

Walterboro City Council
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting
January 27, 2015

MINUTES

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 6:15 P.M., with Mayor Bill Young presiding.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Bill Young, Council Members: Jimmy Syfrett, Paul Siegel, Tom Lohr, Bobby Bonds, James Broderick and Judy Bridge. City Manager Jeff Molinari, City Clerk Betty Hudson, and City Attorney George Cone were also present. There were approximately 19 persons present in the audience.

There being a quorum present, Mayor Young called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Council Member Syfrett gave the invocation, and Council Member Bridge led the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

No public comments or questions were received on agenda items.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Mayor Young then opened a public hearing, duly advertised to receive public comments or questions on the City's CDBG Needs Assessment. He then introduced Ms. Michelle Knight of Lowcountry Council of Governments, who was present to conduct the hearing.

Ms. Knight stated that tonight we are here to hold the City's annual needs assessment public hearing. This public hearing is one of three points within a grant process, where the public is allowed input. This particular hearing is solely for the purpose of identifying needs and prioritizing those needs for the coming year.

Ms. Knight further stated that the State Community Development Block Grant Program has been in existence since 1982. HUD, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, basically allocates out to the states by a formula each year an amount of money for the state to run their program and it is run by the South Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Grants Administration.

Ms. Knight then gave the following highlights of the CDBG program for 2015.

1. The State is anticipating receiving roughly \$19.3 million. There is also an anticipated program income of \$6 million (This is money that is returned back to the state for projects that under-run their budgets).
2. The program has been divided among two set asides for CDBG funding:

Community Development	\$16,116,505
Business Development Programs	\$ 2,000, 000

Technical Assistance for Administration and regional planning which allows LCOG to come out and hold public hearings like this, meet with their staff on various potential projects and talk with them about things that they can and can't do.

- A. **Community Development** \$16,116,505 set aside

This program is the largest part of the set asides. Projects in this set aside are things that improve citizens' quality of life, and create a competitive environment for business by addressing some essential community needs in an area primarily benefitting low-to moderate income people. There are five subsets for this set aside:

MINUTES/Page II

1.	Community Infrastructure	\$10,216,505
2.	Community Enrichment	\$ 3,000,000
3.	Neighborhood Revitalization	\$ 2,000,000
4.	"Ready to Go" Public Facilities Program	\$ 600,000
5.	Special Projects	\$ 300,000

1. **Community Infrastructure** *\$10,216,505 set aside*

Community Infrastructure is basically what we all refer to as our "spring infrastructure round." Projects under this set aside typically contribute to the creation of healthy and sustainable communities by alleviating documented threats in a community or providing improved access to critical public facilities, meaning water, sewer, drainage and roads. There are three basic priorities:

- a. To provide significant improvements to existing infrastructures that address health concerns. There are basically projects where there is a DHEC Consent Order involved.
- b. To provide viable regional solutions or new service in areas where it is near business centers and where it is cost effective to provide that new service. They define cost-effective service as new services costing less than \$10,000 per house after installed.
- c. To provide general upgrades to address quality standards or new service that is more in rural areas that are not near business centers, but are cost effective to provide a new service.

2. **Community Enrichment** *\$3,000,000 set aside*

This program funds set asides like buildings. Typically what we do, we are looking at three priority areas here. We are looking at projects that will increase economic competitiveness, address educational workforce development issues, or do things that provide safe and health communities. Some examples of the types of projects in this set aside are:

Economic Competitiveness examples: Developing energy efficiencies for CDBG Public facilities. This means a building that provides services to an LMI clientele. So, you could not apply for energy efficient improvements for your City Hall, but you could do a DSS center or something like that. Also, Brownfield projects, downtown streetscape projects, and planning for regional infrastructures.

Education and Workforce Development examples: Libraries in LMI areas; publicly owned (non school) facilities that offer extended education programs to at-risk youth; and transportation oriented public facilities or services that serve LMI workforce populations.

Safe and Healthy Communities examples: Public safety facilities in LMI neighborhoods such as a police substation; demolition or clearance of properties that are vacant or done as part of crime prevention; health clinics in LMI neighborhoods near business centers; firefighting facilities or equipment in areas serving LMI neighborhoods that are near business centers.

3. **Neighborhood Revitalization** *\$2,000,000 set aside*

This is like your North Lemacks Street project that you have right now. This is where you look at a neighborhood and you have a neighborhood plan for a Low-to-Moderate Income area. In it, you laundry list all the needs that need to be

MINUTES/Page III

addressed in that neighborhood and you look at comprehensive ways to address those problems. You can have infrastructure activities involved in a project like that, exterior housing rehab, demolition and clearance, some public service activities, such as putting up security cameras, and things like that if they are needed. A completed neighborhood plan is a requisite for this application. You cannot apply for another neighborhood project until you have finished the neighborhood projects that you have. So, if you already have a neighborhood project, you are not really going to be able to do anything else until you finish what you are doing in that neighborhood. Then, you can focus on another neighborhood in the City.

