

Community Development Block Grant Program
Target Neighborhoods Community Meeting
November 2, 2017– 6:00 pm
Bolton Avenue Community Center
315 Bolton Avenue, Alexandria, Louisiana

Minutes of the meeting:

Meeting Open: Shirley Branham, Administrator of Community Development for the City of Alexandria

Prayer: Mrs Helen Johnson

Introductions: Welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Introduced staff, other city employees and Councilman-at-Large Joe Fuller. .

Shirley: Stated that everyone's input is very important.

Stated the purpose of this meeting is for the five target areas that HUD has defined as low/mod areas.

Named all 5 districts, which is on the copy of the surveys you have in your bags.

HUD requires that we spend 70% of the funds on these target neighborhoods, we spend about 90% because we understand this is where the needs are.

Shirley: In 2016, based on your input we did a few big projects that Kenna manages in demolition.

Explained the process if someone calls with a complaint.

In 2016. We processed 90 complaints, this brings us to 1435 up to more than we have done in community development existence. We got 30 persons to tear down their dilapidated properties and had 5 owners to rehab their properties, we want them to rehab.

Shirley: Stated, demolition for the city is more expensive than if the owner demolished their property.

In 2016-2017 we managed to demolish 28 properties, this puts it to a total of 551, we still have about 70 more properties that's still on the list.

If the city has to demolish the property, we are required to test it for asbestos and if so this has to be abated through a whole different process, this is very expensive. If we have to go through all these processes it costs us 7-10,000 dollars for this.

Told Mrs. Johnson if she has property to be torn down all she has to do is get a contractor to tear it down, would cost her \$2,000 and would cost the city \$10,000.

Talked also about lien on property and if we are able to recoup the money, we put it right back in demolition. This does not happen very often.

Discussions were also on legal successions and properties being tied up in legal.

Shirley: Stated, we started a ranking system. Kenna gets the complaint. Inspector Daniel goes out he ranks it as, 1.

The structure is burned and is about to fall down, we need to get to it as soon as we get funding. 2. Not immediate. 3. Not burned maybe windows out etc. so we prioritize these structures on how we will spend the money. This seems to have been working, when we get the money we try to get all the priority ones we can.

Rehab Minor: Krystal Wimbley handles this program. This program has a cap of \$5,000. Repairs a discipline of work, looks at the roof first, then electrical, plumbing, and last general carpentry. This is how we prioritize how we will spend the money in the Rehab Program.

We managed in 2016 to get 55 projects addressed. Asked persons who had benefitted from this program to raise their hand? There were none. With this program, we do not file a lien on your property.

SNAP: Rehab Program

Shirley: We work with some of the local banks. They provide the fundings. We go through the same process, seeing if you qualifies for this. Stated the limit is \$6,000. With this we were able to get 3 homes in 2016. We are trying to get more banks to participate. This is a bank requirement, you will have a lien on your property. SNAP funds are not available until January 2018.

Home Major Program:

HUD. States if we work on a house the entire house has to be brought up to code. We know a lot of our homes are 21 or more years old, a lot will not be in code compliance. Two of the big killers for us is if the property has lead this disqualifies the house. In HUD rules we have to bring it up to code, so we would have to abate the lead, this is very expensive. 2. If it is in the flood plain, we can not touch the house, we would have to lift the house out of the flood plain and this is about \$7,500. We can spend up to \$40,000 and make a sufficient impact. Basically we are fixing good houses.:

Sandra Ward: At one of your meetings you all were suppose to partner with a bank, did this go through?

Shirley: Yes, this is the SNAP program we were talking about, and we did 3 houses and with the bank it is \$6,000, also with HomeMajor there is a lien on the property for 10 years.

Shirley: We decided how we are going to spend the money based on your input last year at the meeting. You all filled out a survey, like the ones in your bags. You all told us how you wanted us to spend the money.

