PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee meeting was held on January 11, 2010, at 12:00 noon with Chairwoman Russell presiding. Members present were Mr. Ruane, Mr. Hogan, Mr. Lewis, and Mrs. Horsey.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mr. Hogan moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Mrs. Horsey and unanimously carried.

PRESENTATION - SALVATION ARMY

Due to the absence of a representative from the Salvation Army, no presentation was provided.

UPDATE ON 2009 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Mr. William Neaton, Economic Development Director, explained that the Dover Housing Authority (DHA) is administering the Youth Employment Program and that 33 applications have been received, 18 from applicants living in DHA developments, five (5) from west Dover, four (4) from the downtown area, and four (4) from east Dover. He added that 17 applications were received from residents of Camden but were ineligible for consideration due to non-residency. He noted that selectees would undergo a one-week training program in general job skills conducted by the DHA with the assistance of Aid in Dover. He noted that originally ten (10) businesses had expressed interest in utilizing youths, and that figure has since grown to 29. He stated that 20 young people will be hired at the minimum wage rate and will work for 16 weeks and that applicants were solicited by the DHA through flyers, phone calls, and personal contact.

In response to Mr. Hogan, Mr. Neaton explained that selections will be made by the DHA with assistance from the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP). He also noted that the DDP wished to rescind their request to the Committee that the grant be amended to name the DHA as grant administrator and recipient.

Responding to Mr. Ruane, Mr. Neaton indicated that the City has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DHA to administer the program and train the youths selected, and DDP will review their efforts. He stated that all Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the program are dedicated to wages, and the DHA will bill the City for this cost. He noted that there are no other administrative fees associated with the program.

In response to Mrs. Horsey, Mrs. Tracey Harvey, Community Development Manager, noted that low-to-moderate income participants were identified by the use of a sliding scale based on income and family size.

Mrs. Russell felt that opportunities for low income youth should have been distributed City-wide. She questioned why a large percentage of participants were selected from the DHA housing developments since she stated that the program was financed through approximately $42,000 from CDBG funds and approximately $10,000 from the DHA. She felt that there were a number of potential candidates for the program in the downtown area.

Mr. Neaton noted that applications were broadly distributed and that the downtown area was canvassed by word of mouth and flyers.

Mr. Hogan expressed disagreement, stating that unless the program was designed specifically so that funds were designated for specific neighborhoods, attempts to distribute selection would amount to artificially imposing a quota. He felt that if applications were made widely available, the most qualified candidates should be selected.

Concurring with Mrs. Russell, Mr. Ruane stated that it would be important to avoid the perception that selection for the program is localized to those in assisted housing areas. He felt that if there were a number of equally qualified applicants on the selection list, effort should be made to distribute opportunities City-wide. He noted that the response to the program exceeded available resources and suggested that this program be considered during the next CDBG application period.

Mrs. Russell requested that the applicants from Camden be sent a letter of appreciation for their interest with an explanation of the reason for non-consideration.

Mr. Hogan moved to recommend acceptance of the report, seconded by Mrs. Horsey and unanimously carried.

Puncheon Run Watershed Action Team Update

Mr. Scott Koenig, Public Services Manager, stated that he had spoken with Mr. Jared Adkins, Sediment and Stormwater Program Manager/Engineer, Kent Conservation District, who indicated that the District is planning to submit a concept plan for a stream modification project to the Delaware Clean Water Advisory Council. Mr. Koenig believed this would occur in February. If the project receives a favorable recommendation from the Advisory Council, the District will develop a more specific scope of work and contact the property owners involved. At that point, Mr. Koenig stated, the City will act as a local sponsor for the project.

Mr. Ruane moved that the Public Services Department send a letter to the Clean Water Council in support of the effort to be made by the Kent Conservation District to take the next step in the Puncheon Run Watershed Action Plan.

Mr. Hogan requested that the motion be clarified.

Mr. Koenig suggested that the Committee support a future channel modification project if State funding is available.

Mr. Ruane withdrew his motion.

