



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

### MINUTES

February 5, 2024

12:00 p.m.

Hybrid – Council Chambers

Approved: February 19, 2024

#### Call to Order

Chair Robyn Davis called the meeting to order at 11:59 p.m.

#### Roll Call

Members present: Alex Johnson II (arrived 12:06 p.m.), Jim Cole, Robyn Davis, Larry Timm, Bessie Johnson, Skylar Bailey, Courtney Stubbs

Members absent: John Robledo, Emma Deane (excused)

#### Approval of Minutes:

**12:02 p.m.**

**Motion:** Commissioner Jim Cole moved to approve the January 22, 2024, minutes as presented. Commissioner Skylar Bailey seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

#### Scheduled Business:

**12:03 p.m.**

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Applicant Presentations

Beth Frelander, Planner introduced the presentations, but noted for the record that Emma Deane had recused herself from discussion of Albany Helping Hands and CHANCE presentations because of a Conflict of Interest.

Albany Helping Hands, Don Sparks, Executive Director of the non-profit presented their grant request to assist in their mission to work with the homeless on housing assistance, meals, and connecting with social services and health resources. This grant request is to help them design enrichment programs to help residents deal effectively with life's challenges and give them the tools to improve their lives. They intend to add recovery and sobriety assistance through organizational partnerships serving clients in-house. In answer to a question about being a faith-based organization, he said they have no faith requirement for their services, and they do not deny anyone care.

Commissioner Bessie Johnson asked whether residents could stay forever or if at some point they must move out. Sparks responded that some residents have been there a decade, hence the need to provide a better motivational model. Sparks wants the shelter to be a pipeline but will not kick residents out.

Commissioner Alex Johnson II asked if residents are contributing anything to offset the costs of their care. Sparks answered that they do not ask for contributions at this time. Officially, they require 30 hours per week of volunteer work when able for their stay, but they don't currently manage that process.

Commissioner Bailey asked what percent of clients are being served because of addiction related issues. Sparks responded a lot. As a high barrier shelter, residents are not actively using drugs.

CARDV (Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence), Mary Zelinka, Facilities Manager and Tia Daversa, Grants Coordinator presented for the CARDV application. Daversa described CARDV as a survivor services agency for those experiencing domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, or trafficking in Linn and Benton Counties by providing emergency shelter, crisis support, 24/7 confidential hotline, basic needs, housing assistance, and prevention-based curriculums. They applied for CBDG funds to build a fence around their latest confidential shelter

home for security and privacy shelter, which is vital to the clients and potentially to install keypad entry deadbolts on the bedroom doors for personal safety. Zelinski reiterated that the safety of the clients is vital and if the shelter is not secured with fencing it will not be safe to operate.

C.H.A.N.C.E. (Communities Helping Addicts Negotiate Change Effectively), Jennifer Thelander, Grants and Fundraising Specialist presented an overview of C.H.A.N.C.E. Formerly it was just a monthly recovery center but since 2021 they have been providing expanded services for those experiencing substance abuse disorders, mental health and homelessness in Linn/Benton/Lincoln Counties. They are a low barrier service so there are people in active use and recovery. The grant funding ask is for work on the historic Episcopal Church in Albany which has been donated to C.H.A.N.C.E. but has needed extensive restoration work and construction for ADA compliance. Thelander noted that they are seeking other funding as well.

Commissioner Cole asked whether there would be any anticipated income from the facility. She shared that they have been a venue for community meetings and recovery events that provide small fees for facility use. And the church space will provide an opportunity to expand as a community venue for those in recovery. Anne Catlin wanted clarification on how the building would serve the clients directly, which Thelander addressed.

DevNW, Luis Mendoza, Asset Building Manager presented their application for CBDG Funds. DevNW provides resources and programs to low- and moderate-income families, like homeownership education and HUD led counseling, foreclosure work, downpayment assistance programs, and development and rehab work on homes for low-income residents who are financially unable to do major home repairs that are necessary to keep their home safe and livable.

