CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 2, 2023

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chairman; David Heuvelman; Tom Livingston; Barbara Smyth; Lisa Shanahan; Darlene Young; Brian Meek (6:55 P.M.)

OTHER: Clinton Hamilton, Carver Foundation; Maria Palacios, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County; Jim Maloney, Connecticut Institute for Communities; Tamara Pardo, Domestic Violence Crisis Center; Sylvia Archibald, East Norwalk Improvement Association; Denise Cesareo, Elder House; Chrissy Cacace, Family and Children's Agency; Tina Kramer, Filling in the Blanks; Tristan Fields, Help Inc.; Sean O'Brien, Homefront's; Kim Carter, Keystone House; Maggie Young, Liberation Programs; Danielle Lebrando, Malta House; Phyllis Lodato-Suppa, Northeast Community Cycles; Adam Bovilsky, Norwalk Housing Authority; Michele Conderino, Open Door Shelter; Ruta Pakstas, Person to Person; Tonya Torian, Serving All Vessels Equally; Kate Guthrie, The Rowan Center; Ed Spilka, Wheel It Forward; Dajuan Wiggins, Youth Business Initiative; Brian Bidolli, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency; Heather Ely; Troy Deering; Stephen Ivan; Alan Kibbe; Garrett Bolella; Jessica Vonashek; Shawnee Knight; Shaye Ann McCormick

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kydes called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. There was a quorum present.

ROLL CALL

A Roll Call of those present was performed.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no Public Participation at this time.

ADMINISTRATION

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2023 MEETING.

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MS. SHANAHAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NEW BUSINESS

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT – REVIEW AND PRESENTATION OF CDBG

APPLICATIONS. (STEPHEN IVAN)

Mr. Clinton Hamilton came forward to represent the Carver Foundation. He said that the Carver Foundation had partnered with various organizations over the years, including Redevelopment, to take on projects such as energy efficient boilers, new gym floors, new bleachers, and a new HVA system. They are currently seeking funding to modernize their kitchen. He noted that many people, including seniors, were using the kitchen currently.

Ms. Maria Palacios came forward to represent the Catholic Charities of Fairfield County. They are requesting $25,760.00 to support their expenses. Their Norwalk Immigration Services is currently the only program that provides immigration legal services. She reviewed the services provided.

Chairman Kydes asked if the majority of the funding would be going to the staff to help facilitate the legal help.

Ms. Palacios said that this was partially the case as they mainly wished for the funding to help cover fees and losses from providing services to those who lacked the ability to fully pay.

Mr. Maloney came forward to represent the Connecticut Institute for Communities. They operate the Head Start program and have two facilities. They plan to match the money from the grant. The money will go to improve the facilities including security, additional bathrooms, and other things. He highlighted some of the current security issues that needed addressing.

Chairman Kydes asked to clarify that they were asking for half of what the total project would cost and if they had the matching funding.

Mr. Maloney confirmed this.

Mr. Livingston asked if they had been in contact with Mr. Lo or Building Management to discuss the proposed renovations.

Mr. Maloney said that they had and had done an almost identical project recently.

Ms. Tamara Pardo came forward to represent the Domestic Violence Crisis Center. They are a State Certified provider of Domestic Violence Services. She provided an overview of the services that they offered. They are asking for $16,705.00 to repaint and repair their Norwalk Safe House. The house has not been repainted in the three decades since its purchase. She reviewed the amount of use that the house has offered over the years. They are projecting that it will help appx. 50 individuals this year alone. She noted that the houses were over-capacity and people were staying in them longer than they were prior to COVID.

Ms. Sylvia Archibald came forward to represent the East Norwalk Improvement Association. She outlined the various programs that they have preformed such as literacy programs, robotic camps, music and art programs, and live plays. They are hoping to receive another award for the 2023-2024 period. They are requesting $9,000 to continue their work for the community. They want to host more literacy programs, expand their robotics program, offer STEM programs over more age groups, and continue to provide their family programs. She said that the T.T.D., which supports them with ~70% of their fund-raising, had decided to reverse an $11,000.00 match that was designated as an incentive to fundraise. As a result, they need fiscal assistance.

