

MINUTES
REGULAR WORKSESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
March 15, 2016
6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Craft called the Regular City Council Worksession to order at 6:00 p.m.

Councilmembers Present: Thomas, Shelton, Knight, Miller, Wright, and Deputy Mayor Craft
Councilmembers Absent: Mayor Nicholls
Staffmembers Present: Deputy City Administrator, Ricky Rinehart
Neighborhood Services Specialist, Nikki Hoogendoorn
Director of Public Works, Joel Olea
Senior Planner, Naomi Leeman
Various department heads or their representatives
City Attorney, Steven W. Moore
City Clerk, Lynda Bushong

Motion (Knight/Thomas): To recess to Executive Session. Voice vote: **adopted** 6-0. The meeting recessed at 6:01 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Craft reconvened the meeting at 7:08 p.m. with all above noted members present.

I. 2016-2021 CONSOLIDATED PLAN AND 2016 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) ACTION PLAN

Heidi Aggeler, representative of BBC Research and Consulting, and **Hoogendoorn**, presented an overview of the 2016-2021 Consolidated Plan and 2016 Action Plan.

Aggeler explained that the City of Yuma is a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) entitlement community. This means that the City receives a stream of funds for housing and community development activities directly from the federal government instead of having to compete for state allocation of funds. Specifically, the City receives a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). To receive those funds, the City is required to conduct a five year consolidated plan, annual plan showing how the funds will be spent, and a fair housing study.

CDBG Eligible Activities:

- Reconstruction/rehabilitation of homes and other properties
- Down payment assistance for home ownership
- Construction of community centers, parks, recreation facilities, facilities to serve special needs populations (such as senior centers)
- Improvements to sidewalks and streets
- Demolition of property to prepare the land for other uses
- Code enforcement
- Employment assistance

- Provisions of public service for special needs populations
 - Special needs populations have a harder time finding housing and may have social service needs that exceed those of the average member of the community. This may include seniors, youth, persons with disabilities, persons who are homeless, victims of domestic violence, and those that live with HIV/AIDS.

The City expects to receive \$750,000 of CDBG funds in the 2016-2017 program year. This is down from last year, and significantly less than at the height of the program in the mid part of the last decade when the City was receiving almost \$1.2 million each year. This decline in CDBG funds is due primarily to federal budget cuts. Any recipient of CDBG must comply with the Federal Fair Housing Act and certify to affirmatively further fair housing choice. Compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by the completion of an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI). HUD is in the process of making changes to the AI template that will go into effect during the next consolidated plan cycle. However, the City has modified their AI to reflect those changes and believes that HUD will view this early adoption favorably.

Altogether, more than 400 people participated in the fair housing study via focus groups, one-on-one interviews, public meetings, broad and targeted resident's surveys, and stakeholder's surveys. Participants communicated their housing and community development needs, and provided opinions on how the City should spend CDBG funds. Additionally, a market analysis revealed a housing shortage of approximately 1,800 units with rent of \$400 or less per month. Without the Housing Authority of the City of Yuma aiding the approximately 1,600 people who utilize their services, that shortage would be about 3,400 units.

From all of this information, the City then develops housing, economic development, and neighborhood and community development priorities that will guide the City's funding over the next five years. With these priorities in mind, the City developed the following five-year goals to guide the use of CDBG funding:

- Housing
 - Maintain a supply of assisted rental housing for low-income residents
 - Continue housing rehabilitation for low-income households, particularly in focus communities that also need neighborhood revitalization
 - Increase the supply of affordable housing in general, including those transitioning out of homelessness
 - Housing counseling and down payment assistance
- Economic development
 - Work to improve the educational attainment of Yuma residents
 - Provide job training and job opportunities for those who are unemployed or underemployed
 - Expand the supply of workers who are trained to fill high-paying jobs in growing fields
- Neighborhood and community development
 - Improve after school options for low-income children
 - Continue to improve the quality of neighborhoods with low-income concentrations through home rehabilitation, code enforcement, voluntary demolition when needed, and general revitalization activities.
 - Work regionally to expand transportation options
 - Create a more accessible environment for people with disabilities

Hoogendoorn discussed the 2016 Annual Action Plan and the following proposed funding plan:

