



City of Olympia

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Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, November 26, 2013

5:30 PM

Room 207

Special Meeting of the City Council to Conduct Business of the General Government Committee

1. ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Mayor Stephen H. Buxbaum, Mayor Pro Tem Nathaniel Jones, Councilmember Jim Cooper, Councilmember Julie Hankins, Councilmember Steve Langer, Councilmember Jeannine Roe and Councilmember Karen Rogers

2. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

3. BUSINESS OF THE EVENING

3.A 13-0986 Briefing on the Use of Community Development Block Grant Funds for Economic Development Purposes

Councilmember Roe, as Chair of the General Government Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting, and outlined the discussion points for the evening surrounding the use of CDBG funds for economic development purposes.

Community Planning & Development Deputy Director Leonard Bauer pointed out the six strategic goals of the CDBG Consolidated Plan outlined in the staff report, which cover economic development, housing, public facilities, social services, homeless continuum of care, and land acquisition.

Mr. Bauer then discussed the options for economic development activities, including the recipients of 2013 CDBG funding.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones asked about the rehabilitation project delivery costs and whether or not those costs were ongoing. Mr. Bauer indicated that as we shift to economic development projects, we will not charge as much staff time and thus those costs would be lower.

Councilmember Cooper asked if permit fees could be paid for as a part of economic activities and if free Wi-Fi in the Downtown would qualify. Mr. Bauer stated that pre-design costs would be eligible for funding and said he would need to look into the

Wi-Fi issue further.

Councilmember Roe next asked Mayor Buxbaum to provide an update on the activities of the Community Renewal Area (CRA) Ad Hoc Committee and the link to CDBG funding.

Mayor Buxbaum indicated the Ad Hoc Committee discussed three areas for the use of CDBG funds, which included investing more staff time into researching options for use, a housing rehabilitation revolving loan program, and options for linking the Section 108 loan program to the entitlement grant program, specifically if we could use entitlement money to pay on a loan until a project is completed and occupied as a way to aid developers in deferring costs.

Councilmember Hankins asked if we knew yet whether or not we could use the entitlement funding to help the developers defer costs. Mr. Bauer stated he is still looking at how that might fit under program guidelines.

Councilmember Langer asked is we could accumulate funds over time to do a bigger project. Mr. Bauer responded that we have to meet our spend down requirements on a year over year basis.

Mayor Buxbaum stated we should look to take actions that are impactful in terms economic development activities, and we will need to look at a range of options to do this.

Councilmember Cooper asked if the CRA Ad Hoc Committee had a list of projects to be considered, or whether an RFP approach be used. Councilmember Langer said we can deal with infrastructure issues like the isthmus demolition, alley lighting, sidewalks, etc. Mayor Pro Tem Jones said it is always better to be focused and the Committee is still working on where the CRA is going.

Councilmember Rogers asked if Downtown is our priority, and if so, whether the consultants should focus efforts there. Mayor Pro Tem Jones stated the CRA process had two components. Component A looked citywide and Component B looked specifically at Downtown.

Mayor Buxbaum said we should look for input from local developers and other stakeholders in using CDBG to further Council goals rather than an RFP process. This could aid in finding the most impactful way to use these resources.

Councilmember Langer stated we have a list of Downtown projects that could be considered. Councilmember Cooper asked if the list is prioritized in some way. Councilmember Langer said we could come up with a prioritized list.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones inquired as to the timeline for moving forward. Mr. Bauer responded that there are two timelines. The Section 108 loan process needs a decision soon, and the CDBG needs an action plan, but we have several months to

decide.

Community Planning & Development Director Keith Stahley mentioned the Downtown Project III is coming back to the Land Use & Environment Committee December 5, and to the full Council on December 10. It may have some options to consider. Mr. Bauer stated that a Section 108 loan project proposal would be coming before Council tonight.

Mayor Buxbaum provided a wrap up on next steps and future Council and committee discussions.

The discussion was completed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.