

**City of Lawrence, KS
Community Development Advisory Committee
March 8, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Baker, Jenna Coker, Alex Delaney, Jonathan Holley, Steven Koprince, Kendall Simmons, Blake Swenson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Frank Pondrom

STAFF PRESENT: Danelle Dresslar, Brad Karr

Chair Koprince called the CDAC meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

1. Introductions

The committee members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the January 25, 2018 meeting minutes

Delaney moved to approve the January 25, 2018 meeting minutes. Koprince seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Delaney nominated Holley for Chair. Koprince seconded the motion. Holley accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations for Chair. The motion passed 6-0 with one abstention.

Delaney nominated Swenson for Vice Chair. Coker seconded the motion. Swenson accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations for Vice Chair. The motion passed 6-0 with one abstention.

4. Discussion of 2018 CDBG Non-Public Service applications

Dresslar explained the amount of reallocation of funds available for the 2018 CDBG Non-Public Service grant. Staff recommended fully funding all of the applications, and additionally over-funding some of the applications to reduce the amount of funds currently in the credit line of the grant.

Delaney moved to approve the staff recommendations for funding of 10a. City of Lawrence (Public Works Division) Sidewalk and Bicycle Gap at \$240,200, 11a. Community Living Opportunities Removal of material and architectural barriers at \$37,580, 12a. City of Lawrence Community Development Division Housing Rehab/EL/FL/Weatherization at \$325,000, 13a. Independence, Inc Accessible Housing Program at \$49,500, and 14.a-d North Lawrence Improvement Association four Traffic Calming Devices at \$32,000. Baker seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

5. Discussion of 2018 CDBG Public Service applications

Applicants for the 2018 CDBG Public Service grant spoke to the committee about their applications.

Coker spoke on behalf of the Brook Creek Neighborhood Association (BCNA) about their application for public service operating expenses, and recused herself from the all voting.

Cindy Suenram spoke on behalf of the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association (ELNA) about their application for public service operating expenses. Baker asked how many people were on the board of ELNA, about how many people attend the ELNA meetings, and how do they raise additional funds. Suenram said there were 14 people on the board and meetings averaged about 25, and ELNA holds multiple fundraising activities throughout the year to raise additional funds.

Sarah Jane Russell, Executive Director of the Lawrence Community Shelter (LCS), and Charles Frager, Director of Operations, spoke to the committee about the LCS application. Delaney noted in past allocation years, LCS has been funded at about 50% of their requested budget. Delaney asked about the most important items requested for funding on the LCS budget. Russell said the most important would be the funding for the monitors who serve as night staff, and the funding for the kitchen staff. Dresslar reminded the committee the LCS application was submitted before Russell was hired as the new Executive Director. Holley asked if the amount requested would have been different if Russell had prepared the application. Russell said yes. Frager said the requested amount would have been to fully fund the budget items for the monitors and kitchen staff. Holley indicated those items would total to \$39,296.

Delaney moved to fund 7a. Lawrence Community Shelter Operating Expenses at \$39,296. Holley seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-2 with one recusal.

Cindy Lynn, Case Manager for Emergency Assistance and Pathway to Hope with the Salvation Army (TSA), spoke to the committee about their application for the Emergency Service Council (ESC). Baker asked how long the monthly allocation distributed among the five agencies in the ESC lasts. Lynn said only four or five days.

Rich Minder, Collaborative Projects Coordinator for Success by 6 Coalition of Douglas County (SB6), spoke to the committee about their application for a Housing Assistance Fund. Delaney asked why the request this year was \$14,000 while last year the request was only \$7,000. Minder said a reduction in flex funds from the Early Childhood Block Grant has necessitated a larger request from CDBG.

Baker asked why there are three different requests for emergency assistance funding; since the ESC is the oldest, did anyone considered making one larger request by the ESC to cover all of the emergency assistance programs. Minder said SB6, working with its coalition partners, could work to spread out funds over the whole year to assist families with young children, while a consolidated emergency assistance fund might expend the funds quickly without possibly assisting any families with young children. Lynn said the ESC does try to be as open and receptive as possible to referrals from other agencies, but different grant sources have different program parameters to follow.

Dawn Meyers, Grants Manager of Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas (CCNEK), spoke to the committee about their application for the Lawrence Emergency Assistance Center. The funds are 100% used for rent and utility assistance; their food assistance programs are funded from other sources.

