeppe and Patti Peek from the RPC gave a presentation on the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This is a web-based software program called ServicePoint that used by the Urbana-Champaign Continuum of Care, which includes the City of Urbana. This program consolidates information about homeless persons in the community. Six agencies from the Continuum currently participate. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provided a grant that paid for startup costs, with local match provided by the Cities of Urbana and Champaign. The RPC selected ServicePoint from a bidding process that included nine software companies.

Ms. Peek noted the Continuum was interested in the HUD assessment of clients who are using housing services. The data collected will automatically complete HUD's required Annual Progress Report. She worked through the ServicePoint software and noted there were many software components that would be of interest to other agencies. The main component concerns the client, which determines if a person is in the system, gathers emergency contact information, and scans the client's documents into his or her electronic file.

Commissioner Thakkar asked if the system explained why a person was banned from a shelter. Ms. Peek said this would indicate that a ban would be enforced for a certain period of time. Commissioner Thakkar was concerned (1) whether a person would know why he/she was banned, and (2) the accuracy of the information. If the information was incorrect, that person could not find shelter. Ms. Peek answered at this time this feature is not being used.

Commissioner Thakkar was also concerned with ServicePoint requesting a person's Social Security Number and asked if this was necessary. Ms. Peek replied that it is highly recommended to obtain the Social Security Number; however, it is not necessarily required. Commissioner Silvis wondered about the program's security. Ms. Peek stated there are many levels of security and assessments.

Ms. Kloepfel explained the program is similar to what an agency would ask during intake. ServicePoint can be customized to match the agency's paper forms. Ms. Peek added the program allows for case planning and tracks the client's progress. If a client needs service, it keeps track of which agencies are providing services and helps with referrals.

In response to Commissioner Michelson, Ms. Kloepfel said the software is housed on a website in Louisiana. The site is password protected with various levels of security, and all users sign agreements of confidentiality among themselves and with the RPC (the administering agency). ServicePoint follows everything a user does under a password. The system administrator can track everything a user enters or deletes. If there was an employee problem, ServicePoint can follow and find that. All information is encrypted when it is sent over the web, and Social Security numbers are protected.

Commissioner Michelson wondered if only agencies that run homeless shelters had access. Ms. Kloepfel said the following had access to HMIS: Transitional Initiative and Men's Empowerment Services (TIMES) Center, Center for Women in Transition (CWIT), the RPC, City of Urbana (due to Shelter + Care), GCAP, and the Mental Health Center. Commissioner Michelson asked if someone was banned from shelter A, was that person also banned from other shelters that night. Ms. Kloepfel answered that there are different levels of access within and among agencies. Some agencies share that information and some do not. An intake worker may or may not have access to the case records.

Commissioner Lewis inquired how the RPC uses this information. Ms. Kloepfel explained that HUD wanted an unduplicated count among agencies of homeless persons. The HMIS program can do this and generate reports on the numbers of clients seen by which agencies. This prevents the same person from being counted several times. In response to Commissioner Thakkar, Ms. Peek said that passwords were changed every 45 days. Commissioner Cobb questioned whether the software company would have access to the information. Ms. Kloepfel answered yes. ServicePoint has systems in several different states. They have internal security concerning which of their employees has access to the system.

Commissioner Vidoni understood this program provided the RPC with efficiency and accounting. He emphasized that commissioners' concerns with confidentiality and privacy were paramount. Ms. Peek responded that these are not new concerns. The demonstration was being presented as one user would see it. Another user from another agency could not see the same assessment information. A user has limited access to the options and will not have access to custom assessments. Ms. Kloepfel added the RPC determined that the company was in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and mental health regulations. Commissioner Thakkar asked if there was a way to determine which ServicePoint employees had access to the information. He felt more checks and balances were better. Ms. Peek said there were a set number of ServicePoint employees who had access.

Commissioner Silvis commented that agencies have been collecting and storing this same information on paper for many years. She felt HMIS might provide better security since many times paper files are not safeguarded. Commissioner Silvis felt this provided more information

so the homeless shelters could provide a good system of care and protect other people in the system. She believed the security issue had been around a long time.

Ms. Kloeppel said the agencies are just beginning to use HMIS, and it will take a few years before there is enough data for the system for agencies to make those types of decisions. Also, other users might be interested in the program. The system has a small per user fee for continuing costs. If an agency wanted a computerized case management software, it may purchase a license which gives access to a different program. For example, a Consortium for Workforce Development Initiative purchased a license that gave it access to a very different program. This agency has no access to the homeless service files, and the homeless service agencies do not have access to its information. Information and referral providers in the community may also use this. The various police departments may use this type of software for case management of station adjustments. There are many different ways to use case management software once an agency gets past the initial startup.

Chairperson Cobb asked how long the program has been used. Ms. Kloeppel said it was purchased last year, and data was first entered in July 2004. Chairperson Cobb questioned whether a Police Department could access other areas. Ms. Kloeppel said no. Currently there are six homeless providers on the HMIS system. If another homeless service agency wanted to join, that agency must sign the same agreements as the other agencies. All agencies must be in agreement about what access is permitted. Once a person is in the system, there is no way to determine why a person is in the system or what services they received. Chairperson Cobb asked who regulated the sharing process and if there was a higher authority. Ms. Kloeppel stated the agencies themselves regulate this process. The only higher authority is Patti Peek who is system administrator and has all contracts.

In response to Commissioner Lewis, Ms. Kloeppel explained that each client would have a specific number. There may be many persons with the same name, and an agency needs to identify the right person. That is why birth dates and Social Security numbers are required. Also, an agency would look at other identifying fields to determine identity. Commissioner Lewis noted this has been a problem for people named "Junior." Ms. Peek added the first assessment page also asks place of birth to help determine identity.

