



*APPROVED*

**MINUTES**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING**

**Tuesday, November 22, 2022, City Council Chambers**

**400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801**

**Call to Order:** Chairperson Anne Heinze Silvis called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Braden Belcher, Community Development Coordinator, called the roll. A quorum was present.

**Commission Members Present:** Anne Heinze-Silvis, Chris Diana, Patricia Jones, and Shawn Green

**Commission Members Excused/Absent:** Rev. Robert Freeman and DeShawn Williams

**Others Present:** Braden Belcher, Community Development Coordinator; Hillary Ortiz, Office Specialist

**Approval of Public Hearing Minutes:** Commissioner Jones moved to approve the minutes for the October 25, 2022, Public Hearing. Commissioner Green seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the Public Hearing minutes were approved.

**Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes:** Commissioner Green moved to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2022 CD Commission Meeting. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the minutes were approved.

**Petitions and Communications:** No petitions or communications were presented.

**Audience Participation:** An opportunity for the public to provide comments was given. No audience members stepped forward and no written or email feedback was received.

**Staff Report:** Updates on the HHI Consolidated Application program, which was extensively covered at prior meetings, were delivered by Mr. Belcher. He stated that the Neighborly portal opened on November 4 and applications will be accepted until December 12. Anyone interested in applying for the HHI Grant was invited to an informational session, in the Champaign City Council Chambers on November 4th. There were a decent number of applicants present at the meeting. A second informational meeting will take place at the Urbana Free Library on November 28th.

To promote transparency among all applicants, HHI staff have been regularly updating the grant's webpage to include any questions and answers that have been submitted. Recordings of both

informational sessions will also be made accessible for viewing on the grant's website. On December 12th, the application portal will close. All submissions will be reviewed by HHI staff during that week, and any projects or programs the cities want to submit for funding will be brought to the CD Commission and City Council for their approval. Agreements for the approved projects and programs will be carried out in late January/early February.

Mr. Belcher provided a brief update on the City's HOME-ARPA application process. He stated that applications were closed on November 15th, but since HOME-ARPA funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Treasury and not HUD, the Commissioners will not need to recommend any of the applications to the City Council. Applications are being evaluated by City staff, and applicants will be given a chance to present their projects to the City Council the week of December 13th. All final funding decisions will be made by City Council.

A copy of the 2023 CD Commission Meeting Schedule was presented to the Commissioners. In light of the fact that the December 2022 CD Commission meeting comes during the week of Christmas, Mr. Belcher provided the commissioners with the option of proceeding with the meeting as scheduled or postponing it until January. He stated that, if postponed until January the meeting on the 3rd would be in addition to the regularly scheduled one on January 24th. Commissioners and staff both expressed a preference for having two meetings in January 2023, rather than one during the week of Christmas.

**Old Business:** There was no old business to discuss.

**New Business:** Mr. Belcher gave a brief overview of the City's plans for the Youth Services Grant Program for the 2023–2024 Fiscal Year. The program's achievements to date were summarized. Mr. Belcher announced that because there will be a rollover of unused funds and because the city has also been awarded a grant from the Illinois Department of Human Services, the FY 2023–2024 Youth Service Grant Budget would be greater than that of the previous year. The upcoming fiscal year's budget would rise from \$100,000 to \$300,000 in total.

Starting in FY 2023–2024, the City of Urbana intends to make a few adjustments to the Youth Grant Program. The city would like to retain the focus on youth services, update the funding cycle to two-year agreements and add a category to the program which focuses on violence prevention. Additionally, the application process will also change. Applications will be accepted electronically, through the Neighborly Portal, for a period of two months rather than thirty days. Two informational sessions in which the applicants can attend and ask questions will also be held. Both in-person attendance and live streaming will be available for each session. The website for the application will host training videos, and show a list of all questions/answers submitted during the open application period.

The following is an anticipated timeline for the grant program cycle:

- Applications will be accepted from January 30th through March 30th.
- Staff will host the first informational session on February 3rd.
- Staff will host the second informational session on March 24th.
- Staff will review and evaluate submissions on April 3rd and 4th.

- In early April, a Special Commission Meeting will be held so the commissioners can review and vote on recommendations for City Council's approval.
- Recommended applications will be presented to City Council on April 10th and 17th.
- Agreements will be executed in late June.
- Programming will begin on July 1st.

Commissioner Diana voiced concern that a \$300,000 allocation this year might unfairly distort the accomplishments of the program years that receive regular financing. He is concerned that HUD would interpret the additional \$200,000 in funds as evidence that their annual \$100,000 allocation is no longer necessary. In response to this concern, Mr. Belcher reminded the commissioner that the city has an automatic built-in cap on Public Service program spending, so there is no reason to be concerned about HUD's funding for this being reduced.

Commissioner Diana sought clarification on the city's plans for handling the constraints and financing delays that frequently occur when the city has to wait for HUD funding approval. Mr. Belcher responded by stating that the city has been quite clear and upfront with the applicants that the authorized projects and programs will have agreements prepared and funding ready for distribution, but that the official execution of those things will not begin until HUD has given the official approval to disburse the funds.

Commissioner Diane inquired as to what the city intended to do with the second year's funds during the two-year contract period. Mr. Belcher stated that should the funding be more than necessary to support the second year of the agreement terms, the city would decide what to do with it at that time. Regardless of the amount of funding available, Mr. Belcher promised that the money would not go unused during the interim year between the agreement's conditions.

Upon hearing no other questions, Chairperson Anne Heinze-Silvis reminded the other commissioners of their options for approval of the FY 2023-2024 Youth Services Program amendments. She then asked for a motion to be passed. Commissioner Jones motioned to forward the recommendation, as is, to the City Council, with the recommendation of approval. Commissioner Green seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Study Session:** There were no items for this agenda.

**Adjournment:** Seeing no further business, Ms. Heinze-Silvis adjourned the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Recorded by

Hillary L. Ortiz  
Office Specialist