Anju Mishra, Lawrence Branch Manager of Housing & Credit Counseling Inc (HCCI), and Marilyn Stanley, Executive Director of HCCI, spoke to the committee about the HCCI application for their Housing and Credit Counseling Program. Holley asked if HCCI had any new initiatives for raising additional funds. Stanley said HCCI continues to apply for grants, seek individual donors, and have funding events; corporate donation amounts have decreased which has led to a decrease in staff levels.

Delaney proposed an idea of funding the neighborhood associations at the same level as last year, \$5075.85 each, funding LCS at \$39,296, SB6 at \$7000, HCCI at \$5270, TSA at \$8405, and CCNEK at \$8405. Holley asked how Delaney determined the split. Delaney said it was somewhere near 50% of their requests, without cutting the neighborhoods.

Holley proposed his alternate idea of funding LCS at \$39,296, SB6 at \$7000, TSA at \$8250, HCCI at \$5270, CCNEK at \$7500, and the neighborhood associations at \$5341 each.

Koprince said he felt the continued funding of neighborhood associations needed to be discussed; Lawrence is the only city to fund neighborhood associations with CDBG funds. He said he would propose zero funding the neighborhood associations; the total CDBG funding is now too small due to federal cuts, and what he felt the trade-offs were for what the community gets from the neighborhood association's newsletter compared to what is provided by the public service agencies competing for the same funds. He said he felt the funds being provided to directly assist a family in need had more value than a quarterly newsletter about a neighborhood.

Simmons said she could see the value in Koprince's idea, but felt it might be too late to implement this year; she felt the neighborhood associations were counting on the funding now, but maybe this could be a warning there will be no funding award next year.

Swenson felt the neighborhood associations do something the public service agencies do not, which is building a community; he felt strong neighborhoods were one of the aspects of Lawrence which make it an appealing place to live and did not know if it would continue without funding.

Koprince said he was not advocating for getting rid of neighborhood associations, and there are plenty of other low/mod income neighborhood associations in Lawrence that exist without receiving CDBG funds. Coker said those neighborhood associations are all in West Lawrence. Delaney said no, there were strong neighborhood associations located all over Lawrence.

Koprince said it might be good for the neighborhood associations to have a coordinator, but maybe it should be a volunteer and maybe it was good to have a neighborhood newsletter, but they should raise the funds to pay for it.

Baker said he had served on this committee long ago, and he noticed when something was cut out of funding, it was hard to re-instate the service in future years. He gave an example of a consumer affairs agency which was zero funded, and the City received many complaints about not having a local agency to provide those services, which is why HCCI is now here.

Coker said BCNA is different because they have very few businesses located in the neighborhood to solicit for donations and ad revenue.

Coker said she thought CDBG was created to help low income neighborhoods. Dresslar said no, funding public services is only a small part of CDBG funds. Karr said CDBG regulations only allow 15% of the total CDBG grant to be used for public service activities such as the neighborhood associations and public service agencies; the majority of CDBG funding is for low/mod income neighborhood infrastructure, such as sidewalks and traffic calming devices, or rehab of low/mod income homeowner units, such as the City's Housing Rehab program, Emergency and Furnace Loan programs, and Weatherization grant program. Dresslar said the original funding of the neighborhood associations was for capacity building to help establish a neighborhood association, but the funding has continued to be awarded every year since as part of the neighborhood associations expected budget. Dresslar said there are 25 low/mod neighborhood associations in Lawrence which are eligible to apply for funding. Baker said in the past, more neighborhood associations applied for infrastructure projects; Dresslar said the funding for infrastructure projects in low/mod neighborhoods is not subject to the 15% cap, but for some reason the neighborhoods have gotten away from applying for those types of projects, except for North Lawrence.

Ted Boyle, President of the North Lawrence Improvement Association (NLIA), spoke to the committee about their application for both public service operating expenses and for traffic calming devices. Boyle said in the past NLIA had CDBG infrastructure projects for sidewalks, drainage tubes, curbs and gutters, and traffic calming devices. Boyle said North Lawrence is the highest rated neighborhood in Safe Routes to Schools because of the traffic calming devices installed with CDBG funds.

Nathan Littlejohn, President of the Pinckney Neighborhood Association (PNA), spoke to the committee about their application for public service operating expenses. Littlejohn said he took to heart what the committee said last year about possibly reducing funding to the neighborhood associations, and has been working on programs to increase fund raising for the neighborhood association. Littlejohn said PNA is aware the CDBG funds will not last forever.

Dresslar cautioned the committee about making allocation recommendations based solely on a flat percentage of the requested funds; an applicant could just increase their request next year to receive a larger amount of funding. Delaney said he was aware of the possibility, but looking through the archives of past funding requests, most requests have remained about level.