Commissioner Thakkar asked if there was a way to identify any disabilities. Ms. Kloeppel said disabilities were indicated on a separate page. There are many levels to each page. Also, HMIS keeps track of service transactions, which is important for reporting to HUD. When referring clients to another agency, the program also prints driving directions and a map.

In response to Commissioner Thakkar, Ms. Peek indicated there was a place where an agency's website would be added. However, that section is not yet complete. She added that ShelterPoint and ScanPoint are primarily used by shelter agencies. ScanPoint can produce ID cards with bar codes for agencies that provide many services, such as meals. Ms. Kloeppel said this makes a big difference in larger communities.

Ms. Peek stated that the audit reports are available only to her, and she can see who has provided information. Provider reports are available to all agencies. HUD's Annual Performance Report

(APR) is one type of report; however, reports can be customized, such as reporting only residents of Urbana or only persons over a certain age. Ms. Kloeppel added that this system is useful to agencies because they may have more than one funder and must generate different reports. Due to licensing, only Ms. Peek can set up custom assessments to help others. Reports usually show a count rather than individual information from each client. Further, if one agency wanted to see what others are doing, Ms. Peek would have to request permission from the other agencies. She stressed that each agency can determine the level of security and determine what information that other agencies may access.

Mr. Grewe felt the HMIS system was amazing. He added that the agencies as a group decided on this approach in response to HUD's requirements for electronic reporting software. The RPC purchased this software to help with planning and evaluation.

Commissioner Thakkar asked if HMIS would be accessible with using a handheld device such as a PDA. Ms. Kloeppel has not seen this on a PDA; however, RPC staff uses laptops when going out of the office. The RPC uses this system for its Senior Home Repair Program and can scan the client's information. Commissioner Thakkar suggested asking the company if the software was compatible to a PDA or if it can be made so very quickly. In response to Chairperson Cobb, Ms. Peek noted that reports are downloaded as Excel spreadsheets. The reports are sent as encrypted e-mail, so it is secure. Mr. Grewe added this system prints reports that the City of Urbana needs to generate.

Old Business: None.

New Business: **Amendments to the City of Urbana and Urbana/Champaign/Champaign County HOME Consortium FY 2003-2004 Annual Action Plan and FY 2004-2005 Annual Action Plan** – Mr. Grewe briefly reviewed the three amendments. After the 30-day public comment period, staff would take any comments on the amendments to City Council. The first amendment concerns Family Services of Champaign County's request to change the scope of work from improving its restroom facilities to replacing windows in its facility. This is due to lack of funding to complete the restroom project. There would be no change in the budget—only the scope of work would change.

The second amendment concerns the City of Urbana's Transitional Housing Program. This program's budget has been very limited in the past because it fell under the Public Service cap. Public Service funding is limited to only 15% of the annual CDBG grant. Neighborhood Cleanup, which is also funded from Public Service, had a cost savings of \$6,700. This amendment reallocates this funding to the TH Program to address deferred maintenance.

The last amendment concerns funds set aside for United Citizens and Neighbors (UCAN). UCAN was going to purchase, rehabilitate and sell a single-family house. Since UCAN is not prepared to do this, the funds will return to the City of Urbana and will be placed in the Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation line item.

Sheryl Bautch explained that Family Services' original grant application was for funding to remodel four restrooms to bring them into compliance with ADA standards. The total project

cost was estimated at \$47,000, and Family Services had planned to match the City's funds from private donations. Although Family Services appreciated the City's funding of \$12,000, Family Services was not able to get enough additional funds nor were there enough resources to make up the difference. Family Services then re-considered its remodeling project. Another part was replacing the facility's single pane windows with more energy efficient windows. Because the City of Urbana's grant would be sufficient to replace the windows, Family Services is requesting an amendment of its grant. Family Services is downscaling the cost of its remodeling project to fit available resources.

Chairperson Cobb inquired about Family Services' future plans for its bathrooms. Ms. Bautch said Family Services might apply for funding next year. Family Services is doing parts of the renovation as it receives funds and will continue to look for grants from the City of Urbana and other resources. She also understood that CDBG funds needed to be used this fiscal year.

Commissioner Lewis asked if there was a timeframe when the restrooms would need to be in compliance. Ms. Bautch said there was no imposed deadline because these were not mandated renovations. Rather Family Services wanted to make its facility more accessible. Chairperson Cobb wondered about doing a combination of renovations, i.e., one bathroom and some windows. Ms. Bautch replied that they had looked at doing only part of the bathrooms; however, there are economies when an entire project is done at once. It cost more than half of the total cost to do only half of the bathroom project.

Referencing savings from Fall Neighborhood Cleanup, Chairperson Cobb questioned whether \$5,000 would be enough for Spring Neighborhood Cleanup. Mr. Grewe indicated the cost per ton would be the same, and Fall Neighborhood Cleanup cost \$3,300. In response to Commissioner Lewis, Mr. Grewe said there were considerable savings by bidding the project out by the ton rather than by the yard. Also, the haulers were not driving the junk to Danville or Clinton landfills but were taking it to the transfer site on North Lincoln Avenue.

Referencing the third amendment, Chairperson Cobb commented this appeared to be an automatic shift of funds from the UCAN project to the City's Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Commissioner Thakkar moved to recommend to City Council approval of an Ordinance Approving Modification to the City of Urbana and Urbana/Champaign/Champaign County HOME Consortium FY 2003-2004 and FY 2004-2005 Annual Action Plans. There was discussion whether the motion included changes to the amendment. Mr. Grewe was aware of a typographical error in the memo. Commissioner Thakkar clarified the motion did not include any changes. Commissioner Vidoni seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment: Chairperson Cobb adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Recorded by Connie Eldridge

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