COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
September 10, 2019
MINUTES

Members Present
Ron Crockett
Chase Mitchell
Vernon Perry
Marjorie Tester
Steve Willinger
Dan Witcher

Members Absent
Todd Dolehanty
Spence Flagg
Ella Kane

Others Present
Steve Seyphers, Bristol Housing
Cherith Young, Staff
Christina Blevins, Staff

I. Call to Order & Roll Call:

The Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) meeting was called to order on September 10, 2019, at 5:31 p.m., at the Bristol, Tennessee Annex Conference Room by Chairman Dan Witcher.

Christina Blevins noted the members present/absent above.

II. Election of Officers:

Dan Witcher noted that a quorum was present then read over the CDAC By-laws. Dan opened the floor for nominations for the annual election of officers. Dan stated that a committee Chair and Vice Chair is needed, and Christina will continue to be the Secretary.

Discussion ensued among the group regarding elections. Dan Witcher was asked if he would serve as president again, Dan noted that he had been Chair the past two years and would like to open the position up to others on the committee. Ron Crockett asked Marjorie Tester if she would serve as Chair if asked, Marjorie agreed. Steve Willinger formally nominated Marjorie Tester as Chair, seconded by Vernon Perry. With no other nominations, Dan Witcher asked for a vote. All present were in favor of Marjorie Tester becoming CDAC Chairman for the 2019-2020 year.

Dan added that the committee needed to elect a Vice Chair to act in the absence of the Chair. Discussion ensued among the group regarding the election. Steve Willinger nominated Vernon Perry as Vice Chair; Marjorie Tester seconded the nomination. Vernon stated he would be
happy to serve. Dan Witcher asked for other nominations and hearing none he closed the floor and asked for the vote. All present were in favor of Vernon Perry becoming Vice Chair for the 2019-2020 year.

III. Approval of Minutes, April 9, 2019 Meeting:

Marjorie Tester asked for any changes or corrections to the minutes. Steve Willinger made a motion to approve the April 9, 2019 meeting minutes as presented, Dan Witcher seconded the motion, and all present were in favor.

IV. Public Hearings:

Marjorie Tester formally opened the Public Hearing at 5:42 p.m., and noted the purpose of this Public Hearing was to provide citizens of Bristol, public agencies and other interested parties an opportunity to review and comment on the City’s program performance this past year through the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report for 2018-19 (CAPER). A 15-day comment period in conjunction with the Public Hearing has been advertised in the Bristol Herald Courier for September 6 - 20, 2019.

Marjorie Tester then asked if anyone would like to speak regarding the 2018-19 CAPER. Ron Crockett commented that City staff is doing a great job keeping the community involved and informed. Dan Witcher commented that our local citizens need to understand that it’s up to us to protect liberty, life, and the ownership of property in our community. There was general discussion but no further comments received for the CAPER from those present. No other comments being heard, the Public Hearing was closed at 5:48 p.m. Marjorie Tester then asked for a motion from the floor to approve the Draft Community Development Block Grant (CDBG & HOME Consortium) CAPER as presented. Steve Willinger moved that the CDBG & HOME Consortium CAPER be approved as presented; seconded by Ron Crockett; all present were in favor and the motion carried.

Marjorie Tester formally opened the second Public Hearing at 5:55 p.m. by announcing that this second Public Hearing also provides citizens of Bristol, public agencies and other interested parties an opportunity to express views regarding the identification of housing and community development needs within the City of Bristol and sets aside a time for staff to respond to proposals and comments. Interested parties were encouraged to comment at this Public Hearing or within 30-days following this Public Hearing. Marjorie added that this begins the process for planning of the 2020-2021 one-year Action Plan and 2020-2025 five-year Consolidated Plan, the Northeast Tennessee/Virginia HOME Consortium, as well as the Community Development Block Grant program established by the City of Bristol, Tennessee. Public meetings will be conducted during the year and comments welcomed throughout the planning process. A 30-day comment period had been advertised in the Bristol Herald Courier for September 6 – October 6, 2019.

Marjorie Tester then asked if anyone would like to speak regarding any housing or Community Development needs within the Bristol, TN City limits or the Northeast Tennessee/Virginia HOME Consortium footprint for planning of the 2020-2021 Action Plan. No Comments were heard. Marjorie Tester then asked if anyone like to comment regarding any housing or Community Development needs within the Bristol, TN City limits or the Northeast Tennessee/Virginia HOME Consortium footprint for the planning of the 2020-2025 Consolidated Plan.
Ron Crockett noted that he feels the objectives are appropriate considering the amount of funding the grants are given.

No other comments being heard, the Public Hearing was closed at 6:05 p.m. by Marjorie Tester.

Group discussion ensued as Dan Witcher asked the committee about establishing a document as to safeguard and further protect our community's unalienable rights of life, liberty, and property ownership. The committee agreed to review and discuss a draft Vision and Mission statement. Dan stated that he would be glad to draft documents for the committee for review and discussion in the October committee meeting.

Group discussion ensued regarding down-payment assistance, credit scores and lending agencies for homeownership. Steve Scyphers talked about Bristol Housing and transitioning people into homeownership, as Bristol Housing has multiple success stories.

V. Old Business:

2019 HUD Allocations 2019 CDBG $195,764 & HOME $1,019,714 – Christina announced to the committee that the 2019 Action Plan was approved by HUD as presented. The acceptance paperwork has been completed. Christina added that the committee has the same focus as years past, and she’s excited for the year to come.

