Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC)
March 2, 2020 – 3:30 PM
Room 335 City Hall 100 Broadway Norwich, CT

Members Present:  Les King;

Members Absent:  Mark Marcy; Sean Barnes; Gemma Fabris; Kevin Saythany

Others Present:  Kathy Crees; Tianne Curtis

I. Call to Order
The CDAC meeting was called to order at 3:40 PM.

II. Kathy Crees, Community Development Director, gave a Power Point presentation (Attached) on the 5-Year Planning Process and highlighted the key elements of eligible CDBG project funding. The floor was opened. Present and wishing to speak were:

1. TVCCA representatives Jon-Paul Mandelburg, Director of Housing and Megan Brown, Senior Director of Marketing & Development. TVCCA’s concerns focused around affordable, permanent housing & the housing cost burden, increased employment & training opportunities, affordable & accessible child care and improving public transportation. (Statement attached.) Les King asked if there was a way to track Norwich residents assisted only; Ms. Brown responded there was and that she would forward an example.

2. Christine Goracy, Youth and Family Case Worker representing Norwich Youth and Family Services stated the most important need of City was a community center with a focus on activities in the after-school hours.

3. Cheryl Hancin-Preston, Recreation Director stated the needs of the City have changed and that there are public spaces that have become rundown and dangerous. Ms. Crees noted that maintenance is not an Eligible Activity for CDBG funds. Ms. Hancin-Preston stated they also felt the City needed a community center.

4. Mike Van Vlaenderen, COO of Reliance Health stated his organization had been awarded CDBG funds in the past, however the focus had shifted to larger awards to a lesser number of recipients.

5. LeeAnn Gomes, Director of Human Services stated the job training and shelter diversion programs currently funded by CDBG were an asset to the City of Norwich and should continue to be supported.

6. Leonard Miller, President of Night Flight Basketball League stated he has strong ties to the area and proposed increased involvement of all residents to have pride in the community. Mr. Miller explained how the NF League supports this with tournaments and outreach and stated he would like to see renovations at Jenkins Park on High St.

III. Adjournment - Kathy Crees announced there would be a final meeting March 9, 2020 for Community Plan comments. There were no more present wishing to speak & meeting was adjourned at 4:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Tianne Curtis
CD Program Assistant
CITY OF NORWICH

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - FIVE YEAR PLANNING PROCESS

CONSOLIDATED PLAN

- FIVE YEAR PLAN 2020-2024
  - Identifies local housing and community development needs
  - Identifies the strategy for addressing local needs

- ANNUAL PLAN
  - Describes actions to be undertaken to meet strategic plan goals
  - Details budget for use of federal funds
FUNDING CYCLE

- FY 2020 ALLOCATION ESTIMATES:
  - CDBG: $861,120
  - RETURN OF LOAN: $50,000

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES: SOME EXAMPLES INCLUDE

- Housing Rehabilitation
- Homeownership Assistance
- Public Facilities and Improvements
- Blight Removal/Site Clearance
- Code Enforcement
- Economic Development
- Public Services
- Acquisition/Disposition of Real Property
INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES: EXAMPLES

- **NO** Political activities
- **NO** Construction of housing units by a unit of local government
- **NO** Operation and maintenance of public facilities
- **NO** General government expenses including construction of general government buildings
- **NO** Purchase of equipment (except fire)
- **NO** Direct Income Payments

FUNDABLE ACTIVITIES: MEETING NATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Each Activity MUST meet one of the THREE NATIONAL OBJECTIVES:
  - 1. Benefit to Low & Moderate Income Persons
  - 2. Prevent or Eliminate Blights
  - 3. Meet urgent needs when health and welfare are threatened
LOW & MODERATE INCOME BENEFIT

AREA BENEFIT

Must serve 51% low/moderate income persons by Census Tract or block group:

Eligible census tracts: 6968, 6964, 6961, 6967
AREA BENEFIT

- FACTORS to determine the area served by a public facility or improvement are:
  - The nature of the activity – What are you planning on doing?
  - The location of the activity – Have you checked to make sure it is allowed (planning, zoning, state, feds)?
  - Access to the facility
  - The availability of comparable activities (does this already exist)?

