

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN, COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY
MARCH 12, 2002

The Special Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Franklin, County of Somerset, New Jersey, held at 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, New Jersey, was called to order by the Mayor at 7:00 P.M.

The Mayor read a statement indicating all requirements of P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 (The Open Public Meeting Act) had been met.

The Township Clerk called the roll.

Present: Mayor Eberle, Deputy Mayor Grippo, Ms. Barrier, Mr. Levine, Mr. Mazzola, Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Mettler, Mr. Sumter. Mr. Chivukula was absent at roll call but arrived later in the meeting.

Absent: No one

Also Present: Kenneth W. Daly, Township Manager, Jean C. Pellicane, RMC, Township Clerk

CONSOLIDATED PLAN

Bonnie von Ohlen, Grants Coordinator, presented an overview of the Community Development Block Grant process as follows:

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

SECOND PUBLIC HEARING

Purpose of Hearing

The Township is developing a **Consolidated Plan** that describes the needs, resources, priorities and proposed activities to be undertaken with CDBG funds. The plan will include a 5 Year Strategic Plan and a 1 year Action Plan outlining the specific activities that will be funded. This hearing is part of the Township's **Citizen Participation Plan** designed to encourage residents to participate in the Consolidated planning process.

Today was the deadline for applications. A total of eight applications for approximately \$445,000 was received. I will review the applications for eligibility and forward the requests for you to decide by the April 23 council meeting when you will be asked to vote on the Consolidated Plan. The Plan will include a list of first year activities. A copy of the program schedule is attached to your list of applications.

The handout lists the organizations that have submitted applications for funding. Also included on the handout are some details about the grant. The total grant is \$288,000. 20% is allowed for administration and planning which can not exceed \$57,600. The maximum that can be spent on public services is 15% of the entire grant or \$43,650. You only need to listen to the proposals tonight. You do not need to decide on any funding allocations.

Housing rehabilitation program – The one Township-wide activity that is proposed is a housing rehabilitation grant program for low and moderate income households. The program can be run similar to the County program that has administered our housing rehabilitation grant funds for the past two years. **The need for this program is overwhelming.** Almost every week I get 2-3 calls asking about grant assistance for low and moderate income homeowners. There are about 100 households in the waiting list, some since 1998. It is a good use for funds and it targets them where they are intended – to low and moderate income households. It also maintains the condition of the housing stock and the integrity of the neighborhoods.

Information concerning the hearing and CDBG funding process was mailed to about 30 individuals and organizations on the mailing list and listed in a display ad in the newspaper. The program information, application and deadlines were posted on the Township's web site.

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Organizations were asked to register to speak tonight, although that is not required. We are asking everyone to limit their presentations to 5 minutes.

I want to thank everyone for coming out tonight and participating in this process. It is a good opportunity for the Council to hear of the work of your organizations and their funding needs.

APPLICATION PRESENTATIONS***Housing Rehabilitation Grant***

This grant application is submitted by the Township in the amount of \$100,000.00 and is similar to the grants which the County has administered for the past two years. The program targets low and moderate income residents and housing stock and provides grants up to \$10,000. The grants are issued in the form of a lien against the dwelling, forgivable at the rate of 20% per year.

First Baptist Community Development Corporation

Presented by Sharon Tucker Brown, Executive Director of the applicant, requests \$35,000.00 for the purchase of a 15-passenger van for transporting persons serviced by the CDC to their building at no charge to the citizen. The van would increase service and assure the safety of the children and senior citizens utilizing the program. In response to a question from Deputy Mayor Grippo, Ms. Brown noted that the van could be shared by the Township Recreation Program as long as scheduling, insurance, drivers services, etc. could be arranged.

Renaissance Economic Development Corporation

Presented by Stephanie Ferrier, requests \$100,000 for pre-development costs for engineering for the Gateway Project along Route 27. The development will be primarily commercial. The total pre-development engineering costs are estimated at \$150,000 for civil, site, geotechnical and environmental services. Other grant applications are being filed for the balance of the required funding, and the developer is prepared to provide equity if grant monies are not received. In response to questions from Council, Ms. Ferrier advised that the total project cost will be \$27 million, with the bulk of the funding from private lending sources as development begins. Total pre-development costs will be approximately \$4 million; site acquisition will be approximately \$5 million.