Mr. Ruane moved that the City of Dover write a letter in support of the Kent Conservation District's request to the Clean Water Council to fund a stream modification project at Puncheon Run, seconded by Mr. Hogan and unanimously carried.

In response to Mr. Ruane, Mr. Koenig explained that the City allocated $5,000 in the current budget to fund submission of a Letter of Map Revision to potentially alter the flood plain map in the Puncheon Run area. He explained that a proposal has been received from URS Engineering for the initial phase of the work at a cost of $8,700 and that Senator Brian Bushweller and Representative Brad Bennett have indicated they would be willing to fund this phase of the project. However, Mr. Koenig noted that the proposal from URS Engineering to complete the additional funding for the Letter of Map Revision exceeds the $5,000 that the City has allocated. He stated that two options are being considered: 1) to contact URS Engineering to renegotiate their proposal, or 2) to seek consulting requests from other firms to prepare the Letter of Map Revision.

Mr. Ruane stressed the importance of moving forward expeditiously on this matter, stating that a hardship is being created for residents in the area who are paying, in some cases, over $1,000 annually for flood insurance because the old map indicates that they are in the flood plain. He noted that the issue creates additional difficulties for property owners who want to sell or refinance their homes.

Planning and Funding for New Library

Ms. Margery Cyr, Library Director, stated that Holzman-Moss Architects will visit Dover on January 25, 2010, to make a presentation to City Council regarding the conclusion of the Design/Development Phase of the project and to discuss budget issues. Holzman-Moss will also meet with potential major donors for the capital campaign at that time. She noted that Horizon Philanthropic is working with the Library Committee to manage the campaign, and that the Capital Campaign Committee is chaired by Mrs. Donna Stone, with First Lady Carla Markell serving as Honorary Chair. She noted that there are four "points" to the campaign as follows: 1) a Major Donor Committee, also chaired by Mrs. Stone, 2) a Medical Committee chaired by Mrs. Terri Nellans Brown with Dr. Ralph Zaragoza as Honorary Chair; 3) a Business Committee chaired by Mr. K. C. Sheth with Mayor Carey as the Honorary Chair; and 4) an Events Committee co-chaired by Mrs. Julie Eaby and Ms. Denise Gast. She noted that solicitation training will begin January 21, 2010, and solicitation will begin immediately thereafter, with the largest potential donors being approached first. She indicated that part of the large donor solicitation will be for donors to purchase naming rights to parts of the building or the building itself, and the opportunity to make multi-year pledges will also be provided.

Ms. Cyr stated that during the week of January 4, 2010, several sizeable donations were received, including a request to purchase a naming right to the children's computer area for $12,500, $5,000 from a local business, and $5,000 which was bequeathed by a community member in his will. In addition, she indicated that a pledge to donate $1,000 per year over a three-year period was received from one of the committee members and was accompanied by an initial $1,000 payment.

Ms. Cyr stated that the group will meet with There DuPont of the Longwood Foundation in early February to provide an update on the project and obtain feedback about the most opportune timing for grant submission. She noted that grant submission deadlines are March 15, 2010, and September 15, 2010.

Ms. Cyr explained that arrangements are being made to host a breakfast for State and local legislators in February in preparation for State Bond Bill hearings scheduled in March. She noted that a request has been submitted to the State for $5 million. Ms. Cyr mentioned that she attended a meeting during the week of January 4, 2010, where Mr. Rick Geisenberger, Assistant Secretary of State, indicated that he anticipated that the first two (2) to three (3) projects recommended by the Delaware Division of Libraries would be funded, and she noted that Dover's library project is first on that list.

In response to Mr. Ruane, Ms. Cyr stated that there has been a great deal of public support for library construction throughout the history of the project. She explained that the Steering Committee has guided the project overall, and that this committee is comprised of the chairs of various supporting committees formed several years ago. She noted that the composition of this group is reflective of the library population, as it is composed of both City of Dover and Kent County residents. She explained that the work of the previous supporting committees has been completed and these members are now serving on the new Capital Campaign committees, with 7-10 participants actively working on each subcommittee.

