

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

ZOOM Digital

8:30AM

Virtual Presence:

Commissioner Bill Collins

Commissioner Jim Bojo

Commissioner Sundai Stevenson

Kelley Parker

Aundi Lesley

James Martin

Emma Wells

Cindy Reed

Bekki Fox

Suzanne Parris

Courtney Griffin

Marleny Escobar

MEDIA:

Doug Walker

Guest:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 8:35AM. Commissioner Bill Collins asked for any corrections to the minutes from the December meeting. Not hearing any, the minutes were approved by common consent.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Bekki Fox:

- Fox gave an update on the 2020 CDBG funds. Fox stated the 2020 Action Plan was submitted to HUD and approved. Fox gave a summary of projects and expects them to be underway soon. Discussion was made about where the sidewalk was going and if she is planning for sidewalks in other areas of town. Fox identified other areas in North Rome that have previously been completed.
- Fox stated that earlier this year HUD allocated CARES Act funds (CV-1) to Rome in the amount of \$258,026. Fox explained that these funds have to be used for a CDBG eligible activity and connected to COVID. The Small business Grant program was created to help with job retention/creation for low/mod income employees. Fox stated there has been 31 grants issued to date in the amount of \$5000 each. There are \$103,026 of funds still available. Fox also broke out the demographics of the business owners and stated there was approximately 40 jobs retained. Commissioner Collins asked what the time frame is to expend these funds. Fox stated 18-24 months.
- Fox stated that the City also received an additional allocation of CARES Act funds (CV-3) in the amount of \$255,497. Fox stated all the same rules and regulations apply to the new allocation. Fox detailed a new Financial Hardship Assistance Program that would provide assistance with rent, mortgages, and utility payments. Fox explained that it must be tied to lost jobs, hours, or income due to COVID. Commissioner Jim Bojo asked if the County has such a program and Fox stated no, they are not an Entitlement community. Discussion was made about qualifications and eligibility. Fox stated she is in the process of amending the 2019 CDBG Action Plan in order to access these funds, as required by HUD. She anticipates approval and the new program to begin in March. The committee approved moving forward the proposed project by common consent.
- Fox stated the 2021 CDBG funds are being considered and estimated to be about \$434,000. She recommends continuing the housing rehab program, the sidewalk improvements in East Rome; but will also consider park improvements at Banty Jones Park, and a request for building improvements to a low-income day care center.
- Fox indicated the Choice Neighborhood Planning process for a portion of East Rome is moving forward. Fox reminded the group this is in partnership with the NWGHA.
- Fox also gave an update on the Demolition process for three houses. The process has been approved through HUD and the identified structures will be demolished asap.
- Fox stated construction is nearing completion on two of the three new single-family homes on Peachtree St in South Rome in partnership with the South Rome Alliance (former SRRC). Fox showed the commissioners updated photos of the progress and reviewed income criteria for families at 80% AMI. Discussion was made and Commissioner Stevenson stated she would like to extend the program to other areas of town.

BUILDING INSPECTION/CODE ENFORCEMENT

James Martin:

- James Martin provided a detailed report for Building Inspection and Code Enforcement. Discussion was made about permits issued, inspections, demolitions and code enforcement efforts.
- Martin reviewed in detail the 2019 vs 2020 report for the City and County. See report attached.
- Martin also reported with the staffing changes they now have four Code Enforcement Officers and Glen Ruben was promoted to Senior Code Enforcement Officer. Marin stated they are able to work from their trucks and are more efficient.
- Commissioner Collins asked if anyone worked through the weekend. Martin stated no. Discussion was made about roofing and other jobs taking place on the weekend and Marin stated his staff are addressing the issues as they are aware. Collins also asked for a copy of the report.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Aundi Leslie:

- Leslie had a meeting conflict and was not able to report for her department.

KEEP ROME/FLOYD BEAUTIFUL

Emma Wells:

- Emma Wells provided her report for further review.
- Wells discussed the DDA cleanup and other volunteer participation.
- Wells also highlighted the installation of cigarette butt containers downtown and the new pocket ashtrays.
- Wells also discussed several upcoming events to include Feb 19th Arbor Day and a Drive it Home event at McDonalds. Discussion was made.
- Wells also gave a report summary for the ECO Center to include 106 walk in visitors for January. Other upcoming events were provided.

OTHER

None

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 9:26 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Parris
Recording Secretary