



Minutes of the Oberlin City Council Public Hearing

Monday, September 20, 2010

Oberlin City Hall Council Chambers

7:15 p.m.

Present: Sharon Soucy, Vice-President; Charles Peterson, Bryan Burgess, Elizabeth Meadows, and Scott Broadwell

Absent: Ken Sloane, President and Kate Pilacky

Purpose: To consider the City of Oberlin's intention to apply for funding under the FY 2010 CDBG Downtown Revitalization Grant Program.

Vice President Soucy called the hearing to order at 7:16 p.m. Soucy asked the City Manager to provide information on this matter.

City Manager Eric Norenberg explained that City Council will consider Ordinance No. 10-68 AC CMS later in the meeting regarding authorizing a grant application under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Downtown Revitalization Program. He asked Planning and Development Director Gary Boyle to briefly summarize the program.

Boyle explained that the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) administers the State's CDBG program. This public hearing is the second required CDBG hearing that the City has held this year concerning the FY 2010 CDBG programs. The first one provided an overview of the CDBG programs, and this one specifically deals with the Downtown Revitalization Program. In May 2010, the Planning and Development Department presented an updated Downtown Revitalization and Development Plan, and a Market Analysis to City Council for adoption. Those documents were then an important part of a Preliminary Threshold Application to ODOD which was the first step in the process of applying for a grant under the Comprehensive Downtown Revitalization Program. The State has subsequently invited the City to apply for this competitive grant as they found our Preliminary Threshold Application to be thorough and comprehensive. If awarded the grant, the maximum amount of the grant would be \$400,000.00 and the intention is to apply for the full amount that is available under this program. Of that amount, \$60,000.00 can be used for administration costs. The remaining amount will be used for private building and business owners to make improvements to their property and the City can use funds for public infrastructure improvements. This grant application must be submitted to the State by October 5th. The official notice of any grant award will likely be received in November or December.

Boyle noted that the City was successful in being awarded downtown grants under the State's programs in FY 2003 and FY 2005. Both times the City was awarded \$400,000.00. The City used grant funding in the amount of \$60,000.00 to contract with the Poggemeyer Design Group and Main Street Oberlin to assist with the administration of those grants. The City did not use any of that grant funding to cover its own administrative expenses related to those grants. If the City receives a grant under the FY 2010 program, the City plans to contract for assistance with administering the grant with the Oberlin Main Street Chamber organization.

The City is seeking commitments from downtown building and business owners to participate in this program. There are about 58 buildings in the downtown target area and most of them need some type of improvement. Both the Oberlin Community Improvement Corporation and the Oberlin Planning Commission have concurred with the need to freshen the downtown streetscape. The Public Works Department has developed engineer's cost estimates for that work. Also, the Oberlin Municipal Light and Power System has identified the need for and has plans for some electrical upgrades and lighting improvements in the downtown target area as well.

City Council person Scott Broadwel asked Boyle to talk about the need to meet the requirement for "slum and blight conditions." Boyle responded that this is one of the national objectives under the CDBG program. Other national program objectives include providing assistance to low and moderate income persons, and addressing unforeseen community needs. In order to be funded, the City will need to demonstrate in the grant application that one of the national objectives will be met. The requirement is to either reduce "slum and blight" conditions or avoid the potential for those conditions to exist in the future. This is an important national objective that staff feels can be met. Such conditions can be attributed to many causes such as failing or outdated electrical systems, HVAC, plumbing issues, need for roof repairs, replacement of faulty window and doors, etc. Many of these conditions exist in the downtown area so the City can meet this national objective or requirement.

Broadwell also asked about expanding the target area to Puffers Floral Shop. Boyle noted that Puffers had not been interested in the past in participating in this program. He further commented that the area could be expanded if need be to include that commercial property.

Boyle also informed City Council that the property or business owner component of the grant program is to be based on a matching grant amount of up to \$10,000.00 per building. Those that have submitted commitment forms would be offered such assistance first if the grant is awarded. At the end of past grant programs, Council has agreed to allow additional grant funds to be spent on buildings that have participated but have additional project needs. The City will work with the building owners to make sure that they are meeting all procurement, historical preservation requirements, etc.

Soucy asked for comments from the audience.

Krista Long, 67 Orchard Street, advised that she is President of Oberlin Main Street Chamber. She asked that City Council vote in favor of the ordinance that will be presented to them later in the meeting. The sidewalks need to be improved in the downtown area, and the streetscape needs updating. In addition, many businesses had benefitted in the past programs and much more work is

needed to be completed in her store and others located within the target area. She knew of many other building owners who would appreciate the opportunity to make improvements to their property.

Soucy asked for any other comments from the public. There were no other comments.

Soucy declared the Public Hearing adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Submitted by:



Sharon Pearson, Acting City Clerk

Attest:



BELINDA B. ANDERSON, CMC
CLERK OF COUNCIL



KENNETH SLOANE
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

Approved: 10/18/2010

Posted: 10/19/2010