Commissioner Timm asked about the amount in their revolving funds. Mendoza didn't have an exact figure but Freeland added that any available funds would automatically be applied and spent down for ongoing repair projects.

Commissioner Johnson II asked how many homes are under this project. Freeland replied it is for DevNW Low-Income Homeowner Rehab Program as a whole. Mendoza shared that the normal repairs range between \$35,000 to \$40,000 for each family.

Commissioner Davis asked whether the homeowners repay the program. Mendoza said it is a 'silent second' and a lien is put on the property and repaid when it is sold. The loan may incur a low interest rate depending upon the amount but no monthly payment is required. They do a preliminary assessment of the home's equity to prevent the homeowner from going into increased debt.

Family Connections, Bryan Steinhauser, Business Liaison/Childcare Accelerator spoke about the grant application for Family Connections, a regional childcare referral agency serving Linn/Benton/Lincoln Counties. Their Growing Care Recruitment program goal is to increase the number of registered home-based childcare services in the community by providing incentives to overcome the financial barriers of starting these businesses. The start-up grants will include business training and long-term mentoring.

#### Fair Housing Goals and Actions

**12:55 p.m.**

Beth Freeland shared a draft of potential fair housing impediments and goals and actions to remove these barriers.

Regarding the lack of affordable housing impediment, Commissioner Johnson said she was unsure of the City's ability to create more affordable housing. Staff replied that for receiving CBDG funding HUD requires that we affirmatively address barriers to fair housing. Freeland noted that she has tried to leverage other planning efforts the City is doing outside of the CBDG program to advance these goals.

Commissioner Davis surmised that this Commission has not only a role in the allocation of these funds but the formation of public policy to support affordable housing efforts. The Commission can recommend that the City raise additional revenues to support the effort. Commissioner Cole noted tax incentives, or city fees reduced for certain types of housing.

Commissioner Timm asked if the City had re-development authority. Staff explained that the city has an Urban Renewal Agency that is very focused but is at the end of their cycle; their focus is not necessarily on housing. But the City has been removing obstacles to housing development and increasing the variety of housing choices through modifications of development standards to encourage re-development as well as expanding mixed-use zones in accessible locations.

Freeland continued the discussion with what they saw as the second impediment, Lack of Housing Choice and the draft actions are to pursue strategies in the housing implementation plan to reduce barriers to needed housing types and to leverage climate friendly areas to increase housing density and diversity. Commissioner Timm asked if apartments could be added to the list of needed housing types.

Commissioner Cole asked about complimentary strategies like making housing clusters more livable with increased transportation options, such as with vouchers, so those areas aren't segregated. Catlin noted that there are efforts to improve accessibility across the spectrum of housing, transportation, and land use. Freeland suggested focusing investment in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods to improve the facilities and amenities in those areas.

Freeland reviewed the next impediment, the Lack of Understanding of Fair Housing Laws and Resources and suggested actions to reduce discriminatory practices through training to increase awareness of how actions may affect fair housing choice and marketing resources.

The final impediment is Cultural and Linguistic Barriers. Freeland suggested that the City continue building partnerships with organizations that serve diverse communities and ensure that services are available to non-English speakers and to ensure services are accessible to all including the disabled.

Commissioner Bailey asked about programs geared to Spanish-speaking communities. Catlin said that Casa Latinos Unidos serves the Spanish-speaking community, but we can encourage agencies to have bilingual staff and translate materials for better access to resources.

#### Business from the Public

None.

#### Business from the Commission

Staff asked about the meeting room preference of the Commissioners. Commissioner Davis asked about the Annual Commission Training. Staff confirmed that it is scheduled for February 15, 2024. Reminders will be sent out.

#### Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting is February 19, 2024.

Adjournment

**Chair Davis adjourned the meeting at 1:19 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

*Signature on file*

*Signature on file*

Susan Muniz  
Recorder

Beth Frelander  
Planner II

\*Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. The documents are available by emailing [cdaa@cityofalbany.net](mailto:cdaa@cityofalbany.net).