

**City of Cleveland Heights
Citizens Advisory Committee
January 26, 2021
Virtual Meeting and Public Hearing (via Zoom)**

MEMBERS PRESENT

David Benson
Bradley Eckert
Cory Farmer
Diane Hallum
Allison Hite
Allison McCallum
Josephine Moore
Allosious Snodgrass
Catalina Wagers

Laura Black
Susan Efroymson
Jonathan Goldman
Christine Henry
Marc Lefkowitz
Gretchen Mettler
Jessica Schantz
Patti Substelny

MEMBERS ABSENT

Lee Barbee (exc.)
Steve Titchenal

T. Nadas
André Witt (exc.)

STAFF PRESENT

Brian Iorio

Eric Zamft

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Cory Farmer called the meeting to order. Secretary Jessica Schantz called the roll; a quorum was present.

INTRODUCTIONS

Due to the presence of many new CAC members and a new Planning Director, Chairman Farmer asked that everyone introduce themselves. Chairman Farmer asked Eric Zamft, the City's newly hired Planning Director, to introduce himself to the CAC.

Next, Chairman Farmer asked all members of the CAC to introduce themselves and state which neighborhood they live in.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Cory Farmer commenced the Public Hearing portion of the meeting. The purpose of the public hearing is to accept and respond to any public comment regarding the Year 47 (2021) CDBG Annual Action Plan and the substantial amendment to the Year 45 (2019) CDBG Annual Action Plan that incorporates the third round of CDBG funding the City will be receiving as a result of the CARES Act.

Chairman Farmer asked if there was anyone wishing to make a public comment regarding either plan. There was no additional public comment made at this meeting. Mr. Iorio stated that the City has not received any written comments as a result of the public notices.

Mr. Iorio summarized the process for submitting both plans to HUD and the funding cycles for subrecipients. He also summarized the CV3 amendment to the 2019 Plan.

CAC Members asked questions relating to the emergency assistance portion of the CV3 amendment and the formula used to determine our allocation.

With no further questions, Chairman Farmer closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

Next, Mr. Iorio described what the City's "Local Definitions" mean. He explained that they define when a change in the CDBG program's plan necessitates a substantial amendment. He also explained that this is something that the CAC votes to accept every year. For 2021, no changes are being proposed to the Local Definitions.

David Benson made a motion to accept the Local Definitions as presented for program year 2021. Christine Henry seconded, the motion was approved unanimously.

Next, Chairman Farmer shared that André Witt has requested to take a leave of absence from the CAC for 2021. Cory read Section 3 of Article 3 of the CAC By Laws pertaining to attendance requirements. In summary, excessive absences are reviewed by the Chair and the CAC can vote to request that Council remove their appointment or that the member resign. Many members acknowledged the important contributions André has made to the CAC and their desire that he remain on the CAC. They also expressed the desire to discuss with André whether he would be willing to rejoin the committee in August when the CAC workload intensifies. Members also discussed tabling the issue until Council indicates that they will appoint new members. Chairman Farmer also requested that André still receive CAC communications.

Lastly, the CAC discussed the lack of diversity on the CAC and ways in which this

can be improved. Mr. Iorio described FutureHeights' Community Capacity Building program. He also briefly described the appointment process, the standards established in the Citizen Participation Plan and the need for CAC members that are LMI or in presumed benefit populations.

Members discussed drafting a letter to Council describing the issue and urging Council to appoint CAC members from targeted backgrounds. Chairman Farmer stressed that he did not want any current members to feel obligated to leave the CAC in order to make room for new members with underrepresented backgrounds.

A member expressed the opinion that some portions of the community are intentionally excluded. Another member highlighted that despite the current racial makeup of the CAC, committee decisions can still be intentional in combating historical disinvestment and discrimination. Other members stressed the importance of outreach and community engagement in order to increase board and commission applications from underrepresented groups. A suggestion was made that members of the CAC work with members of other committees in order to improve community engagement.

Mr. Iorio pointed out that the CAC should compile some ideas on how to increase engagement if there is going to be a letter written to Council. Members suggested that an outreach plan for the CAC be developed. Some members stressed the need to make the community more aware of the work that the CAC does and the work that is facilitated by the CAC through grantees. This could also include educating the public about what CDBG is.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Cory Farmer, Chair

Jessica Schantz, Secretary