

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 8, 2021
Carnegie Training Room
8:30 AM

Present:

Commissioner Bill Collins
Commissioner Jim Bojo
Commissioner Sundai Stevenson
Aundi Lesley
James Martin
Emma Wells
Bekki Fox
Logan Drake
Marleny Escobar

Media:

Doug Walker

Guest:

Porter Law
Chole (Berry Bonner Scholar)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Bekki Fox:

Fox requested approval of the 2021 CDBG Action Plan budget and stated that it increased by another \$6,800. In April the budget was approved for a total of \$466,386. The new estimated total is currently \$473,259. Fox discussed the break out of the funds to include:

- \$90,000 Housing Rehabilitation (including project delivery)
- \$84,000 Planning/Administration
- \$174,259 East Rome Sidewalk Improvements (continuation of ongoing efforts)
- \$125,000 Assistance requested for building improvements to Rebecca Blalock Child Development Center

Commissioner Stevenson made a motion to approve the 2021 CDBG Action Plan final allocation of \$473,259; seconded by Commissioner Bojo. Motion carried.

- Fox gave an update on the new single-family homes on 7 Peachtree Street and 10 Peachtree Street. The home located on 7 Peachtree Street was closed and sold on Monday, June 7, 2021. The home on 10 Peachtree Street had a minor flooding which delayed the closing process but Fox anticipates closing in July. Fox also announced that due to housing construction costs, the third home located at 1 Grover Street will not be constructed. The South Rome Redevelopment Committee moved forward and sold the lot to a private developer to construct affordable housing.
- Fox stated that another program affected was the Housing Rehabilitation program due to Covid-19 and a lack of licensed contractors willing to work in the program. Fox stated it has been very hard to move these funds forward and Fox requested approval for an addition of a new exterior paint program to help with the Housing Rehabilitation funds. The paint program will be a grant up to \$5,000 for exterior paint only and possibly minor repairs. Discussion was made. Commissioner Collins made a motion to allow Fox to and staff to move forward with the implementation of the Exterior Paint program. Seconded by Commissioner Stevenson. Motion Carried.
- Fox also gave an update on the Rome/Floyd Land Bank Authority progress from September 2017- May 2021 (current). There has been a total of 165 parcels sold and transferred, \$5,670 collected in application fees, \$217,739.99 in property sales revenue, 2 parcels sold this year with a total of 14 parcels transfers pending, and \$2.1 million in property value returned to the tax rolls! Fox stated the Center for Community Progress staff visited the department on Friday, June 4th. Fox stated that the City will be receiving funds from the American Rescue Plan and Fox shared that the Rome/Floyd Land Bank plans to expand housing construction utilizing the Land

Bank as a developer. Fox stated that there are several ideas on how the funds will be used.

- Fox gave an update on new staff changes in the Community Development Department. She introduced Logan Drake the new Program and Compliance Specialist. Fox also gave a monthly report update on the Small Business Emergency Grant program and the Emergency Rental- Utility Grant program. There has been a total of 38 Small Business grants issued to date in the amount of \$5,000 each with a total of \$190,000 funds awarded. The Emergency Rental- Utility program assists residents residing inside the city limits of Rome with past due rent, gas, or power, who were financially impacted due to Covid-19. There has been a total of 32 grants issued to date with a total of \$65,113.95 funds awarded. There are \$68,026 funds remaining for the Small Business Grant program and \$144,983.05 funds remaining for the Rental-Utility Grant program.

BUILDING INSPECTION/CODE ENFORCEMENT

James Martin:

- Martin provided a detailed report for Building Inspection and Code Enforcement. Discussion was made about permits issued, inspections, demolition and code enforcement efforts.
- Martin stated that the citation numbers for the city and county are down because of the different approaches they are taking.
- Martin also addressed the issue about the roofing and other jobs taking place during the weekend. He stated that they must be posting permit cards visible from the streets in order to do their inspections.
- Martin also shared that Smith Douglas a new home builder plans to construct a big subdivision in Rome. This includes 800 Homes in 24 months or less.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Aundi Leslie:

- Leslie shared that they had great engagement from the Support Your Neighbor Campaign during Small Business Month. The Downtown Rome Facebook page reached over 127,000 individual Facebook users.
- Leslie also stated that Downtown Rome had a successful First Friday concert and shared that residents enjoyed the Andrew Brothers and dancing on Town Green. There was an open container policy that lead to an increase in foot-traffic for downtown restaurants and bars.
- Leslie also provided information on a new Downtown Marketing Grant they will be administering for businesses and organizations located within the Business Improvement District for their marketing needs. Grant recipients must agree to a marketing workshop with the UGA Small Business Development Center and one-on-one consultation to develop a marketing plan for the business and organizations that apply.

KEEP ROME/FLOYD BEAUTIFUL

Emma Wells:

- Wells provided her report for further review.
- Wells stated the ECO Center will be open to the public every last Saturday of the month from 10:00-2:00 pm (March- October). Other upcoming events were provided.

OTHER

None

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 9:43 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Marleny Escobar
Recording Secretary