

**City of Cleveland Heights  
Citizens Advisory Committee  
August 4, 2015  
Council Chambers, Cleveland Heights City Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeffrey Bendix	Donalene Poduska
David Benson	Carol Roe
Vetella Camper	Amanda Shaffer
Kim DeNero-Ackroyd	Kéba Sylla
Douglas Dykes	Steve Titchenal
Cory Farmer	Sarah West
Christine Henry	George Witherspoon
Allison McCallum	Parker Zabell
Marian Morton	

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jonathan Goldman (exc.)

STAFF PRESENT

Nancy McLaughlin

GUESTS PRESENT

Amy Jenkins, City of Cleveland Heights	Amy Rosenbluth, Lake Erie Ink
Earl Pike, Open Doors Academy	Avrohom Adler, Gesher
Bob Norton, Hts. Emergency Food Center	Deanna Bremer Fisher, FutureHeights
Angela Shuckahosee, Cleveland Tenants Org.	Roscoe Morgan, Heights Youth Club
Rev. Jimmie Hicks Jr., Start Right Food Program	Lynda Hicks, Start Right Food Program
Myesha Crowe, Heights Youth Club	Chris Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Allison McCallum, Chair, called Public Hearing to order. She opened the public hearing by welcoming everyone and giving a brief statement of the order of the meeting. She stated that this was the first of two public hearings and that the second would be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 11, 2015 in Council Chambers at Cleveland Heights City Hall.

Allison stated that Cleveland Heights is an Entitlement Community receiving Community Development Block Grant funds directly from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The funds enable the city to develop a viable community by

providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and by expanding economic opportunities. She explained that a final allocation for 2016 has not yet been made by Congress, but that the City is estimating that we will receive slightly less than 2015, which was about \$1.46 million. She explained that CDBG is a federal program and that all applicable regulations must be followed including an environmental review of each project that includes a Section 106 Historic Preservation Review.

Members of the audience not affiliated with an applicant agency were invited to speak regarding the CDBG program or community issues that could be addressed by a CDBG-funded activity. No comments were received.

Allison reminded each applicant to limit their prepared remarks to five minutes if they were applying for one activity and to eight minutes if they were applying for more than one activity. She stated that CAC members could ask questions after their comments. Presenters were reminded that CAC had received a copy of their written application and that a CAC Subcommittee would be contacting them after the public hearing.

Nancy McLaughlin announced one change to the agenda. Cleveland Tenants Organization has been added to this hearing and will not present on August 11 as originally scheduled.

#### ROLL CALL

Secretary Amanda Shafffer called the roll. A quorum was present.

#### APPLICATION HEARING FOR CDBG

##### **Office on Aging – Total Request \$45,000**

Amy Jenkins, Office on Aging Supervisor presented their request for funding for 2016. The office continues to employ two part-time master level social workers who assist seniors throughout the city to be safe and secure in their homes or to help them transition to other circumstances. The social workers assess needs for services and help the seniors access those services, with work being done in person and/or on the phone. Amy explained that their office refers seniors to many programs, including Meals on Wheels etc. Seniors are referred by the Police and Fire Departments, friends, neighbors and relatives. The Senior Center now holds group discussions with seniors where they are able to discuss issues and problems they face with one of the social workers. There has been a good response to this new outreach.

##### **Heights Youth Club - Total Request \$64,684**

Heights Youth Club Director Roscoe Morgan presented their request for 2016 funding for the Project Learn program. Roscoe also introduced Myesha Crowe, the assistant

director. She is a licensed social worker which has allowed entire families to be assisted at the club. HYC will be 10 years old in January and has 549 active members, their highest membership in its history. Project Learn is the foundation of their programming. They recently added the Sparks Program which offers enrichment help in math and reading for 6 – 9 year olds. More than 60% of the youth in the program who come four days a week have earned Merit or Honor Roll status. The club is working closely with the school system during the school renovation. They have nearly completed an agreement to have the athletic study tables at the club. This will bring another 500 students into the club. Any student who wishes to come to the club will be bused there. Coaches and other volunteers will add to the adults in the building.

### **Lake Erie Ink- Total Request \$12,560**

Amy Rosenbluth, Executive Director, presented this organization's request for CDBG funding. They are an afterschool writing space for youth in the Cleveland Heights/University Heights schools. They are about to begin their fifth year at Coventry School. The Ink Spot program works with 4 – 8<sup>th</sup> graders, four days per week. The students receive homework help as well as daily creative expression sessions. Lake Erie Ink is expanding this program to Noble School and has been at Noble this summer during the free lunch sessions operating creative writing drop-in program. They have seen fifteen students during the month of July.

### **Open Doors Academy – Total Request \$20,000**

Earl Pike, Chief Strategy Officer, presented their request for funding for their year-round enrichment and character development programming at the St. Paul's site for Roxboro Middle School as well as their new Cleveland Heights center at Monticello Middle School. Open Doors has grown rapidly and now has twelve sites throughout Greater Cleveland. They look to have 20 campuses by 2020. They have also added high school programming with 65 students in that program. They have maintained a 100% graduation rate of their alums for the past 5 years with 97% of those going on to college, trade school or the military. They have a goal to add some type of assistance to help those students to graduate from college as well.

