# Citizens Advisory Committee for Community Development
## February 23, 2021
## Held Virtually via Zoom Technology
## 6:00 P.M.

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| **Members Present** | Trish Hubbell, David Carr, Kate Stockton, Alex Sheppard, Jenna DeJong, Abby Rea, Angela Dowler-Pryor, Brandy McShane |
| **Absent** | Lindsay Taggard |
| **Staff** | Bob Atchley, Senior Planner, Planning and Development; Bob Jones, Grants Administrator, Planning and Development; Judy White, Department Secretary, Planning and Development; Kyle Tolbert, Department Attorney, Planning and Development |
| **Others Present** | None |
| **Attendance** | Trish Hubbell called the meeting to order at approximately 6:02 p.m. Attendance was taken by Ms. White. |
| **Welcome and Introductions** | Welcome by Ms. Hubbell |

**Approval of Minutes**

The Committee review the following draft meeting minutes:

January 12, 2021 – Joint City Council & CACCD Annual Action Plan Public Hearing

Angela Dowler-Pryor moved to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2021 Joint City Council & CACCD Annual Action Plan Public Hearing. Brandy McShane seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

January 26, 2021 CACCD Meeting

Angela Dowler-Pryor stated she hasn't had a chance to review the minutes. A change was recommended on the first page regarding the Junior League not being consulted as a part of the annual process. Angela Dowler-Pryor moved to table the approval of the minutes until the next meeting on March 23, 2021. Kate Stockton seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Discussion of Proposed Revisions to City Council Resolution 8720, CACCD Bylaws, and Citizen Participation Plan**

Ms. Hubbell stated that this resolution is to reformat what they do as a committee. Clear goals need to be established that stands by what the Committee does and why.

Ms. Stockton mentioned the Junior League and cleaning things up on line 50. The bigger objective is getting their voices heard by City Council to be a better vessel for the community at large.

Ms. Hubbell would like the agencies, such as CFO, to be explained as to why they were contacted. Every agency should get asked the same questions and the responses should be documented.

Ms. Dowler-Pryor added that each organization's commentary should be transparent and documented. It should be public.

Ms. Sheppard suggested creating a form that the staff would use for the agencies that are being consulted, such as a score sheet, to track responses. Ms. Dowler-Pryor stated that it all needs to be out in the open. It was suggested that some other agencies may have disapproved of funding an agency, which may have played a role in the input.

Ms. Dowler-Pryor referenced the Blue House project, with The Drew Lewis Foundation, was turned down due to not being project ready enough and that the United Way gave them a bad reference. This information had been presented by Brendan Griesemer previously.

Ms. Hubbell stated it's not an argument on asking other's opinions but rather she wants clear, specific questions as to why an agency gets funds. Asking opinions can be a dangerous area when it isn't properly framed out.

Mr. Atchley reiterated that approval, or denial of an application for discretionary CDBG funding, is based on the total score received.

Mr. Jones mentioned the reason that the United Way of the Ozarks and the Community Foundation of the Ozarks are consulted is due to it being put in the resolution in 1994.

Ms. Stockton brought up the conflict of interest provision and that it needs to be universal, not just specific to the CACCD. Ms. Hubbell stated that it shouldn't be directed to just one side since everyone should be looking out for the best interest of the citizens of Springfield.

Ms. Stockton agrees with record keeping regarding third-party consultation but doesn't necessarily think it needs to be thrown out. She believes it should be standardized for the comfort of everyone involved.

Ms. Sheppard asked about defining funding groups and generalizing to open to other agencies.

Ms. Hubbell likes the idea of having an outside opinion if it is structured and documented appropriately. It would need to be the same agency that is talked to for each.

Ms. Dowler-Pryor states that it to be transparent to eliminate gossip and showing no personal investment.

Ms. Hubbell thanked everyone for their participation on getting the Resolution written before moving on to the Bylaws.

The letter from Mr. Jones is the next point of focus. Ms. Hubbell started off with the first issue of the City favoring a select few agencies every year. Ms. McShane sees how hard the staff tries to communicate to non-profits to increase participation. Ms. Dowler-Pryor supports what Ms. McShane said and knows that the staff follows the rules but doesn't think that those rules are fair or work best for the community. She has seen that 100 applications get sent out and the same people get the funding. New organizations might not get funds as they need to prove their justifications. The Drew Lewis Foundation has applied 5 of the 7 years she has been on the committee and it seems every time they are denied, it is for a different reason, or predetermined. These agencies can feel defeated by the process and just give up.