Koprince said because of past allocations they were now stuck with the status quo of funding the neighborhood association operating expenses, but the committee should discuss the bigger picture of receiving the most value from the funds. Delaney said this could be the notice to neighborhood associations for next year, but felt it was too late this year to zero fund them. Delaney said necessity is the mother of invention, and if motivated the neighborhoods could stay cohesive and engage no matter what funding they receive. Delaney agreed when the committee is trying to decide between emergency assistance for a family with no utilities, possibly in these same neighborhoods, versus a newsletter, it should be a no-brainer.

Swenson suggested making a plan to reduce the funding for operating expenses to the neighborhood associations each year, to wean them off the funding. Holley said he was impressed by recent news articles of some neighborhood associations having successful fundraising activities, and also agreed with the suggestion of putting the neighborhood associations on notice of reducing the funding; he suggested funding each at \$4000 this year, and reducing it more in future years. Delaney asked how the remaining money this year would be allocated. Swenson said between the agencies who provide emergency assistance. Simmons asked how much would be left to allocate if the neighborhood associations were reduced to \$4000 each. Delaney said roughly \$4000 total would remain to allocate. Swenson felt more should be allocated to TSA and CCNEK.

Swenson suggested funding TSA at \$12,000, SB6 at \$7000, HCCI at \$4000, and CCNEK at \$10,000, which would leave \$4100 to each neighborhood association. Delaney asked how he determined those amounts. Swenson said it was about 40% of HCCI's request, and he felt there was more value in the other services. Delaney asked if there was more value in providing immediate need versus the long term education provided by HCCI. Swenson felt the levels provided enough for long term education. Baker reminded the committee HCCI is the only local program of its kind, yet intersects with all of the other agencies.

Swenson asked Meyers if there was more need now in the community for funding for emergency assistance. Meyers said yes, there was more need. Meyers said if the homeless population grows, it will destroy the community because they will not leave what they know; the agencies who provide emergency assistance protect existing Lawrence residents from becoming homeless and adding to the numbers in the annual HUD homeless point-in-time count.

Holley suggested allocating an even \$4000 for each neighborhood association, and any remainder from the reduction to HCCI. Swenson asked if the committee was informing the neighborhoods of future cuts in their funding. Delaney and Koprince both said yes, in their opinion this was a notice to the neighborhood associations to expect future cuts. Delaney said it was in no means a judgement on the importance or value of the neighborhood associations, but when it comes down to people having food or having a newsletter, it is an easy decision. Coker said even her, who loves her neighborhood so much, could see Delaney's point and would rather feed and house people than have a newsletter and paid coordinator.

Holley moved to fund 1a. Brook Creek Neighborhood Association Operating/Coordinator Expenses at \$4000; 2a. East Lawrence Neighborhood Association Operating/Coordinator Expenses at \$4000; 3a. North Lawrence Improvement Association Operating/Coordinator Expenses at \$4000; 4. Pinckney Neighborhood Association Operating/Coordinator Expenses at \$4000; 5a. Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas Lawrence Emergency Assistance Center at \$10,000; 6a. Housing and Credit Counseling Inc Housing and Credit Counseling Program at \$4384; 7a. Lawrence Community Shelter Operating Expenses at \$39,296; 8a. The Salvation Army Emergency Service Council at \$12,000; and 9a. Success by 6 Coalition of Douglas County Housing Assistance Fund at \$7,000. The motion was seconded by Delaney. The motion passed 5-1 with one additional abstention.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Miscellaneous/Calendar

The next meeting of the CDAC will be on March 22, 2018. Dresslar said in April the committee could meet if needed on April 12, 2008 to finalize the allocations, and the April 26, 2018 meeting would be the public hearing to present and discuss the final recommendations.

8. Adjourn

Holley moved to adjourn the meeting. Delaney seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Attendance Record

Members	Jan 11	Jan 25	Feb 8	Feb 22	Mar 8	April 12	April 26									
Robert Baker	X	*+		X	+											
Frank Brown	X	U		X												
Jenna Coker	X	+		X	+											
Alex Delaney	X	E		X	+											
Jonathan Holley	X	+		X	+											
Steven Koprince	X	+		X	+											
Frank Pondrom	X	+		X	E											
Blake Swenson	X	+		X	+											
Kendall Simmons	X	E		X	+											

E	Excused Absence	U	Unexcused Absence
X	Meeting Cancelled – Weather Conditions	-	Meeting Cancelled – Committee Vote/No Business
*	First meeting after appointment	**	Last Meeting Prior to expired term
^	Last Meeting		