### **Heights Emergency Food Center – Total Request \$11,000**

Heights Emergency Food Center Treasurer Bob Norton presented the agency's request. The new president of the organization has reorganized the job duties which has allowed HEFC to continue as an all-volunteer organization. Their major donors to HEFC are 15 local churches who give an average of \$1000 per year. They also receive bequests from estates. The Hunger Network funds pay for food, whereas CDBG funds cover operating expenses.

### **Start Right Food Program – Total Request \$5,000**

Rev. Jimmie Hicks, Jr., Executive Director of the Start Right Development Corporation presented the request for administrative expenses for their food pantry. The food pantry has been serving people for several years and the need continues to increase. More than 100 families access the food pantry each month. Word of the services offered by Start Right continues to spread. CDBG funding will allow them increase their ability to access more food items from the Food Bank and therefor provide higher quality meals to the families in need of them. The new freezer allows them to receive a larger amount of meat from the Food Bank when it is available and provide it to the clients. Start Right is also providing lunches for seven weeks over the summer when children are not in school. Their families are welcome as well. The Food Bank provides the food for this service as well. They are considering purchasing new, more efficient refrigerators to replace the ones they currently have which are generally ones that have been donated by persons who have purchased new.

### **Gesher – Total Request \$35,000**

Avrohom Adler, founder of Gesher and director of the board, presented their request for funding. This organization works to connect families and individuals in need with the various social and human service organizations that can assist them. They will serve anyone who approaches their organization, but specifically targets the underserved Jewish community of Cleveland. Avrohom estimates that Gesher served less than ten non Jewish clients in the past year. Gesher was created to fill the void in that community that is created by their lack of access to normal outreach efforts. They work closely with Cleveland Housing Network and the Ohio Benefits Bank to assist families in need. They serviced more than 350 clients in their first two years of operation, including approximately 200 Cleveland Heights residents. They are working to increase the exposure of the organization in the upcoming year through various means. They have partnered with CEOGC, JFSA and WIC in the past year on many projects.

### **FutureHeights – Total Request \$46,000**

Deanna Bremer Fisher, Director, presented their request for funding to continue the community building and place-making program for Cleveland Heights. She shared that 14 residents have completed the series of 4 workshops that were held in the past few months. The first grant applications are due in September and FutureHeights is looking forward to seeing the types of projects that are proposed.

Deanna also announced that Sruti Basu has been hired as their director of community-building programs. She will start August 31 at a salary of \$46,000.

Deanna also asked that CAC approve reprogramming the \$5000 that was allocated to

Neighborhood Mini-grant program for 2015 to personnel costs. FutureHeights has realized that it will be difficult to find projects that meet CDBG national objectives. Nancy noted that this will be voted on at the September 1 meeting.

### **Cleveland Tenants Organization – Total Request \$7,000**

Angela Shuckahosee, Executive Director of CTO, presented the organization's request for 2016 funding to continue their Rental Information Center program for Cleveland Heights tenants and landlords. CTO continues to work with both tenants and landlords to help answer questions and resolve issues. They receive more than 10,000 calls each year from throughout Cuyahoga County. They handled more than 353 contacts with Cleveland Heights residents and landlords last year. The main reason behind calls from tenants is the lack of repairs in rental units. The agency's main focus is to stabilize housing and they work closely with Cleveland Heights court to assist tenants facing evictions. CTO moved to a new location in Slavic Village at a much lower rent than their previous location.

### **CDBG Administration – Total Request \$153,100**

Nancy McLaughlin, Development Officer, presented the CDBG administration request. Nancy reminded CAC that CDBG administration is responsible for all of the reporting and for assuring that regulations and procedures are being followed. She stated that the request includes \$35,000 for indirect costs and administrative costs for the management of the CDBG program. The funds include Nancy's personnel costs as well as a portion of the personnel costs for the Finance person who prepares and monitors the financial information for HUD as well as a small amount for clerical coverage and for Karen Knittel's time spent on HOME activities. The request also includes \$12,750 for Fair Housing Sales/Rental Audits. This would cover 10 audits in Cleveland Heights and 5 in the Hillcrest area.

Allison McCallum stated that this was the last applicant to present their 2016 request this evening. The public hearing portion of the meeting was closed.

### MINUTES

Minutes from the June 16, 2015 meeting were approved as amended.

### STAFF REPORTS

Nancy McLaughlin reviewed the financial report. She was happy to report that the 2015 allocation was received on Monday. All 2015 budgets are completely funded at this time. With the street resurfacing and water line work still to be done this summer she is hopeful that timeliness will not be an issue.

Nancy announced that Melissa Bilancini resigned due to time constraints as she is returning to school to pursue her Masters. Nancy will send out the subcommittee template to all chairs and vice chairs. Subcommittee reports will be due to Nancy on Friday, August 28.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Allison McCallum told the committee that she sent a letter to City Council following CAC's June meeting to express the committee's concern about pending Fair Housing legislation in the Ohio House and Senate. A copy of the letter will be sent to all members.

#### NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

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Allison McCallum, Chair

Amanda Shaffer, Secretary