Ms. Denise Cesareo came forward to represent Elder House. Elder House is an accredited medical model adult day center. They serve older adults and their family caregivers. She reviewed the issues that their clients often have that need servicing. Their requested funding will allow them to continue to enroll all seniors regardless of their ability to pay for support.

Ms. Chrissy Cacace came forward to represent the Family and Children's Agency. They are present to request funding for their Behavioral Health Services. She provided an outline of the service program. She noted that they were having trouble finding clinicians and looking to add things like group therapy.

Mr. Livingston asked if the money would go to serving any particular population.

Ms. Cacace said it would be mainly for Norwalk residents and residents who might not be able to pay co-pays.

Ms. Tina Kramer came forward to represent Filling In the Blanks. Their goal is to combat childhood hunger by providing children in need with meals on weekends. They are requesting $51,716.00 to start school-based pantries. She outlined the amount of work they had done in providing food to children. She noted that high-school kids were averse to taking meal bags due to friends/peers being able to see that they are receiving food assistance. They are hoping to move to a school-based pantry to address this issue. They are also hoping to provide hygiene products at the pantry.

Mr. Tristan Fields came forward to represent Help Inc. They help increase College access to underrepresented groups of students. He outlined how they provided this service. The program is offered free to students. A lot of the students cannot hire private tutors to help them with studying. He reviewed the number of students that they currently assist.

Mr. Sean O'Brien came forward to represent Homefronts. He outlined some of the families that they have managed to help. They have revitalized 623 homes in Norwalk over the years. They are back to helping at pre-pandemic levels. They had 55 requests for help in Norwalk this year. He provided details on their current staff.

Ms. Kim Carter came forward to represent Keystone House. They are looking to replace the sanitary sewer line at one of their three homes. They had a licensed plumber conduct a hydro-jet snake video which showed tree root damage. Due to the severity of the damage, they are at great risk of ruptures and leaks. She reviewed the damage that had been done and the repairs that would be needed.

Ms. Maggie Young came forward to represent Liberation Programs. She outlined what her organization provided. Their proposal is for a child-care coordinator, and they are asking for $15,000 to support this position. She outlined the tasks that they would be performing.

Ms. Danielle Lebrando came forward to represent Malta House. She outlined the services provided by Malta House. It is currently the only Transitional Living Program in the state where a mother and child can live for long-term. They are permitted to stay in the house for up to 18 months. The program is designed to help end chronic homelessness. They also offer free childcare. Further review of the services offered followed.

Ms. Phyllis Lodato-Suppa came forward to represent Northeast Community Cycles. They were established as a 501c3 in 2012. This is their first year applying for this grant. She reviewed the services provided by their organization. They are looking to increase the amount of distribution of bicycles to Norwalk residents. They are requesting $5,000.

Mr. Adam Bovilsky came forward representing Norwalk Housing Authority. He reviewed the services that they provided. They recently received a violation from the State for one of their elevators. They will need to perform repairs on it. They are requesting $51,700 for the repair and have matching funds in place. They expect an additional $28-29,000 in staff costs while the elevator is not in use.

Mr. Livingston asked if the elevator was currently working.

Mr. Bovilsky said it was operating but it was in violation.

Mr. Livingston asked how many floors were in the building.

Mr. Bovilsky said that there were four floors in the building. He stressed that the elevator being out would have a large impact on the seniors in the building.

Ms. Michele Conderino came forward to represent Open Door Shelter. She reviewed the services that they offered. They opened the Financial Opportunity Center in 2021. They are asking for support for their ongoing Employment Services. She reviewed the details of their employment services for those present.

Ms. Ruta Pakstas came forward to represent Person to Person. They are a 501c3 organization. She reviewed their mission statement and services provided for those present.

Mr. Tonya Torian came forward to represent Serving All Vessels Equally. He provided an overview of the services provided by his organization. They are requesting $30,000 intended to be used for the salary of program coordinators. He provided further details on the programs in question.

Mr. Brian Meek joined the meeting at 6:55 P.M.

Ms. Kate Guthrie came forward to represent the Rowan Center. She is requesting $50,000 for the Rowan Center's Long Term and Crisis Therapy Support. She provided a review of what their organization provided and the services they offered. The program comes at the request of their low-income clients and survivors of which over 97% voiced an interest in the program.