4. **"Ready to Go" Public Facilities** \$600,000 set aside

This is for any project that would fit in Community Infrastructure or Community Enrichment that you have done all your up-front work on. - you have cleared your environmental review, and you have acquired property if you needed it. You have done all of your engineering and design work, and have the project permitted, but for having a check in your hand, you could go out tomorrow and start working on the project. This is a noncompetitive set aside. It's first come, first serve, but the idea is that you have done all of your up-front work and you are ready to be able to do work within 60 days.

5. **Special Projects** \$300,000 set aside

This program is something new this year. It is a pilot program designed to meet community development needs that are not typically funded through the other set asides, but meet the criteria for CDBG. These projects could include:

Historic preservation, energy conservation, parks, trails or green ways. There has to be significant leveraging involved. You still have to meet a national objective while working on this type of project. Their priorities, in general, are projects that have an economic development impact or increase competitiveness. Projects that address health or safety issues, and improve long term stability. Finally, the lowest priority is historic preservation and energy conservation projects.

B. **Business Development - 2nd Major Program** - \$ 2,000,000

-Regional Planning Program	\$500,000
-State Technical Assistance (1%)	\$192,953
-State Administration (2% of Allocations + \$100,000)	\$485,907

Ms. Knight stated that this program is basically where the old Economic Development Program was. There are no application deadlines. Here, you will apply for money whenever you have a project. The idea behind this is that the City can receive grant funding to provide public infrastructures to support a business that is either locating in the area or expanding in the area, provided they write a letter and provide their private investment that they are going to put into their business as a result of this expansion. Also, they commit to create jobs with at least 51% of those jobs going to LMI individuals. Also, those jobs have to be what we call grant qualifying jobs, most of them meaning that you can do them with a high school education and a year's experience. So, they are not necessarily looking at high educational requirement jobs there. The maximum you can apply for is \$500,000.

3. Ms. Knight then explained all projects must meet a national objective, meaning:
- a) Benefit low-to-moderate income (LMI) people.

MINUTES/Page IV

- b) Aid in the prevention of elimination of slums or blight.
- c) Meet other urgent community needs posing a serious threat to the health or welfare of the community, where other financial resources are not available to meet such need.

Ms. Knight explained that in reality, in South Carolina over 90% of what is funded is funded under low-to-moderate income benefit. There are a few examples of slum/blight projects - your streetscape project is one that we got documented under slum/blight. Urgent community needs are health threat projects and are typically done when there is some sort of natural disaster, where there has been a declared emergency - basically, water and sewer systems need to be brought back into operation - that kind of thing.

- 4. Ms. Knight also pointed out that in Colleton County, a low-to-moderate income family of four would make less than \$38,150 a year. That number goes up or down based on the number of people in your house.
- 5. Ms. Knight stated as part of our public hearing, we have to notify the public that the City of Walterboro does not discriminate in fair housing practices in either the sale or rental or housing, in residential real estate transactions or in the provision of brokerage services. If you think that you have been discriminated against or someone contacts you and says that they have been discriminated against, you can have them contact Lowcountry Council of Governments. They can call us and we can talk to them and determine whether we need to forward that information on to other people to investigate.

6. Application Request Deadlines:

Under the "Ready to Go" and Business Development Program, there is no application deadline, and it is ongoing. You apply whenever you have a project.

For Community Infrastructure, the application request deadline is March 13, 2015.

Under the Community Enrichment Program, Neighborhood Revitalization and Special Projects, the application request deadline is: August 14, 2015.

All applications are due in 30 days from when the request was made. For the spring round, it is April 13. For the fall round, it is September 14 and Ready to Go and Business Development is 30 days after you make the request and you receive your application.

7. Funding amounts that can be applied for:

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Community Infrastructure	\$50,000	\$750,000
Community Enrichment	\$50,000	\$500,000
Special Projects	\$50,000	\$150,000
Neighborhood Revitalization	\$50,000	\$500,000
"Ready to Go"	\$50,000	\$500,000
Business Development	\$50,000	\$500,000
Job Creation/Retention	\$50,000	\$10,000 per job

MINUTES/Page V

8. Match Requirements:

The matching fund requirement for all projects is 10%. However, the more you match, the higher your score goes up. So, if you leverage more, your score goes up for your competitive applications.

Ms. Knight informed Council that right now the City of Walterboro has three projects open, and due to close one in November. She said, if it closes on time, you will be good for pursuing something in the spring of next year. If anything closes early, you might be able to do a project this fall.

Concluding her presentation, Ms. Knight told Council that at the last public hearing for needs assessment, the City ranked its priority projects as follows:

1. Infrastructure.
2. Neighborhood Revitalization.
3. Downtown Revitalization and Economic Development.
4. Public Safety.
5. Public Facilities.

