

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

Sam King Room

8:30AM

## Present:

Commissioner Bill Collins  
Commissioner Jim Bojo  
Sammy Rich  
Megan Otwell  
Aundi Lesley  
Cindy Reed  
Bekki Fox  
Marleny Escobar

## Media:

Doug Walker

## Virtual Presence:

Commissioner Sundai Stevenson

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 8:33AM. Commissioner Bill Collins asked for any corrections to the minutes from the February meeting. Not hearing any, the minutes were approved by common consent.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Bekki Fox:

- Fox gave an update on the proposed 2021 CDBG Action Plan budget. Fox stated in February that the budget was estimated to be about \$434,000 but has increased up to 30,000 to include \$125,000 for assistance requested for building improvements to the Rebecca Blalock Child Development Center, 90,000 for Housing Rehabilitation, 84,000 for Planning/Administration, and 167,383 for the East Rome Sidewalk Improvements. The new estimated total is currently \$466,386.
- Fox shared the petition from The Board of Directors of the Rebecca Blaylock Early Learning Center requesting the City of Rome CDBG funding for upgrades to 608 Graham Street. The Center has utilized the building for over 50 years, serving as a safe, positive haven for underprivileged youngsters. Operating as a non-profit, 501c3 organization, the Center has relied on donations in addition to fees and state funding for operational expenses, making major upgrades to the facility difficult. Over the years the Graham street building has had various maintenance work done, but the time has come to do major upgrades. The committee approved moving forward with the proposed project by common consent.
- Fox gave an update on the new single-family homes on Peachtree St in South Rome. The marketing method used for 7 & 10 Peachtree St was listing the homes on Zillow an online real estate marketplace for \$97,750. Both homes were listed on Zillow and were both under contacted in less than 48 hours with a closing date of June 7, 2021. Fox shared that one family was a young couple in their early 20s renting in South Rome to potentially becoming new home owners. The other applicant was a lady currently living in Acworth, Georgia wanting to relocate in Rome.
- Fox also gave an update on new staff changes in the Community Development Department. She introduced Marleny Escobar the new Administrative Program Assistant and stated that Marleny has been able to reach out to the Hispanic community and assist them with the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Grant program and other programs the department offers. Escobar gave a monthly report update on CDBG CV-1 funds and CV-3 funds. Escobar stated that there has been a total of 34 applications submitted for the new Emergency Rental/Utility Assistance Grant program that provides assistance with rent and utility payments for residents living in the city limits of Rome that have been financially affected by COVID-19. The Community Development Department has funded 14 of those 34 applications in one month. Escobar stated that there has been 36 grants issued to date in the amount of \$5000 each for the Small Business Grant program. There are \$78,026 of funds still available for the Small Business Grant program.

## **BUILDING INSPECTION/CODE ENFORCEMENT**

James Martin

- Martin was not able to attend the meeting. Martin provided his monthly report. See attached.

## **DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Aundi Leslie:

- Leslie announced that the First Friday concert was back in town this year. Megan Otwell gave an update on the social media campaign for national Small Business Week 2021. The campaign will be out in May to help put a face to the businesses in downtown. Otwell shared that there will be a runoff between Gunner the PAWS dog and Dooley the bulldog for the Downtown Rome Dog Mayor election. Otwell stated that the purpose of The Dog Mayor election was to start a Dog Waste Station Sponsorship to install dog waste stations throughout Historic Downtown and the River District. Otwell stated that the public would be able to vote for their favorite dog by liking their photo on the Downtown Rome Facebook page until April 27, 2021.
- Leslie also gave an update on the 2021 parking report for months January- March and stated that security has been out at 6:00pm instead of 8:00pm to decrease the loud car exhaust noises, illegal light usage, and speeding in Downtown.

## **KEEP ROME/FLOYD BEAUTIFUL**

Emma Wells:

- Wells had a meeting conflict and was not able to attend the meeting. Wells provided her monthly report. See attached.

## **OTHER**

None

## **ADJOURN**

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 9:41 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marleny Escobar  
Recording Secretary