Mr. Ed Spilka came forward to represent Wheel It Forward. He provided an overview of the services that they provided. He noted that they had collected 70 tons of durable medical equipment and serviced 3,000 individuals. They are working on creating a provider network. They are requesting $25,000 this year.

Ms. Shanahan asked how people found the organization.

Mr. Spilka reviewed the various manners in which the organization was advertised.

Mr. DaJuan Wiggins came forward to represent the Youth Business Initiative. They are asking for funding for their entrepreneurship program. He reviewed the history of the organization and the services that they provided.

Ms. Shanahan asked for more details regarding the offerings of the organization.

Mr. Wiggin provided more detail regarding how their programs operated.

Mr. Bidolli came forward to represent the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency. He provided an overview of the services that they offered. Discussion followed to clarify the costs being applied for.

Chairman Kydes noted that they would not be able to cover all the programs and would need to carefully pick which ones to support.

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF $150,000 OF AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS FOR P3 ADVISORY SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORS, LLC AND TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY RELATED TO THE WEBSTER STREET LOT PROJECT. (BRIAN BIDOLLI) ACCOUNT NUMBER: TBD (ARPA FUNDS)

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF $150,000 OF AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS FOR P3 ADVISORY SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORS, LLC AND TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY RELATED TO THE WEBSTER STREET LOT PROJECT.**
**** MR. LIVINGSTON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Mr. Bidolli came forward to discuss this item. This item is related to the Webster Lot Redevelopment Project. They desire to have some outside services for technical review. The first task will be to review the proposal of the selected developer and do an audit of the developer's financials and pro-forma. The second task will be to analyze risks and policy objectives. The third task will be taking a look at potential grant funding opportunities and various public-private financing strategies. The fourth task will be a straight-ahead economic impact analysis. He provided further review of their project plans. The City hopes to use the $150,000 in ARPA funds for this project.

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX (6) IN FAVOR (HEUVELMAN, LIVINGSTON, KYDES, SMYTH, YOUNG, SHANAHAN) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (MEEK).**

PLANNING AND ZONING

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THE WANDERLUST GROUP, INC. FOR DOCKWA SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES FOR 1 YEAR IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $2,000 WITH A 5-YEAR RENEWAL OPTION. (ALAN KIBBE)
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 400000-2628

Mr. Kibbe and Ms. Williams came forwards to discuss this item. They are looking to upgrade their software system. Ms. Williams noted that the City already uses this system. Mr. Kibbe reviewed the benefits offered by the software system. Further review of the boating and mooring system followed including the fees for the moorings. The Harbor Commission has budgeted funds from its Mooring Permit revenue to pay the annual fee. The request is to authorize an agreement for annual renewal.

Mr. Livingston asked what was being done currently.

Mr. Kibbe provided information regarding the moorings to answer Mr. Livingston's question.

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THE WANDERLUST GROUP, INC. FOR DOCKWA SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES FOR 1 YEAR IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $2,000 WITH A 5-YEAR RENEWAL OPTION.**
**** MS. SHANAHAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TRANSPORTATION, MOBILITY, AND PARKING

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE AN ON-CALL CONTRACT WITH KERIN & FAZIO, LLC FOR APPRAISAL SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $10,000. (GARRETT BOLELLA/JIM TRAVERS)
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 133710-5796-AEC02

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE AN ON-CALL CONTRACT WITH KERIN & FAZIO, LLC FOR APPRAISAL SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $10,000.**
**** MS. SMYTH SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Mr. Bolella and Mr. Deering came forward to discuss this item. He provided an overview of the project. He reviewed the standards for sidewalk approval and why they desired the appraisal services to help meet those standards. He said that this item would allow them to streamline the designing and planning of sidewalks. Mr. Deering said that they were nearing the final stages of advancing the plans of the project. He reviewed the current status of the sidewalks that they were going to be improving. They have also come across some properties that will require small easements. They do not believe that the sidewalks will be a detriment to anyone and will, instead, be providing better walk scores and increasing the value of the properties. Further discussion followed.

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX (6) IN FAVOR (HEUVELMAN, LIVINGSTON, KYDES, SMYTH, YOUNG, SHANAHAN) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (MEEK).**

OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** MR. HEUVELMAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted
Ian A. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services