In response to Mr. Hogan, Ms. Cyr estimated that more than 200 people have had an active role in the project, in addition to those who have attended monthly public meetings. She indicated that over 5,000 individuals have signed petitions in favor of the library, and that the list of supporters continues to grow. She stated she would try to gather more precise information for the Committee relating to public support for the project.

CDBG Program

Mrs. Tracey Harvey, Community Development Manager, provided an update on CDBG Projects as follows:

Fiscal Year 2008

Dover Interfaith Ministry - Mrs. Harvey stated that Dover Interfaith Ministry to the Homeless has begun submitting bills for renovations for the shelter at 684 Forrest Avenue, has signed a lease with the Downtown Dover Partnership, and has applied for a building permit for minor demolition of the some of the interior, which will not be included in CDBG funding.

Fiscal Year 2009

Homeowner Rehabilitation Program - Mrs. Harvey indicated that three (3) homes have been completed (49 S. Kirkwood Street, 420 Court Street, 720 Carol Street). She explained that the waiting list for housing renovations will open on January 21, 2010, at City Hall. The first 20 qualified applications will be accepted, and the remaining 2009 funding will be utilized to rehabilitate homes of the first four (4) to five (5) families on the list.

Homeownership Assistance Program - Mrs. Harvey reported that one (1) family has purchased a home, closing documents were recently received for two (2) additional families to close by the end of January and mid-February, and one family will be closing in mid-March.

Elizabeth W. Murphey School - Mrs. Harvey noted that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) denied approval for the replacement of existing windows with vinyl windows at the Murphey School. The Executive Director submitted bids and a scope of work to replace the steam lines to heat buildings 12-48 instead of the window replacement project, and this request has been approved by SHPO.

In response to Mr. Ruane, Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, indicated that this administrative change was approved by the representative from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as both projects are classified as rehabilitation programs.

RC & D Emergency Home Repairs - Mrs. Harvey stated that emergency home repairs have been completed on homes at 38 North Kirkwood Street, 117 Quail Hollow Drive, 722 Forest Street, and 893 Schoolhouse Lane.

Housing and Recovery Act of 2008 (Neighborhood Stabilization Program) Program

Mrs. Harvey explained that six (6) properties have been purchased under this program and $822,255 has been expended in Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funding to date. She stated that one (1) home is under renovation and the next round of renovations is expected to begin in mid-February or early March.

In response to Mr. Ruane, Mrs. Harvey indicated that, in addition to advertising through legal notices, the program has been publicly promoted on residential electric bills beginning in December 2009, which has resulted in approximately 10-15 calls per day from interested parties. She also stated that the program was mentioned at the second public hearing for the preparation of the 2010 CSBG Consolidated Plan, which was held on January 7, 2010.

In response to Mr. Ruane, Mrs. Harvey stated that approximately $1.5 million was received in NSP funding and approximately $823,000 has been spent. She noted that ten (10) houses were originally scheduled for purchase, but she believed that eight (8) total properties will be purchased and the remaining funds will be used for renovations. She believed that this program was a one-time opportunity from the federal government.

Mrs. Harvey stated that the Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit applications under the FY 2010 CDBG will be issued on January 14, 2010.

Responding to Mr. Ruane, Mrs. Harvey stated that FY 2010 funding levels for the CDBG Program were anticipated to be similar to FY 2009, but possibly decreased in the category of program income because repayments from home sales/refinancing have not been coming in. Mrs. Harvey stated she would provide information regarding the FY 2010 program at the next Committee meeting.

Youth Advisory Committee

Mrs. Russell stated that the Youth Advisory Committee remains active and that members are planning for upcoming Committee elections.

Mr. Hogan moved for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:43 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sophia R. Russell
Chairwoman

SRR/js/tm
S:\AGENDAS-MINUTES-PACKETS-PRESENTATIONS-ATT&EXH\Committee-Minutes\2010\01-11-2010 PR&CE.wpd