

Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission
Special Meeting
Wednesday November 12, 2014
Crown Roller Mill

Unapproved Minutes

Commissioners Present: Kirk Roggensack, Jeffrey Strand, Matthew Dobratz, David Zaffrann, Francisco Segovia, Eric Gustafson, Debra Behrens, Ishmael Israel, Dennis Houle, Maleta Kimmons, Doron Clark

Staff Present: David Rubedor, Cheyenne Brodeen, Howard Blin

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 PM.

1. Approve Agenda

The agenda was approved.

2. 2015 Budget Discussion

Rubedor provided a presentation on the fund balances in the neighborhood funding program. The reported \$16 million in uncontracted funding for neighborhoods is program income, part of strategies included in NRP Phase I or Phase II plans or unallocated Community Participation Program (CPP) funds. Very little of the uncontracted funding is not programmed for a project or program. Some of these projects take a few years to get started and become contracted. Of the total of \$226 million in total allocations for neighborhood programs, \$7.4 million or 3.3 percent remains uncontracted.

Commission members had the following questions and comments:

- Are there time limits for use of NRP or CPP funds? Rubedor responded that there is a basic 10 year time frame for the NRP Plans and a two year cycle for the CPP
- Does the total of \$226 include program income? No.
- It was stated that neighborhoods have spent a lot of time developing plans and allocating the funding. That is why there has been such a furor over questions from the Council on the \$16 million.
- Has any communication gone out to neighborhood organizations? No since there has been no discussion of reprogramming the \$16 million. Various Commissioners agreed that there is some move toward establishing time limits to spend money, but not to move money from neighborhood programs.
- There has long been a practice, if not a policy, to considered program income as belonging to neighborhoods, has this changed? No.

- A Commissioner described the history of directing property tax increment financing (TIF) revenue collected in downtown out to the neighborhoods.
- It was stated that a councilmember described the TIF revenue as an expenditure, not a revenue. This is because the money captured in the TIF district is not available for the City's general fund.
- It was noted that it is useful to talk about neighborhood funding as a tool for equitable engagement.
- The plan for the TIF District speaks to use of the funds for neighborhood revitalization purposes. This has always been interpreted funding for neighborhood organizations. This was a moral and ethical, if not legal promise.
- The Commission should also discuss how investments in the NRP and CPP programs led to strengthening the city's tax base such as in areas such as Loring Park and Elliot Park.
- Those are good examples since the neighborhoods can be the eyes and ears for the larger city.
- Consistent with the principles of engagement, a more robust and inclusive process should be used to change how neighborhood revitalization purposes has been defined thus far.

Commission members discussed drafting a statement to be presented to the City Council Health, Environment and Community Engagement Committee (HECE) at the public comment period on neighborhood funding the Committee will hold on November 17th.

- Any discussion on allocation of funds should include how neighborhoods have built the core infrastructure for community engagement in the city.
- It was suggested that specific examples must be given of what neighborhoods have accomplished. This should include projects that the city has not funded.
- It was stated that the city is entering a new stage of inclusiveness. Message needs to be that money provided to neighborhoods must be spent in a spirit of inclusion.
- Concerns should be expressed about establishing a precedent on using funds for non-neighborhood purposes.
- It was also suggested that the expanding definition of community should also be addressed.
- The language must be about given changing demographics in the city, the current engagement structure must be strengthened and expanded to include greater inclusion.

Houle suggested that the following language could be part of the statement from the Commission:

In response to the mayor's 2015 budget, and acknowledging the work neighborhoods have accomplished with NRP and CPP funding during the past 25 years, and acknowledging the city and its neighborhoods must work together to continue these successes, and acknowledging that neighborhood fund allocation and use can improve . . . supports previous uses of TIF funds that allocates them only to previous recipients as defined by state law.

MOTION by Stand SECONDED by Roggensack to have the NCEC Executive Committee and Commissioners Clark and Zaffrann, develop a consensus statement regarding the 2015 NCR budget, funding for neighborhood programming, and proposed expanded uses of the Consolidated TIF funding for presentation to NCEC members, working from Commissioner Houle's draft statement and the recorded comments presented by commissioners present at the special meeting, and subject to simple majority approval by the NCEC members using electronic mail means. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Submitted by Howard Blin