

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
CITY OF WILLMAR, MINNESOTA
THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2012**

MINUTES

The Community Development Committee of the Willmar City Council met on Thursday, March 29, 2012, in Conference Room No.1 at the City Office Building. Chair Dokken called the meeting to order at 4:45pm.

Present:

Jim Dokken	Chair
Ron Christianson	Council Member
Bruce DeBlieck	Council Member
Tim Johnson	Council Member
Bruce Peterson	Director of Planning and Development Services
Charlene Stevens	City Administrator

Others present: Frank Yanish – Mayor, Jill Bengtson – HRA Director, Steve Renquist – EDC Director

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

There were no public comments offered at this meeting.

2. SMALL CITIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Jill Bengtson, HRA Director, presented information about the latest Small Cities Development Program grant application. The program is intended to be a continuation of the 2009 grant, which provided commercial/residential rehabilitation in the target area shown on Attachment A. The current application anticipates the following activities within the City of Willmar: 8 commercial rehabilitations, 14 owner-occupied residential rehabilitations, and 17 rental rehabilitations. Additionally, the application provides for activities in the City of Raymond which would include 18 owner-occupied residential rehabilitations. There was no action required of the Committee because the Council is scheduled to conduct a public hearing at the April 2nd meeting. It was noted that program funding has decreased from \$20 million to \$13.8 million. The State anticipates funding 25-30 of the 73 applications being considered. In 2009, the grant award was \$800,000. The current application is for \$1,076,000. The Committee briefly discussed the process for determining the boundaries of the target area.

3. EDC FUNDING REQUEST POLICY (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Steve Renquist, EDC Director, was present to explain their guidelines for handling funding requests (See Attachment B). The EDC budgets \$10,000 annually for community activities. All requests receive committee review. If recommended for approval, the request is considered by the EDC Operations Board. It was noted that in the past \$5,000 annually had been contributed by the EDC to the Community Marketing Coalition.

4. DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Staff provided an update on the downtown planning process. A revised draft plan is nearing completion. The Committee reviewed the proposed plan elements (See Attachment C). The anticipated project schedule moving forward is as follows: Planning Commission review – April 11th, public meeting to discuss the plan – April 18th, Community Development Committee review – April 26th, Council review and ordinance introduction – May 7th, public hearing to adopt the ordinance – May 21st.

5. JOHN'S SUPPER CLUB (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Staff presented the most recent inspection report for the John's Supper Club rehabilitation project (See Attachment D). It has been obvious for some time that Mr. Kidrowski would not meet the Council imposed deadline of March 31st. Staff said they would continue to push Mr. Kidrowski to complete the project in a timely and workmanlike fashion.

6. MISCELLANY (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Council member Johnson informed the Committee that he was aware of banks renting foreclosed homes to their former owners. It is not known if these properties are being registered in the rental housing inspection program. Staff said they would prepare a document notifying local banks of rental program responsibilities. Due to the number of loans sold on the secondary market, there are many mortgage holders that don't have local ties and notification would be extremely difficult.

Council member Christianson offered some comments about the Planning Commission meeting of March 28th. He expressed concern about the hearing process conducted to consider the Islamic Society mosque request. He suggested that the Planning Commission post their review criteria so that those in attendance have the ability to structure their arguments. He also asked that the Commission Chair explain notification requirements to the individuals in attendance at the hearings.

7. There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce D. Peterson, AICP
Director of Planning and Development Services