A/B District – It was Major, Minor and Demolition

C District - It was Minor, Major and Demolition

D District - It was Mino, and Demolition

Shirley: In all three these were your top priorities, and to get these vacant structures down to made it look better in your neighborhoods. Based on the limited amount of funding this is how we decides what we will do for 2017 and 2018.

Code Enforcement – 48,974 might be able to do 45-50 structures

CDBG- Demolition – 97,948 might be able to do 13-16 structures

Stated the city put up \$80,000 to help with the demolition, this will do 10-15 structures, we might be able to get 25-30 houses torn down before the end of this year.

CDBG Minor Rehab - \$179,571 might be able to do 32-35 houses

Home Major Rehab - \$130,887 might be able to do 2-3 houses

Shirley: The total that HUD is funding this year is \$582,632 these funds are diminishing annually. We are already 9,000. Less than last year and next year about a 10,000 deduction. We are trying to do as much as we can with as little as we got.

Sandra Ward: Stated she had talked with Sandra Washington in code enforcement was not pleased, cited several incidents.

Shirley: We are two separate departments, we are community code enforcement and she is public works code enforcement(explained the different)

Shirley: The 2017 & 2018 monies we were supposed to get around July we got it October 26, the city has been footing the bills for us with all the work we have been doing and we will reimburse the city.

Stated, a couple of unexpected events, 2016-2017 calendar year we did not receive our 16-17 money until April, 9 months later. It is hard for us to do work, move forward and do not have the funds.

This year with the presidential election and the changes, this effected how we move forward this year, we got the 2017-2018 money three months late this had an impact on us, and we are moving forward.

The federal government is trying to put new programs in place. There is a lot of talk that they want to dissolve the CDBG and HOME programs. We have been asked to please reach out to our congressman, representatives, etc. to try and get some help. The way it is looking 2018 might be the last year for HOME funds.

Sandra: If we can do the petitions to get signed will this help?

Shirley: You can do anything that will help. Any questions?

Winnie Marshall: In order to qualify does the home have to be paid for? .

Krystal: No, as long as the home is in your name and is listed at the courthouse.

Mercides Harley: Stated she was glad to know this because, she has been telling persons the homes have to be paid for.

Sandra: Asked about heir property?

Krystal: Explained. Heir property is when you are not the sole owner of the property.

Sandra: A few years it was told an attorney would be working on successions.

Shirley: With the program it has to be owner occupied. Gave example.

Shirley: We looked at trying to get an attorney to help with successions and this did not work out. Further discussions were on this.

Winnie: Louisiana need to come from under the old Napoleonian Law, every one need to do a succession. Further discussions were on this.

Krystal: Talked about the affidavit that we have in our office for all siblings to sign and one has to live in the home.

Shirley: HUD wants the owner of the property in the home, they are making an investment in them knowing they will take care of it better than a renter will.

Joanne Johnson: Talked about the conditions with dogs, vacant structures, and run down trailers in her area. Wanted also to know who was over the area which she lives in?

Was told Vivian Fulton is the president for the Peacekeeper Neighborhood Watch and Ed Lavardain is your councilman, you also need to call Code Enforcement and Animal Shelter.

Kenna: They knew about these trailers, had gone out and at that time they were occupied.

Shirley: We need you to vote again on how you would like to see us spend these funds. Went over the survey printout and to rank them from 1-7.

Shirley: Credit Counseling service is we will train some one who is interest in buying a house. For one we will work with them to get their credit score up, get a saving account and make monthly deposits this will get them ready for homeownership to make a down payment to buy a home.

Shirley: There is a lot of talk about drainage, street overlays repairs and sidewalk improvements, Eric Duck from the city Engineering Department will talk later with you on this.

Shirley: If we continue with same activities as 2017-2018 and get the same amount we will put \$25,000 in credit counseling and help about 20 persons. Gave the breakdown of all amounts houses to be demolished and repaired.