LOW AND MODERATE INCOME BENEFIT – TYPES OF LOW/MOD BENEFIT

- Presumed to be low/mod: abused children, battered spouses, elderly, homeless…, or
- Client documents income, or
- Eligibility requirements limit clientele to low/mod income persons, or
- Nature and location of service predominantly used by low income persons, or
- Activity removes material or architectural barriers to accessibility of elderly persons or severely disabled adults,
LOW/MOD BENEFIT - TYPES

- HOUSING

  - Providing or improving permanent residential structures, which upon completion, will be occupied by low and moderate income households

LOW & MODERATE INCOME BENEFIT - TYPES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- The activity must involve EMPLOYMENT of persons, a majority of whom are low and moderate income.
LOW & MODERATE INCOME BENEFIT: DEFINITIONS

- INCOME – Section 8 low income limit established by HUD
  - Very Low Income – under 30% of Area Median Income
  - Low Income – 31% - 50% of AFMI
  - Moderate Income – 51% to 80% of AFMI

FAMILY – all persons living in the same household related by birth, marriage or adoption

2019 INCOME LIMITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Persons in Family</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 Income Limit Area</td>
<td>Median Family Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich-New London, CT</td>
<td>$49,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Low Income Limits ($)</td>
<td>21,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (80%) Income Limits ($)</td>
<td>52,850</td>
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ELIMINATION OF SLUM & BLIGHT

- Definition of slum and blight per state law or local law.

SCHEDULE

- 5 YEAR CONPLAN Public Meetings/Request for Information from groups: February/March 2020
- Applications for funding due – March 11
- CDAC/CD staff review for eligibility and recommend funding – March/April
- Public comment period April/May
- City Council vote on the Action Plan June/July
- Annual Action Plan submitted to HUD by August 15th
Introduction:
Native of Norwich, resident for 20 years, and student of Norwich Public Schools grades K-12, Director of Housing Services at Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA) which has served the residents of Norwich and surrounding towns since its incorporation in 1965.

I would summarize our perspective on the needs of Norwich and its residents within the following categories:

1. Affordable, permanent housing and a means to decrease the housing cost burden experienced by Norwich residents.
2. Additional Employment & Training opportunities
3. Affordable and accessible child care
4. Improved Public Transportation

In recent years, the city of Norwich has done well to improve its economy as evidenced by its drop in unemployment rates, cited at 3.6% at the end 2019. However, according to the United Way’s 2018 ALICE report, approximately 40% of Norwich residents are considered Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed, while the percentage of Norwich residents at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) has increased by more than 20% since 2016. In essence, many Norwich households are living paycheck to paycheck, without a financial safety net to contend with an unexpected expense.

Consequently, many local households are working, but struggle to afford and meet their basic needs to include: housing, nutrition, child care, and transportation. Further, nearly 50% of all Norwich Renters are cost burdened, meaning their housing costs exceed 30% of their gross income, with an estimated 20% of renters spending more than 50% of their income on housing.

During my tenure at TVCCA, I’ve seen a significant number of our service recipients enter the door seeking assistance with a housing crisis, or for support in meeting other basic needs, be it food, transportation or support in navigating another financial burden and accessing local resources.

Often times, our work is with households who have experienced an acute, unexpected financial hardship which they are unable to navigate without assistance due to their limited assets. Our work revolves around assisting these households financially, through the crisis, while developing a plan to be able to maintain stability via the support provided with referrals to supplemental resources in the community.

From October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019, we provided services to more than 4,600 Norwich households, with a majority of them seeking support from our Housing and Community Services departments to include assistance with rental arrearages, security and utility deposits, or the
maintenance of their housing subsidy; with nearly half of these 4,600 households receiving assistance with the cost of their primary home heating source.

As a high cost burden associated with housing remains a reality in Norwich, contributing factors to this are the need for additional employment and training opportunities, aimed at increasing household income.

As of 2017, Norwich had a median annual income 33% less than the median income across the state. In our experience supporting Norwich households, one major obstacle in obtaining and maintaining employment is access to readily accessible public transportation as many households report being unable to afford the cost associated with personally owned transportation i.e.; purchase, insurance, taxes, etc.

Further, the cost associated with childcare can prove prohibitive, as in many cases the cost of child care negates potential job earnings. With the 2018 American Community Survey estimating 2,200 children under the age of 5 residing in Norwich, additional affordable child care opportunities would enable additional households, particularly single parent households, to obtain employment while also providing for their young children.

Thank you for the opportunity to briefly speak to our perspective on the needs of the City of Norwich and its residents.