Neighborhood Grant Award – Christina passed around a newspaper article from May 2019, as the Bristol Herald Courier did an article on the Neighborhood Grant Award given to Haynesfield Elementary School and Appalachian Sustainable Development for the Neighborhood Community Garden. Christina added that unfortunately the $5,000 Neighborhood Grant did not get re-approved by City Council for the FY 20 budget cycle, but she is hopeful it will come back.

YWCA Children’s Center Highlights – Christina asked the committee to review the YWCA’s Children’s Center Highlights for April – June 2019. She noted that all 12 families that received CDBG public service funding last year were all very-low income families, 30% or below Area Median Income (AMI), less than $15,000 annually.

V. New Business:

Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) 2018-19 – Christina mentioned the locations that a draft copy of the CAPER can be viewed including Bristol Housing, Bristol Public Library, Slater Community Center and Development Services office. The CAPER can also be viewed online at the Cities website www.BristolTn.org or First Tennessee Development District’s website www.fidd.org. Steve Scyphers asked to add the CAPER to the Bristol Housing website, Christina said she would email the draft to him asap.

Christina noted several additional reports required by HUD to be reported in conjunction with the CAPER including the Minority Business Enterprise/Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) reports. The CDBG and HOME Consortium programs did not have any contractors meeting the criteria to qualify them as a MBE/WBE business. Christina also mentioned a match log report for the HOME Consortium and Section 3 Contractors report.

VI. Other Matters:
CDBG & HOME Staff Monthly Reports & Project Update - Christina presented the May through August 2019 staff monthly reports for CDBG and HOME projects. Christina then discussed with the group asking for approval/justification for a decision that was made to help a CDBG emergency recipient. She discussed that the property owner at 2507 Bay Street has a prior lien on her property from a local auto dealership for $2,710.08. The CDBG Policy & Procedures handbook states that homeowners are ineligible for assistance if they have any outstanding judgments or previous liens (excluding the mortgage) on the property. Christina described the circumstance of the previous lien to the committee and advised of her conversation with City Attorney Danielle Smith. Christina advised that this homeowner is income qualified for help from the CDBG program, extermination is an eligible activity for CDBG and her current bedbug and roach problem is an immediate threat to her health. She also added that, according to one of the pest control companies, it was the worst infestation they had ever seen, roaches and bedbugs are crawling on every floor, wall and ceiling of her home. Christina stated that she advised Mrs. Smith that the applicant had been turned down for help by multiple other organizations, and she is not able to afford to pay for the bug extermination without CDAC’s help. The applicant has cried on the phone with Christina and asked for the City not to give up on her. The applicant has also meet with Christina and had multiple bugs crawling on her during the meeting. Christina added that the participant has agreed to pay for ongoing exterminator costs if CDAC can help with the initial cost to get the bedbugs and roaches under control.

Christina added that Mrs. Smith advised that the reason the City doesn’t work on properties with previous liens is due to the fact that our Deed of Trust would be behind the local car dealership and there is a possibility that the local car dealership could actually foreclose on the home. Christina stated that she and Mrs. Smith recognized there is some risk here, but they both felt the need to help the applicant is evident. The CDBG program is a 5-year forgivable grant and there have been minimal problems with the program throughout the years. Mrs. Smith advised Christina that they could not make the decision to go against the current CDBG Policy & Procedures manual and that Christina needed to contact CDAC committee chair for further direction. Mrs. Smith also advised Christina that the CDAC may need to look at updating the CDBG Policy & Procedures manual for the future, noting that in special cases where the urgency is evident that the program will consider the need and work to be done before saying no due to a prior lien.

Christina then discussed her phone call with Chairman, Mr. Dan Witcher. Dan agreed and was in favor of helping the applicant and also agreed that this item be added to the September CDAC meeting agenda to discuss with the full committee and ratify its actions.

Committee discussion ensued regarding the applicants current situation, lien requirements and moving forward on the additional parts of this rehab project. Steve Willinger made a motion to ratify staff actions and approve moving forward with this project; Vernon Perry second the motion, all present were in favor.

Christina thanked the committee for their support and understanding.

ARCH Partnership / AmeriCorps/ 2019 Point-in-Time Count - Christina stated she is focusing on partnerships and has taken a larger role with the Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness. She is participating on the Continuum of Care Steering and Ranking Committee for HUD grant funding this year. Lindsey Muller, AmeriCorps / ETSU Social Work student
finished up with the City and ARCH in July. Lindsey didn’t house as many homeless individuals as she was hoping for, but it was an eye-opening experience for her. Lastly, Christina discussed the Point-in-Time Count and Bristol had 101 individuals interviewed here.

**Potential Bristol Day Center Update** – Christina spoke with the group about the Organizational Kick-off meeting that was just held for the Bristol Day Center. She thanked CDAC members who attended. Committee discussion ensued about homeless misconceptions and the need to find ambassadors to support the cause.

**Bristol Housing Partnership** – Christina stated that she was committed to forming better relationships this year and one of our most important partners is Bristol Housing. She added that a representative from Bristol Housing will attend our CDAC meeting and Christina will plan to attend monthly Bristol Housing meetings in order to understand each the programs and find way to support each organization in the future.

**VII. Announcements & Adjournment:**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2019.

**APPROVED:**

Marjorie Tester, Chair

[Signature]

Christina Blevins, Recorder

Vernon Perry, Vice Chair

for Marjorie Tester, Chair

(Absent 10/18/19)