Mayor Young then opened the floor to receive comments/questions from the public.

Ms. Paula Todd then asked Ms. Knight, are the priorities that you just mentioned from the public or just from City Council? Ms. Knight responded that last year, we had a public hearing like this, gave people the opportunity to make comments and then at the next meeting, there was a recommendation made through the staff to rank the priority needs based on the comments received.

Ms. Todd then asked a question in regard to the nondiscrimination in housing. She asked Ms. Knight if her agency conducts some sort of investigation itself. Ms. Knight responded, what we do is we collect information and forward it on and someone else investigates. That is done through the HUD field office in Columbia.

Mayor Young then asked, under the Business Development program, could that be used to provide water and sewer to a business, or would you have to go under the infrastructure? Ms. Knight responded that this could be used under Business Development, but the business has to agree to write a letter providing information about the private investment that they are putting in as a result of having, but for having the water or sewer supplied out to them. They are committing to expanding their business and sink private funds into it and provide jobs. Mayor Young asked, does it have to be an expansion of a business or could it be a new business? Mr. Knight responded, it could be a new business, but the grant money can only go toward public infrastructure. So, we can't run the water and sewer onto their private property. Mayor Young then asked, could we run it to the airport? Ms. Knight affirmed that you could run it down the right-of-ways at the airport parcels to certain businesses. Ms. Knight further stated, there is another funding program that you can look at that you can get up to 50% of what you need. Then, you can take this money and use it as the match money to go toward it. If you had that \$1 million need, it might be for \$50,000 in local funds, you can leverage \$950,000, but you still have to be making public improvements.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Upon motion of Council Member Bridge, seconded by Council Member Broderick, the Minutes of the January 13, 2015 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting were approved as submitted. The motion passed with all members voting in favor.

MINUTES/Page VI

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business before Council.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Consideration of 2015 Rice Festival Requests, Jimmy Trippe, President Colleton County Rice Festival and Approval of Street Closing Request and Parade Permit Request

When asked by the Mayor, if he wanted to say anything, Mr. Jimmy Trippe made a remark about one of the streets to be closed. This street is supposed to be Ireland Drive. This is the street that runs behind Ivanhoe. I don't know what that street is, but I think that is what that is supposed to be. Mayor Young then told City Manager Molinari that the best thing is to have the Police Chief meet with Mr. Trippe just to make sure they understand which streets they are talking about, so that we have the right streets closed.

Mr. Trippe informed Council of another event they plan to hold. He said, on April 18, we will do a Tour of the Lowcountry, which is a bike ride. We won't close any streets, but it is leaving from Palmetto Rural on Robertson Blvd., but we might need some police assistance on that, because we are hoping to draw in a lot of bicyclers from all over the state. That's something new that we are doing this year.

Mayor Young then asked, will you then be back to make a request for the Criterium which is the week after the Rice Festival. It was noted that this event will be on April 29th, and that request will be the same as it has always been.

Mr. Trippe then said, I won't turn in another request on the "Tour of the Lowcountry," unless you want me to. Mayor Young then asked, what's the date of that. Mr. Trippe responded, this is the Saturday before at 8:00 in the morning. Mayor Young then said, you just need to probably just get with the City Manager to take care of that.

A motion granting this the 2015 Rice Festival requests and approval of the parade permit as submitted was made by Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Lohr and passed unanimously.

Mayor Young thanked Mr. Trippe and stated that the Rice Festival has gotten better and better each year and I know it is due to your hard work and that of the committee members. All of us in Walterboro appreciate it, and we are looking forward to this year's event.

2. Request to Close Street for Annual Cubmobile Race on February 7, 2015 from 7:30 A.M. to 12:00 Noon, by Ms. Sheila Morris, Den Leader and Anthony Kubik, Cubmaster

A motion was made by Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Broderick to approve the request to close the streets for the Annual Cubmobile Race on February 7 at submitted. The motion passed with all members voting in favor.

3. Consideration of Cancelling or Rescheduling the March 10, 2015 Regular City Council Meeting

Mayor Young explained that the March 10 meeting will also be at the same time some Council Members will be attending the NLC Congress of Cities Meeting in Washington, D.C.

MINUTES/Page VII

A motion was made by Council Member Syfrett to cancel the March 10 Regular City Council Meeting. Council Member Broderick seconded the motion that passed unanimously. The Mayor stated that if some business arises, Council can always call a special meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no Committee Reports given.

Mayor Young brought to Council's attention that a very nice thank-you note had been received from Mrs. Patti Lohr, wife of Council Member Ton Lohr. He said, we are thankful that she is doing well.

There being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council Member Bridge, seconded by Council Member Bonds and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M. Notice of this meeting was distributed to all local media and posted on the City Hall bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to meeting time.

Respectfully,

Betty J. Hudson
City Clerk

APPROVED: February 10, 2015