Public Services	
Arizona Classical Ballet, Crossroads Mission Dancer's Initiative	\$ 4,000
BRAG, Battered and Bullied No More	\$ 13,000
City of Yuma, Mesa Heights Neighborhood Outreach	\$ 7,000
Healing Journey, Youth Empowerment Program	\$ 10,000
United Way, Financial Literacy Program	\$ 8,000
WACOG, Fair Housing	\$ 15,000
WACOG, Building Sustainable Homeowners	\$ 30,000
Yuma Community Food Bank, Mesa Heights Satellite Distribution	\$ 20,000
	\$ 107,000
Housing & Public Facilities	
City of Yuma, Mesa Heights Neighborhood Revitalization	\$ 325,461
City of Yuma, Joe Henry Optimist Gym Improvements	\$ 60,000
Saguaro Foundation, Palmcroft Group Home Roof Replacement	\$ 23,000
SMILE, Home Accessibility & Emergency Repairs	\$ 40,000
Yuma Neighborhood Development Org, Mesa Heights Steps to Homeownership	\$ 45,000
	\$ 493,461
CDBG Planning & Administration	
CDBG Planning & Administration	\$ 150,115
	Total Uses \$ 750,576
2016 CDBG Entitlement Funds	
Estimated 2016 Program Income	\$ -
	Total Funds Available \$ 750,576

She explained that this process began in December 2015 when the City sent out notices to the community through fliers and newspaper articles. An application workshop was held in January 2016, and a total of 19 CDBG applications were received. The City and the Citizens Advisory Committee reviewed applications and heard presentations from the applicants, and then met to discuss recommendations for funding the various activities. Priority was given to applications for activities improving the Mesa Heights neighborhood. The Action plan will be published in the newspaper and a 30-day public comment period will follow before it is submitted to HUD by the May 15, 2016, due date.

Thomas asked if there were any programs planned that would help with regard to personal accountability. He suggested activities to help those in the affected areas learn a trade or skill, or something to help them better manage their finances. **Aggeler** stated that financial literacy programs can be funded by CDBG, but there is a cap on the dollars that can be spent on programs in the public service category. The total spent on this category of programming cannot exceed 15% of CDBG funding. Additionally, the City can only fund programs for which an application is received.

Hoogendoorn noted that two of the proposed programs, the United Way Financial Literacy Program and the WACOG Building Sustainable Homeowners program, fall into this category. However, both programs focus on the Mesa Heights neighborhood and give priority to residents of that neighborhood.

Thomas asked if there were monitoring programs to ensure that those who have received employment or other assistance stay on track. **Hoogendoorn** stated that while programs may provide job training or other activities to boost employment, she is unsure if it is possible to mandate that the programs follow

up on their clients. There are many obstacles that may cause someone to become unemployed after obtaining a job, such as lack of childcare or transportation issues.

Shelton thanked Aggeler and Hoogendoorn for their excellent and comprehensive presentation. He praised the Crossroads Mission for doing a superb job with placement, treatment, and follow-up with the population they serve. He noted that veterans were not mentioned in the presentation, and asked if they were included in the study due to homelessness amongst veterans being an area of concern.

Aggeler explained that during the survey and focus group process, participants are asked to prioritize different populations. Veterans did not come up as often as some of the other populations, and there was not an overwhelming need expressed by the individuals who chose to participate in the survey and focus groups. However, survey questions are open ended and it would be fairly easy to clarify the needs of veterans as communicated through this process.

Aggeler responded to the employment concerns expressed by **Thomas**. She stated that CDBG funded programs are typically on the state level and allow employers to provide higher wage opportunities to low-income individuals. These types of programs are difficult to track, and few states are investing in them for various reasons. BBC Research and Consulting is looking into best practices regarding the issue of employment for the State of Indiana, and once the research is completed that information can be shared with the City of Yuma.

Knight noted that the Crossroads Mission GED preparation program was not allocated. He asked if the \$45,000 provided to the Mesa Heights Steps to Homeownership program will be used for education or if they will actually provide dollars for down payments. **Hoogendoorn** explained that this particular program purchases homes, rehabilitates them, and sells them at below-market rates to low-income families. The funds will be used for the construction or rehabilitation part of the program. She further explained that it was a difficult choice not to fund the Crossroads Mission GED program. However, the criterion for the math portion of the GED test changed a few years ago, and since then they have had difficulty getting participants to fully pass all portions of the GED test. After discussion, it was decided that the program may need adjustment or reconfiguration. They can try applying again once they determine what needs to be done to improve testing results.

II. RETENTION BASINS AND LANDSCAPING

Olea and Leeman presented information regarding the overall operations and maintenance costs pertaining to the City's current landscaping and retention basins, as well as potential changes for future cost savings.