Look at the surveys in your bags, circle your neighborhood, because we have to report all of this to HUD. Someone will assist you as to the neighborhood you live in and collect the surveys when you are finished.

Shirley: Introduced Eric Duck city engineer.

Eric: Showed the drainage of Chatlin canal that goes to LSUA, stated the water from Bayou Rapides pumps into the river. Most of the HUD areas have 2 or 3 major drainage areas that's being effected.

Showed the middle part of Alexandria which is the mall.

The Horseshoe drainage canal covers a great deal of major drainage within the city.

Eric: The City of Alexandria does not have any responsibility in this drainage canal. The responsibilities live with the Drainage District. We help them and they help us.

This canal is funded by several taxes that were put in several years ago when some of these areas were not in the city limit.

Eric: Chatlin Canal was put in 1926 or 27, because of the flood in Red River, and the levy system was put up along the river. It is directed down south to get rid of the water. It is designed for a 10 year storm (gave example).

Stated: Once all these canals and drainage basins are full it is nothing we can do about it, takes million and million of dollars to create better drainage. Levy District has been cleaning out the canals and are down to LSUA, hope this will help the city.

If you have had some local flooding contact the street department.

Eric: Talked about the Box covers that Foisy St. has, that was built in 1928 or 1929. It will be a 10 million dollars project. Capital Projects are not always for new projects, but to redo old projects. Any questions?

Cynthia Stephens: Talked about the poor drainage in the Lower Third areas, what can be done about this?

Eric: There are a lot of projects coming up but are not in the areas we are talking about tonight.

Cynthia: Talked about them coming in our areas and cleaning out the drainages, maintenance is not being done.

Eric: This is a major part that should be done by the street department. Further discussions were on this

Shirley: This was one of the main reasons to have Eric tonight, because we know there are a lot of drainage problems in the city. If you decide to take HUD monies for this project you will see very little impact. With what Eric has said this is not a dent, and taking away from assisting you with rehab, demolition, etc. Just wanted to put this out to you all

Willard McCall: Asked for the income guidelines?

Shirley: Do not have any tonight because it changes every year, you may call the office and Krystal will get one for you.

We will take applications for next year, April 23-27 2018, last year we got over 257 applications, can only help 55.

Next meeting will be November 1, 2018. Any questions Thanked the group for coming

Meeting Adjourned

Presented:

Shirley Braham

Krystal Wimbley

Kenna Lavalais

Marvin Daniel

Dianne Bonin

Edna Woodard

Fair Housing, Ranking Surveys, Disaster Assistance Information, Complaint Forms, FICO Scores, and Lead Base Paint forms were passed out.

CDBG Housing Code Enforcement for Unoccupied Structures:

1343 - Total Complaints

442 - Owners Demolished

220 - Owners Rehab

168 - Complaints still active

Also shown was the neighborhood meetings past input:

FY -2013 Target Neighborhood needs:
Rankings:

1. Weatherization
2. Senior Minor Repair
3. Demolition/Code Enforcement
4. Homeownership
5. Youth Activities (does not qualify)

FY- 2014 Target Neighborhood Needs:
Rankings:

1. Senior Minor Repair Program
2. Demolition/Code Enforcement
3. Weatherization Program
4. Homebuyers Assistance Program

FY- 2015 Target Neighborhood Needs:

Rankings:

1. Senior Minor Repair Program
2. Demolition/Code Enforcement
3. Weatherization Program
4. Senior Vision Care Program
5. Homebuyers Assistance Program

Community Development Block Grant Demolition by City 513 Total.

City may be required to abate (if the city tears it down)
 Lien on property

Someone asked , what is the time frame on unoccupied structures

Shirley: Explained the process.

Ronald DeJois: Can abatement delay the tearing down process?

Shirley: Yes, gave examples.

Priority Ranking and Limited Funds:

Shirley: Showed the prioritizing process as to the new rankings to be used for demo, ranking them 1,2,and 3, gave examples.