Deputy Mayor Grippo questioned Mr. Sumter's and his ability to act on this application since they are members of the Renaissance 2000 Redevelopment Agency. Township Manager Daly responded that there is no conflict and that the CDBG Program is used by many municipalities to promote their economic development projects.

Franklin Township Food Bank

Presented by Denis McGrath, Executive Director, requests funding in the amount of \$17,270.00 for the purchase of walk-in and reach-in freezers and refrigeration equipment for the Food Bank's new building, anticipated for occupancy in 2002. Funding will be applied for through United Way if the CDBG funding is not adequate for purchase. The freezer requested is similar to the freezer at the High School, used by the Food Bank prior to the freezer's demise last year. The freezer will be large enough to handle the Food Bank's existing needs and will allow the Food Bank to expand the number of turkeys and hams they receive for distribution.

In response to a question from Deputy Mayor Grippo, Mr. McGrath advised that the Food Bank's vehicle, used for the pick-up of donations only, not for client transportation, has been repaired and is serviceable.

SPECIAL MEETING - MARCH 12, 2002***Hamilton Street Revitalization Program***

Presented by David Brown, requests \$75,000 to establish a program to assist businesses with five or fewer employees (95% of the existing Hamilton Street businesses) to support growth, personalize management, provide capital for start-up and expansion, mentoring, training, seminars, loans, credit repair, etc. Mr. Brown will serve as the staff administrator of the program.

Mr. Mettler questioned the grant to an advisory board of the Township Council in relation to funding of other Township boards. Township Manager Daly responded that it is the long term goal for this group to become a self-supporting, private/non-profit association, while other boards will always be fully funded by the Township.

Mr. Chivukula arrived at this time.

Somerset County Coalition on Affordable Housing

Presented by Sharon Clark, Executive Director, requests \$7,500 for a housing counseling program for low and moderate income citizens including pre/post purchases and pre/post rentals, reverse financing for senior citizens, negotiation for credit/foreclosure problems. The total cost of SCCOAH'S program is \$372,862, with the balance of the funding being sought from private corporations, United Way, HUD, Grants and other foundations. This program is totally separate from the services provided to the Township by SCCOAH for administration of our affordable housing units.

Somerset Community Action Program

Presented by Isaac Dorsey, Executive Director, requests \$66,824.00 for renovation of a building at 900 Hamilton Street to provide infant and child care for 24 children from low and moderate income families (to be expanded to 60 children by 2003) in a fee based environment of \$200-\$210 a week. Additional sources of funding are being sought to reduce the cost to \$125 per week. Eligible families can seek vouchers from Catholic Charities to cover the \$125 per week cost. The SCAP building on Lewis Street will continue to provide pre school and after school programs at a cost of \$100 per week.

In response to questions from Deputy Mayor Grippo, Mr. Dorsey noted the Hamilton Street building has a parking lot and small playground, however the hours of the program are not sufficient to require a recess. With expansion and renovation, SCAP will expand the playground to accommodate 10 classes. While the Lewis Street facility is located on a less-trafficked street, it is in a residential neighborhood and has parking problems. SCAP is also building a child care center on Belmont Drive.

Franklin Township Department of Social Services

Presented by Ernestine Callier, Township Director of Community Resources, requests \$43,000 for expansion of an after-school care program for Latch key children between the ages of 6 and 12 and 13 and 18. The program provides snacks, homework assistance and is available to working single-parent households only. The total cost of the program is \$82,200.

In response to a question from Mr. Levine, Ms. Callier advised that a similar program is provided by the Board of Education at a higher cost. The Board of Education program uses teachers as supervisors; the Township uses students

Habitat for Humanity

This application is not for a CDBG Grant but for a Home Grant, authorization for which appears on the agenda for tonight's regular meeting. Presented by Pam Ely, requests funding for the purchase of land at 21 Alex Place for construction of a dwelling for a low income family. Habitat purchases land, obtains volunteers and funding for construction of the dwellings, then sells the dwellings to eligible purchaser with a 0% mortgage. The purchaser is responsible for maintenance, taxes and mortgage.

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In response to a question from Mr. Mettler, Township Manager Daly advised that the Alex Street property is not within the Renaissance 2000 Redevelopment Area, and therefore, the construction of a residential dwelling does not conflict with the commercial development plans for the Redevelopment Area.

Upon a motion made, seconded and agreed, Special Meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

SHIRLEY EBERLE, MAYOR

JEAN C. PELLICANE, RMC, TOWNSHIP CLERK