Olea stated that the City currently has 43 lift stations, 1,978 catch basins, 96 miles of underground pipe, and 145 retention basins. The City primarily acquires retention basins by way of new subdivision development. The primary purpose of retention basins is to ensure that the roadways and sidewalks remain clear during rain storms. Once the City accepts a subdivision, it will maintain the ownership of the associated retention basin and additional infrastructure indefinitely. Of the 145 retention basins 74 are grass, 44 are xeriscape or desert landscaping, 18 are gravel, and 9 are considered multi-use basins which have park amenities and are maintained by Parks and Recreation.

Service of the basins is categorized into three levels.

- Service level 1 - High visibility areas which require maintenance weekly
- Service level 2 - Those that require maintenance every two to three weeks

- Service level 3 - Require maintenance about every six weeks
 - Basins at service level three are those with xeriscaping or desert landscaping, which have no grass to mow and only trees or shrubs that need occasional trimming.

Tonight's focus is on the 74 grass retention basins that total approximately 80 acres. These basins vary in size from as small as a residential lot to as large as two acres. On average, it costs 50% more per acre to maintain the grass basins than those with xeriscaping. Moving towards xeriscape landscaping can significantly reduce the maintenance costs for these 74 retention basins.

Leeman explained the common strategies for reducing water use including turf removal, planting of low-water plants, and smart irrigation systems. Xeriscaping accomplishes this while still providing a beautiful environment through the use of native or drought-tolerant plants, carefully placed rocks and boulders, and a focus on trees to create shade. A large public outreach and education effort goes hand-in-hand with these strategies.

Moving forward with this long-term plan, the City's motto is "the right plant in the right place". The purpose of the long-term plan is to reduce water use in large landscape areas, which in turn reduces long-term maintenance costs. The four goals of the plan are:

1. Reduce water use, concurrent with General Plan goals in the Conservation, Environment, and Energy Element.
2. Reduce the overall maintenance costs for retention basins.
3. Improve the overall appearance of Yuma through a unified approach to landscape design.
4. Minimize the impact on the community as new retention basin design standards are adopted.

The first step of the conversion strategy is to identify which basins are the best candidates for conversion to xeriscape. At this point, only the 74 grass retention basins are being considered. The basins will be compared to the service areas of existing parks to equitably distribute green spaces.

Other elements of the long-term plan will be to determine the cost to convert each basin, prioritize the basins to convert, develop and adopt new landscape code that emphasizes xeriscape for future large landscapes, work with other City departments to improve efficiency and reduce costs, and a public outreach effort. Initial estimates are that at least 40 acres of grass could be converted, saving about 50% in maintenance costs. These strategies don't just apply to City properties, but also to other large landscapes through the City that will be affected by the adoption of an updated landscape code.

Shelton encourages the City to purchase plants from local vendors. **Miller** added that he would recommend the City work with local landscape contractors as they will have knowledge when it comes to the plants that are tolerant to this area. **Leeman** expressed her agreement, noting that the environment in Yuma differs from even nearby areas that one would assume are the same. The City will definitely be working with local contractors to ensure that they are using the right plants.

III. REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA OF MARCH 16, 2016

B.2 Special Event Liquor License: Planned Parenthood Arizona – Approve a Special Event Liquor License Application submitted by Ann Walker on behalf of Planned Parenthood Arizona for "I Stand with Planned Parenthood" Yuma. The event will take place at the Historic Gowan Building

located at 370 S. Main Street on Friday, April 22, 2016, from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (SP16-09)
(City Administration/City Clerk)

Thomas requested confirmation that the only thing being voted on here is the Special Event Liquor License, and that an affirmative vote would not be construed as a vote in support of the organization. **Craft** stated that he would assume this is understood, but that Thomas' comment is noted.

B.7 Grant Award: Arizona Game and Fish – Authorize the City Administrator to execute the necessary documents with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to accept a Heritage Grant for the purpose of conducting a pilot program for a wildlife habitat study in the Yuma East Wetlands for local seventh-grade students. (City Administration/Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area)

Knight asked who would be liable if any of the students were injured during the program. **Moore** stated that the project is simply to provide money to the schools. However, if Parks and Recreation is taking the leadership position and telling the students where to go or what to do, the City is probably assuming the liability. If it is the schools that are taking the leadership position and the City is simply providing the venue, then it may be more of a divided liability situation. **Craft** noted that the meeting packet states it is a school field trip. **Knight** acknowledged that, but pointed out that it is the City's property and the City's park. While it is anticipated no child gets hurt and safety will surely be on everyone's mind that has anything to do with the field trips, accidents do happen.

IV. ADJOURNMENT/EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion (Knight/Thomas): To adjourn the meeting to Executive Session. Voice vote: **adopted** 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

APPROVED:

Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor