

WASHTENAW URBAN COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, April 3, 2019 - 2:00pm - 3:30pm
Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center (LRC), Huron Room

I. Members in Attendance: Treasurer Brenda McKinney (Superior Township); Christine Green (Scio Township); Craig Lyon (Pittsfield Township); Councilperson Elizabeth Nelson (City of Ann Arbor); Joe Meyers (City of Ypsilanti); Clerk Karen Lovejoy-Roe (Ypsilanti Township); Councilperson Linda Terhaar (City of Saline); Supervisor Marlene Chockley (Northfield Township); Michelle Aniol (City of Dexter)

Communities Absent: Ann Arbor Township; Augusta Township; Bridgewater Township; Dexter Township; Lima Township; Manchester Township; Salem Township; Saline Township; Sylvan Township; Webster Township; York Township

Facilitator/Chairperson: Commissioner Jason Morgan (Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners)

OCED Staff Present: Mirada Jenkins, Tara Cohen

Guests: Chris Brown (Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley); Marta Larson (Whitmore Lake resident); Commissioner Ruth Ann Jamnick; Wendy Carty-Saxon (Avalon Housing).

Meeting called to order: 2:04pm

I. Public Comment - None

II. Announcements

- Introductions were made around the table.

III. Minutes - Approval of 3-6-19 Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

*Moved by Clerk Lovejoy Roe. Supported by Michelle Aniol.
Motion passed.*

IV. General Administration

A. Updates: FY2019-20 Draft Annual Action Plan

1) Citizen Participation - Tara Cohen states that two additional public hearings were held to solicit feedback on the Draft 2019 Action Plan since the hearing at the March UCEC meeting, noting that no comments were received at either:

- Thursday, March 14th – Housing & Human Services Advisory Board meeting
- Wednesday, March 20th – Board of Commissioners meeting

Ms. Cohen said that no comments had been received to date for the 30-day comment period, which closes April 4th. That said, she mentioned that several citizens had contacted her for the link to the Draft Plan, which meant some people were interested in and perhaps reviewing the Plan.



2) Summary of Planned Activities – Ms. Cohen stated that only a few updates have been made to the Summary table since the last UCEC meeting, specifically:

- Under the HOME section of the table, she has added in the project names, along with recommended funding amounts, and outcomes were added, based on the funding recommendations presented to the UCEC at the March meeting.
- Under the CDBG section, she added a placeholder for the Voucher-to-Homeownership Assistance Pilot program, which Mirada Jenkins will be presenting on later in the agenda.

3) Timeline – Ms. Cohen explained that deadlines for the Action Plan will be moved back based on informal communication from the HUD Detroit field office that our 2019 allocations are not expected before April 26th.

Based on that reference point, she noted the following new dates for the Action Plan approval process:

- May 1, 2019: UCEC to approve Final Action Plan (with caveat that staff is permitted to adjust the allocations – including for specific projects - once received from HUD)
- June 5, 2019: Board of Commissioners to approve Final Action Plan (reflecting actual allocations)
- June 25, 2019: Final Action Plan due to HUD

Ms. Cohen also mentioned that staff may hold an additional 15-day comment period and one final public hearing after actual allocations received, if they are significantly more or less than the estimates currently in the Draft Plan.

4) Voucher-to-Homeownership Assistance Program Pilot – Ms. Jenkins presented on her plans for development and launch of a pilot program to support voucher holders to move into homeownership, with many program elements coming from the past Down Payment Assistance program that OCED ran when she was in her previous role that focused on HOME-funded contracts/activities. She explained that the initial allocation of \$105,000 will be obtained by reducing the 2019 allocation for Single Family Rehabilitation program, which has been overfunded in the last few years (due to a surplus resulting from the lack of local infrastructure projects) and is therefore more than fully funded for the next year or two. In addition to the details provided in the [agenda summary](#), Ms. Jenkins also explained that:

- This pilot is an attempt to help voucher-holders be able to stay where they live and work;
- Marketing will target not only the voucher holders but also landlords;
- Lenders' and realtors' willingness to participate is another key piece of this work being successful;
- UCEC can expect to receive monthly updates on the status of the pilot from OCED staff.

There was a question about program partners, and Ms. Jenkins responded that MSHDA and Ann Arbor Housing Commission have already committed to partnering with OCED on this Pilot. Additionally, she underscored that WHEP already provides education for new homebuyers, so no new programs are needed in that regard. Craig Lyons asked if participants would be allowed to purchase properties under a land contract; Ms. Jenkins replied that land contracts would not be eligible for the pilot, purchases must be made in the form of a mortgage. Supervisor Chockley asked about limits on home prices; Ms. Jenkins stated that she anticipates capping purchase price at around \$224k, but expects the average price point to be between \$115k and \$150k.

Treasurer McKinney expressed concern about voucher holders being able to stay in (or move to) the City of Ann Arbor, due to the challenge of finding affordable options to buy there. She asked about the possibility of identifying where voucher holders live so that effective marketing can be done, and she stated that if there is a committee formed to assist with outreach efforts, she is interested in participating. She also noted that she knows first-hand Ms. Jenkins' passion for this work from



previously working on projects together, and she is excited to see this pilot move forward under the leadership of Ms. Jenkins.

B. Northfield Township Priority Project Proposal (ACTION)

As a handful of voting members had mentioned the need to leave early from the meeting, Ms. Cohen suggested moving item C “Northfield Township Priority Project Proposal” up on the agenda, since it will require a vote. No one expressed dissent to this idea, so items B and C were switched on the agenda.

Ms. Cohen gave a basic overview of the Northfield Township proposal, which requested \$104,714 for improvements to their Community Center, which was strictly a Senior Center until just a few years ago. She reminded the group that they had taken action at the February meeting to extend the deadline for priority project proposals, primarily to allow for Northfield to submit theirs based on extensive discussion by Committee members and in light of similarity to the proposal that was approved for Ypsilanti Township/Superior Township to replace flooring at the Ypsilanti Township Community Center. Ms. Cohen explained that, due to [Notice CPD-19-02](#) issued by HUD in February, the Low-Mod Income Maps used for qualifying projects under the “Low-Mod Benefit Area” is no longer applicable for the Northfield Township. More directly, the block group where the Community Center is located, changed from being 51% or more LMI to being less than 51% LMI using HUD’s new dataset which comes from 2011-2015 American Community Survey data. However, Ms. Cohen explained that the majority of the items within the proposal – exceptions being the roof and the storage systems - are examples of removing architectural barriers that will benefit Seniors, a population that accounts for a significant portion of the overall population at the Center. She noted that the staff recommendation is to fund all aspects of the proposal that qualify under the CDBG National Objective of “Limited Clientele,” more specifically for the *removal of architectural barriers to benefit Limited Clientele*, which in the case of this project is Seniors. The two items staff is not recommending for funding are: (1) roofing (\$16,000) and (2) storage cabinets (\$2,000). Based on the \$35,000 cash match that the Township proposed, which represented just over 25.1% of the total project cost or 28.8% of the eligible costs under CDBG, staff is recommending CDBG priority project funds in the amount of \$91,285. This recommended amount represents 75% of total project costs for the eligible project components.

Ms. Cohen read aloud the recommended motion language (see below in **bold**.) Michelle Aniol moved, Councilperson Linda Terhaar supported, then Chairperson Morgan opened the floor for discussion and a chance for Supervisor Chockley to speak to her proposal.

Michelle Aniol asked for clarification on why the roof is not eligible for CDBG funding. Ms. Cohen explained that the roof is for the entire facility, which serves a broader population, not strictly seniors or those with mobility issues. If it were a senior center (i.e. strictly serving a presumed benefit limited clientele) or the facility were located in a Low-Mod income area (i.e. meeting the “Low-Mod Area Benefit”), all of the proposed facility improvements would have been eligible for the CDBG priority funds per HUD regulations. Ms. Aniol went on to ask if – hypothetically – the roof to be repaired were located above areas within a facility strictly housing senior programs, would it then be eligible. Ms. Cohen said that was a somewhat unlikely scenario, however it is possible that the argument could be made for that very specific scenario.

Treasurer McKinney asked if there is a membership fee at the Community Center. Supervisor Chockley responded that there are no fees, which is a reason that people come from 23 different zip codes to utilize the Center.



Clerk Lovejoy Roe asked for clarification on how, if the Northfield Township Community Center was not located in an LMI area now, it received 10 points on the scorecard for being in a Low Opportunity Area. Ms. Cohen explained that the question on the Priority Project Scorecard is referring to the Washtenaw County Opportunity Index, which relies on different data sources than do the LMI maps using the ACS data prescribed by HUD. She went on to clarify that, while no longer in a block group that qualifies as majority LMI, the Opportunity Index shows the Center to be located in a “Very Low” opportunity area.

Clerk Lovejoy Roe also shared with the group that a state constitutional amendment will be on the ballot in November 2020, to make changes to the way revenue in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund can be spent. Specifically, if the amendment is passed by the voters, funding would become available for renovation projects of recreational facilities, as well as making funds available for park operations and maintenance. [NOTE: More information on the *Michigan Use of State and Local Park Funds Amendment-2020* can be found [here](#).]

Ms. Aniol asked whether Supervisor Chockley had been in communication with OHM to confirm the performance of the Geoblock product (proposed for parking lot expansion) in cold climates and frost. A few other members joined in to say this project – or something like it – has been used a lot in this region of the country.

Chairperson Jason Morgan stated that he thinks this project clearly shows need and is worthy of funding, however he also wants to make sure staff do not forget suggestions that have been made in earlier discussions with regard to Priority Project proposals. Ms. Cohen responded to say that staff have noted the concerns and wishes of many Committee members (and of themselves as staff) to consider forming an ad hoc subcommittee that would be charged with making improvements to the process, eligibility criteria, and forms used for any future CDBG awards for Priority Projects. Ms. Cohen said that she will include recommended language for a motion to form said subcommittee on the May agenda for UCEC.

MOTION: The Urban County Executive Committee approves the staff recommendation to provide 2019-20 CDBG priority project funding to Northfield Township for the project components that fall under the CDBG National Objective for the *removal of architectural barriers to benefit Limited Clientele*, in the amount of \$91,285.

*Moved by Michelle Aniol. Supported by Councilperson Terhaar.
Motion passed.*

C. Changes to Low-Mod Income Maps (HUD-CPD Notice 19-02)

Ms. Cohen reiterated that, as mentioned above under the Northfield proposal just discussed, HUD issued [Notice CPD-19-02](#) in February, titled *Low- and Moderate- Income Summary Data Updates*, which provides guidance on the new data from the Census Bureau that became effective April 1, 2019 for qualifying projects for CDBG funding under the *Low-Mod Income Area Benefit (LMA)*. Ms. Cohen explained that LMA is by no means the only way to determine eligibility of local projects for CDBG funding. She directed the group to look at the side-by-side of the old versus the new LMI map for the County as a whole included in their packet, noting that she will provide more detailed maps for local jurisdictions as soon as they are available from her colleague who will be making those updates.

Michelle Aniol asked what type of projects the City of Dexter will be qualified for, now that their single LMI block group is no longer majority LMI based on the updated maps. Ms. Cohen explained that ADA-focused projects, or facilities specifically serving low-income populations or presumed benefit clientele (e.g. disabled, seniors, people living with HIV/AIDS, domestic violence survivors, etc.) would be



potentially eligible for CDBG funding. In addition, she stated that household income surveys – such as the one conducted in Northfield for the Main Street project a few years ago, and what Augusta Township will do to determine if their LED street lighting project will be eligible under Low-Mod Area Benefit – is another path to determine eligibility, albeit labor intensive.

D. General Updates

- 1) Local Project updates – Ms. Cohen noted that the Foley Avenue Road improvement project in Ypsilanti Township is moving forward; the WC Road Commission released the RFP this week and work is expected to be completed by no later than August 2nd.
- 2) Community Announcements/Updates
 - Ms. Cohen announced that Peter Lindeman recently started as OCED in the role of Communications & Policy Specialist.
 - Clerk Lovejoy Roe shared that the Washtenaw Avenue sidewalk (Reimagine Washtenaw) project – which has several years of older funding - looks like it will be completed this year, based on the recent update received from Nathan Voght at OCED with regard to the last few easements in question. She also stated that she is hopeful that the bus shelter project at Schooner Cove will also happen this year. Ms. Cohen noted that she is currently waiting on the design from OHM in order to begin the environmental review for that project.
 - Joe Meyers announced that Ypsilanti City Council recently appointed former City Clerk Francis McMullan as the new City Manager, after serving in the Interim role. He also noted that former Deputy Clerk Andrew Hellenga is now serving as City Clerk.
 - Chairperson Morgan announced that this Thursday, April 4th at 6:30pm, the Board of Commissioners would be hosting the working session at the Sylvan Township Hall instead of the regular location (downtown Ann Arbor, Administration building). Main discussion topics will include broadband access and teen mental health. Morgan stated that Sue Shink, in her capacity as Chair of Working Session, decided to hold the meeting in Sylvan; he believes this will be the first of many efforts by the Board of Commissioners to serve the entire County and go to the residents as opposed to asking residents to come to them.
 - Commissioner Ruth Ann Jamnick expressed thanks for allowing her to sit in on the Urban County meeting, noting that she had suggested the Board hold its Working Session in different locations around the County and is grateful to Commissioner Morgan for making this a reality.

V. Adjournment

Clerk Lovejoy Roe moved to adjourn, Trustee Green supported.

Motion to adjourn approved unanimously.

Adjourned: 3:20pm

