



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath
Director
Planning & Development

Cat Kemmett, Planning
Associate

Members

Peter Doeringer, Chair
Sonia Parisca, Vice Chair
Kelley Brown, Member
Sudha Maheshwari, Member
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Chris Steele, Member
Barney Heath, Planning
Director *ex officio*
Lee Breckenridge, Alternate
Kevin McCormick, Alternate

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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 13, 2021

Members Present:

Peter Doeringer, Chair
Sonia Parisca, Vice-Chair
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Chris Steele, Member
Kelley Brown, Member
Barney Heath, *ex officio*
Lee Breckenridge, Alternate
Kevin McCormick, Alternate (Voting Member)

Staff Present:

Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development
Amanda Berman, Director of Housing and Community Development
Shaylyn Davis, Senior Community Development Planner

Meeting held virtually by Zoom Meeting

1. Presentation and Public Hearing on the FY21 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)/ Vote

Mr. Doeringer moved to open the public hearing on the FY21 CAPER at 7:05pm.

Amanda Berman, Director of Housing and Community Development and Shaylyn Davis, Senior Community Development Planner, made a presentation (attached) on the use of Newton's federal Community Development Block Grant, HOME Housing investment Partnership, and Emergency Solution Grant funding for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

Following the presentation, Chair Doeringer recognized Josephine McNeil of 53B Taft Avenue in West Newton. Ms. McNeil provided the following comments:

- The notification of the CAPER report in the previous Friday Report was not enough notice to fully review the document in time for the public comment.
- The demographic breakdown only separated out Hispanic from the minority numbers, but no other group are separated out.
- The breakdown for beneficiaries of the Consortium program do not separately break-out Newton's beneficiaries.

Mr. McCormick move to close the public hearing.

Following the public hearing, a number of the Planning Board members had questions and comments for the staff:

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- Mr. McCormick—Were all of the special COVID-19 funds allocated to the Emergency Housing and Small Business Recovery program expended?
 - Director Berman--\$3.2 of \$3.7 of the million allocated for the Emergency Housing program has been expended. All of the Small Business Recovery Grant funding has been expended.
- Mr. Brown—To what do you attribute the success of getting the funds out the door?
 - Director Heath—The success is due to the hard work of the staff and good partnerships.
- Ms. Molinsky—Can you share how the demographic data is collected?
 - Senior Planner Davis—HUD requires different reporting between CDBG and ESG program.
- Mr. Doeringer—Could we seek to get more detailed demographic data for the CDBG program?
 - Senior Planner Davis—We can look into that as a possibility.
- Mr. Doeringer—Did we capture minority business participation in the award of the CDBG Small Business Recovery Grant?
 - Director Berman—We did request that information as part of the application data and can retrieve that information for those entities that volunteered that information.
- Mr. Doeringer—Are we looking at how the benchmark minority participation in our CDBG and ESG programs?
 - Senior Planner Davis—As part of our contracting procedure, we do ask all subgrantees to submit their outreach plan. In addition, we do review each of the subgrantees' outreach efforts.
 - Director Berman—The ESG minority participation numbers are higher as the communities served (Brookline, Waltham, Watertown) have a higher overall minority population than Newton.
- Ms. Parisca—Why are CDBG funds used for architectural access rather than City funds?
 - Director Berman—This is an eligible expense for the CDBG program.
 - Director Heath—The CDBG dollars help extend the City's ability to complete the backlog of architectural access projects across the City.
- Mr. Steele—Were HOME dollars left unspent? Why only three homebuyers assisted in the past year?
 - Director Berman—FY21 HOME were completely obligated but because of the project, Golda Meir, all of the funds haven't been expended as of yet. The homeownership assistance program is limited only to deed-restricted affordable units consisting of new construction and/or resale of previously affordable units so the universe of units is low.
- Mr. McCormick—Could we put an allocated criterion to show that HOME funds have been actually allocated but unspent?
 - Director Berman—Yes.
- Ms. Molinsky—Is there any probability of reviving the homeownership assistance program?
 - Director Berman—The cost to buy-down homeownership units are so great that it is not possible at this time.
- Mr. Brown—Why was the CV ESG set-aside so great and how did Newton allocate those funds?

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- Senior Planner Davis—HUD lifted the cap on the use of funds for different categories and a big allocation was made to the Community Day Center in Waltham to create a winter overnight shelter.

Upon a motion by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. Steele, and approved 6-0-1 (Mr. Heath abstaining), the Board voted to accept the CAPER and recommended that the Mayor submit the report to HUD.

2. Zoning Updates

Director Heath indicated that at the ZAP meeting also being held tonight the staff will be discussing amending the current language in the Mixed-Use 4 (MU-4) zoning to clean-up confusion around shadows and blocked views.

3. Minutes: Approve meeting minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Molinsky, and unanimously approved 7-0, the minutes from June 21, June 28, and July 13 were approved.

4. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Mr. Steele, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.