The Minorities in Business Proposal Review is the next point discussed. Ms. Hubbell would like to make sure applicants are aware that not attending the training session reflects poorly or suggested they don't get the application until they have attended the training session. Ms. Dowler-Pryor said if it will influence a decision then it should be said in writing. When a rejection letter is sent, explanations need to be communicated to the applicants, so they have room to improve and grow. It should be a learning process, not just an approval or rejection process.

Point # 9, It was questioned that the City staff does not Debrief agencies that are not funded, was addressed next. Ms. Hubbell said the letter doesn't state the exact reason of why they were rejected and it would be helpful to call a staff member to discuss so the agency kows what can be done to improve, or properly apply for the funds.

Ms. Dowler-Pryor commented on Point #4, Citizen Advisory Committee is "required" by HUD. She stated that CACCD meeting are used as a public hearing forum but asked why they can't give out the zoom. She would like to use social media and other platforms to make the public aware and increase participation. Ms. Stockton mentioned how zoom policies have changed since the beginning of the pandemic and it is more secure than it had been. She would like the committee to talk to staff before a decision is made on final scoring.

Points #5 is about Great Circle being allowed an additional opportunity to present their proposal. Ms. Dowler-Pryor saw about the St. James location having poor leadership and sent the newspaper article link to Ms. Hubbell and Mr. Atchley to make them aware. The City went to the organization and believes she was specifically named, which then had the organization feeling attacked by the Committee, so they came to defend themselves. In the past, the Committee voted not to fund LifeHouse for multiple reasons, so the City had another meeting for them to re-pitch. The committee voted again, 2-7, against funding the organization but they were funded anyway. It screams bias from the staff, which needs to be changed. Ms. Hubbell stated this is an area that needs to have a specific policy protocol established.

Point #6 is regarding LifeHouse program having a death of a client. Ms. Dowler-Pryor referred to the Newsleader article in which a client was under their care. She shared with her brother on multiple occasions that she didn't always feel supported by people around her as not everyone approved of medication assisted treatment for her opioid addiction. She constantly struggled and her brother said the recovery community must come together to embrace people that are using other pathways to support them in their recovery choice. Her choices were a religious organization that encouraged her to lean on prayer rather than science, which was a contributor to her death.

Ms. Stockton appreciates and recognizes the importance of the committee in helping the City Staff to be eyes and ears of the neighborhoods and bringing issues to attention. Ms. Hubbell said things like this should be on their radar at the very least.

Ms. Sheppard mentioned that when dealing with any kind of treatment program, this type of thing is more common to prone to occur rather than in a program where they are building homes for instance. Ms. Hubbell supported this comment in stating this was another reason to have rules and regulations.

Ms. Dowler-Pryor said these funds shouldn't be in such controversial areas, such as religious beliefs being pushed. Ms. Sheppard asked for clarity on HUD's guidelines on giving funding to religious organizations. Ms. Hubbell mentioned that HUD used to require a form to be signed that funds wouldn't be used for religious purposes and that it isn't policed. She thinks that the presentations shouldn't be faith based.

When asked if there was an accounting process or tracking of how funds are used, Mr. Atchley explained that there is a detailed desk and on-site monitoring of all funded agencies in which beneficiary files and accounting are monitored. There are a lot of faith-based agencies. He explained that there was an agency that had a complaint against them, and HUD came down to investigate as they take all complaints very seriously. Ms. Stockton mentioned how HUD has a frequently asked questions section on the faith-based and community initiative which explains further on how funds can and cannot be used, which aligns with what Mr. Jones' response mentioned. She will send out the list to everyone to view.

Ms. Hubbell asked for the committee to say anything regarding any of Mr. Jones' points. Ms. Sheppard brought up the fact of not being able to deny organizations based on their religious affiliation if they are using the funds appropriately.

Mr. Jones commented that faith-based organizations are the reason the community has cold weather shelters available. Also mentioned that organizations such as Habitat for Humanity have a religious based origin as well.

Ms. Hubbell stated that ultimately the Committee wants to see things a little more structed and locked down. The best way to do this is to have better processes and procedures in place moving forward. The committee expects to have their voices heard and not be just a yes committee as they have value.

Ms. Stockton and Ms. Hubbell mentioned that the formal response Bob provided opened better conversations and explanations.

Ms. McShane requested that Bob's response letter be included with the minutes from this meeting. Please see attached.

Ms. Hubbell mentioned the next meeting will be about the Bylaws.

**Public Comments** None

**New Business** None

**Next Meeting** CACCD Meeting – March 23, 2021, 6:00 p.m. Virtually via Zoom Technology

**Adjournment** Ms. Hubbell thanked everyone for their meeting attendance.
Brandy McShane moved to adjourn the meeting. Angela Dowler-Pryor seconded the motion. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:41 p.m.

Trish Hubbell, Chair