Ronald DeJois: Asked does the demo contractors up the cost on the homeowners?

Shirley: We put them out for bid and take the lowest bid. Any questions?

Merge Repair Program Types:

Shirley: We combined these two programs (Senior Minor Repair and Weatherization). Explained No, we are not leaving out the seniors 50% of the applicants have to be seniors 55 or older.

Vivian Fulton: What are the qualifications on income?

Shirley: HUD sends the income guidelines to us every year. Any questions?

Shirley: CmDv current programs for housing repairs scope of work consist of roofing, electrical, plumbing and carpentry.

CmDv current Projects:

120 applications submitted in March 2016

CDBG Minor Rehab = \$5,000

___ 354 total; 39 this year

___ Combined Senior Minor and Weatherization programs, no liens.

SNAP Rehab- \$6000 – Explained

___ 6 Total – 0 this year, stated funded and works through local banks, has a forgivable lien.

Home Major Rehab = \$40,000

___ 476 total ; 9 this year

___ Lead or in floodplain : disqualified

___ Has a forgivable lien

2016 Unexpected Events:

Contractors not bidding on rehab work due to limited program funding.

HUD retracted Demo / Clearance spending rule.

45 signed up for First Time Homebuyer Seminar; 8 attended

0 applied for loan or CDBG buy-down assistance

Shirley: Reviewed programming options for 2017-2018, stated with the surveys in your bags it is very important as to what you want for your neighborhoods. Complete them and give to one of our staff members.

Shirley: Named future potential programs, CDBG Housing Code Enforcement, CDBG Demolition
CDBG Minor Rehab, SNAP Rehab, HOME Major Rehab, Credit Counselling Services, Drainage,
Street Repairs, Sidewalks Installations and Improvements.

Shirley: On the HOME Major Rehab, we will be going to \$40,000. If you are in a floodplain area or home has lead this will disqualify you, will have a forgivable lien.

Margie Harris: Asked if her house is above the floodplain, will she be able to receive assistance?

Shirley: Yes, if you have the flood elevation certificate, showing the house is above / outside floodplain.

Margie: If you have your own flood insurance can you still qualify?

Shirley: That would not qualify you if you are in a flood area. Stated, we are looking for grants that would help with the flood elevation.

Shirley: We will be taking applications once a year, these funds have to be spent by a certain deadline. Any questions?

2016-2017 Expenditure Summary:

Code Enforcement / Demolition - \$124,270 (12-15 houses)

CDBG Minor Rehab & Delivery - \$207,121(20 -22 houses)

HOME Major Rehab & Delivery - \$133,400(2-4 houses)

Shirley: Stated HUD funds for 2016 -2017 will be 591,507, amounts decreasing every year, we got 14,554 less than 2015-2016 award.

The mayor will be going to Washington to talk with senators, etc. about this.

Shirley: Shared with the group the 2017 Schedule for CmDv:

Will be accepting applications from May 15 to May 19, 2017, from 9:00AM to 3:00PM.

Our next Neighborhood Community Meeting will be Thursday November 2nd, 2017, 6:00 PM – 7:00PM
Bolton Avenue Community Center.

Any Questions?

Thanked the group for coming and sharing information.

Meeting Adjourned.

Information Distributed:

Pamphlets

Fair Housing Pamphlets

Floodplain Pamphlets

Lead Paint Pamphlets

FICO Credit Scores Pamphlets

IMPC Property Standards

Summary of Ranking Survey Questionnaire for 2017:

2018-2019 Proposed Program Description	Program Rank
Minor Rehab	1
Major Rehab	2
Demolition	3
Code Enforcement	4
Streets Overlay	5
Credit Counseling	6
Drainage	7
Legal Succession	8



Community Development Department
Planning Division, City of Alexandria
625 Murray Street, Alexandria, LA 71301
Office: 318.449.5072 / Fax: 318.449.5031
cda@cityofalex.com

Five Target Neighborhood Public Hearing

The City of Alexandria will conduct a Public Hearing on Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 6:00 PM, in the Bolton Avenue Community Center at 315 Bolton Avenue. The City of Alexandria is seeking public comment concerning the needs of the five (5) Target Neighborhoods for its proposed use of 2018-2019 fiscal year HUD funds that are to be used for various activities that principally benefit low and moderate income persons. Information regarding Fair Housing and Lead Paint Hazards will also be distributed.

The City expects to receive approximately \$174,000 of HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) funds and approximately \$408,000 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Proposed programs are: CDBG Minor Rehab, CDBG Credit Counselling, CDBG Code Enforcement, CDBG Demolition, CDBG Street Overlays and HOME Major Rehab. The five (5) Target Neighborhoods are: North Alexandria (A/B), Central Business (C), Lower Third (D), South Alexandria (E) and Samstown/Woodside (F). All Alexandria citizens are welcome to attend.

For persons with disabilities who need reasonable accommodation, please contact our office by November 1st to make arrangements. Persons who wish to comment, but cannot attend the public hearing, can do so by submitting a completed survey to our office via postal mail or email.

Interested persons can download the survey questionnaire from the City's website: www.cityofalexandrialala.com, under the heading "Services", then "Community Development", then "Neighborhood Meeting Survey". A copy may also be provided by visiting our office during normal business hours. All comments will be given careful consideration prior to any further action on the part of the City towards project implementation.

Contact the Community Development Office at 318-449-5072; visit at 625 Murray Street, Third Floor; postal mail to PO Box 71, Alexandria, LA 71309; or email to cda@cityofalex.com.

-End.



Jacques M. Roy
Mayor



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Please circle which Target Neighborhood you live in:

North Alexandria A/B	Central Business C	Lower Third D	South Alexandria E	Samstown / Woodside F
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Below is an explanation of 2017-2018 programs currently being offered by the City of Alexandria Community Development Department. Upon completion, please return to your group president. Your input is greatly appreciated!

Ranking Survey Questionnaire

Please read the descriptions of each program and rank them in what you believe to be the order of importance to your Target Neighborhood. Rank them from 1 as most important to 7 as least important.

	<p><u>Minor Rehab Program (CDBG)</u> This program combined the old Weatherization and Senior Minor Repair Programs into one new program. Half of all participants will be awarded to qualified applicants ages 55 and older. Qualified applicants may receive up to \$5,000.00 for various deferred maintenance issues to their home. Examples of some repairs could be new roof, electrical repairs, plumbing repairs and carpentry repairs such as handicap ramps, storm windows, insulated entry doors, attic insulation.</p>
	<p><u>Code Enforcement (CDBG)</u> This program is designed to investigate abandoned property and reach out to the property owner to try to get the structure rehabilitated or demolished. The goal is to bring these properties back into use to help surrounding values and keep our children and vandals out of these dangerous structures.</p>
	<p><u>Demolition Program (CDBG)</u> This program assesses the condition of vacant, abandoned and deteriorated structures to determine which structures should be demolished in an order of priority, to eliminate blight or physical decay within neighborhoods.</p>
	<p><u>Credit Counselling (CDBG)</u> This program provides one-on-one credit repair counselling for low to moderate income persons to improve their credit score. The higher your credit score, the more opportunities you have to borrow money!</p>
	<p><u>Street Overlay (CDBG)</u> This program would provide funds to other federal and local funds to address flooding in low lying areas within the 5 Target Neighborhoods. This program would span years of work and be financially expensive.</p>
	<p><u>Major Rehab Program (HOME)</u> This program is designed to assist low to moderate income families to keep their houses in good working condition to extend their useful life. Qualified applicants may receive up to \$35,000.00 to make various code compliant improvements. Houses in the flood plain and that test positive for lead are not qualified.</p>
	<p><u>Other – please describe:</u></p>

Meeting Date: November 2, 2017

Signature: _____



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 Mayor



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