

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

May 10, 1993

Committee Members Present:

Michael Pollock (Chairman), Joan Barr, James Hayes, Marya Ryan, Clifford Singer, John Taylor, Joseph Whelan

Committee Members Absent:

None

Staff Members Present:

Bruce Walden, Jack Waaler, Charles Gordon, April Getchius, Bruce Stoffel, William Gray, Joe Smith, Ron Gremore, Mayor Satterthwaite, Phyllis Clark

Others Present:

Cleveland Jefferson, Vernon Barkstall, Gina Jackson, Fannie Taylor, Paul Meuth, Eugene Heath, Earl O'Shea, Jayne Burkhardt, Members of the News Media

Meeting Location:

City Council Chambers

There being a quorum, the meeting was called to order at 7:37 p.m. by Chairman Pollock.

Additions to the Agenda and Staff Report

There were none.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Singer moved to approve the minutes of the April 12, 1993 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Barr and carried by a voice vote.

CDBG Budget

Community Development Manager Bruce Stoffel presented a general overview of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program for the benefit of new Council Members.

Mr. Stoffel stated that the proposed 1993-1994 CDBG Program budget includes \$550,000 in new grant funds (a 17.8% increase over the amount received in 1992-1993), \$130,045 in carryover funds and \$58,000 in program income and miscellaneous funds. He said the proposed budget emphasizes housing assistance through housing rehabilitation loans and grants, paint grants, house renovations/sales, downpayment loans for Eads at Lincoln development and a home maintenance program for senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

Mr. Stoffel said it is anticipated that the most popular program, housing rehabilitation, will receive \$135,000 from the Illinois Housing Development Authority.

Also included in the budget are funds for upgrading Harvey and Gregory Streets north of King Park, funds for acquisition and clearance of deteriorated, abandoned houses, grants to five social service agency programs, funding for a one-time neighborhood cleanup program and a contribution toward the City's Transitional Housing Program for Homeless Families With Children.

A Neighborhood-Based Police Program discussed extensively at public hearings is not included in the budget according to Mr. Stoffel due to neighborhood opposition to the program being funded by CDBG funds. The proposed pilot program would have funded a full-time police officer assigned to patrol Census Tract 53 and work with residents regarding recurring crime problems.

In response to Mr. Whelan's question, Mr. Stoffel said that based on responses at public hearings it would be questionable whether residents would provide the necessary support for the proposed program if funded from CDBG funds.

Mr. Hayes stated that residents are willing to take a chance with the program funded by CDBG except that the City would not commit to carry on the program after the two year pilot period. He said the residents feel there should be an increase in the number of police officers hired for the entire city, not just in Census Tract 53.

Mr. Taylor confirmed that the permanency of the proposed program does not depend on whether funding is from CDBG or from the municipal budget.

Ms. Ryan asked if there are plans for how a decision would be made to continue the program. Mr. Stoffel stated that although the details have not been established, the program would be periodically tested to determine if residents feel more secure, if they are participating in decisions affecting the program and if the crime rate is reduced. Based on the monitoring of the program, a recommendation would be formulated for Council regarding continuation of the program.

Ms. Ryan asked if the program is not included in the CDBG budget whether consideration will be given to funding from general city funds. Mr. Pollock explained that police staffing can be discussed during the budget process scheduled over the next few weeks.

Mr. Stoffel stated that the CDBG Budget is due to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) at the end of May; however, a grace period has been extended to the city because of the new Council. The application will be accepted by HUD up to September 1 without penalty.

In answer to a question regarding the status of requests for housing rehab funds, Mr. Stoffel said that a \$75,000 grant assisted in accelerating projects by six to twelve months. The existing list of applicants is nearly depleted and a new list will be generated.

Public Participation

Cleveland Jefferson, representing the NAACP of Champaign County, addressed the Committee requesting that the Neighborhood-Based Police Program be funded with general city funds. Upon questioning, he clarified that he supports adding a police officer assigned to Census Tract 53 that would be funded from city taxes at large.

Vernon Barkstall, President and Chief Executive Officer of Urban League of Champaign County, objected to Mr. Stoffel's statement that based on responses at public hearings, he does not believe residents would cooperate with a police officer if placed in the community by CDBG funding. He said people in the community are currently working with police and they will continue.

Gina Jackson, 1210 W. Eureka, presented a petition signed by twenty-two residents of Census Tract 53 and a statement that 100 additional residents are opposed to funding a community police program with CDBG funds. She suggested that a task force address adding police staff and scheduling additional patrols where needed.

Fannie Taylor, 1307 W. Beardsley, stated that residents of Census Tract 53 believe that city decision makers should consider the problem of increasing crime in their community important enough to include in the general city budget. She related that children and teens are not safe in the neighborhood.

Mr. Pollock questioned whether adding police staff not dedicated to serving Census Tract 53 would meet the needs that have been identified.

Paul Mueth, 207 W. Illinois, stated that the spirit of CDBG is to fund rehabilitation and housing needs, not police services and should therefore be allocated from general city funds.

Mr. Singer moved that it is the unanimous consent of the committee that the Mayor be recognized fully in debate and that any tie votes be broken by the Mayor's decision. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor.

Eugene Heath, 1305 N. Romine, stated that the problems in Census Tract 53 need to be resolved immediately regardless of where the funding is derived.

Responding to questions of Mr. Heath, Assistant Police Chief Charles Gordon related that the proposed program would most likely place an officer in Census Tract 53 Tuesday through Saturday from 5:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. Mr. Heath suggested that a back-up officer be considered for the officer's days off.

Mr. Pollock ruled that the motion before the committee is for the purposes of this meeting only. Legal staff will determine if any legislation needs to be changed to make the procedure permanent.

The motion that the Mayor be recognized in debate and cast a deciding vote in case of a tie carried by a voice vote.

Regarding the CDBG budget, Mr. Singer stated the new Council needs to make a fundamental decision on whether the city should insure that property values in the CDBG target area keep up with inflation. He said the CDBG has assisted in accomplishing that end. He noted a slight increase in overhead costs and raised the question of whether overhead should be included.

Mr. Singer moved to send to Council the CDBG Budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hayes.

Mr. Whelan stated his support for a pilot program funded by CDBG for the purpose of proving the efficacy of a community police program.

Mr. Whelan moved a substitute motion to send to Council the CDBG Budget dedicating \$45,000 for a pilot program (Neighborhood-Based Police Program) with the intention of funding from City funds after two years if proven to be successful and to reduce the Housing Rehabilitation line item by \$45,000. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Singer encouraged the committee to demonstrate their continuous support of the program by making a commitment of funds from general revenues.

Mr. Pollock stated his preference that all three of the Police positions proposed in the FY93-94 budget be funded. He added that he would not want to approve the CDBG budget without the police funding and later discover that there is a problem funding the position from general city funds.

Ms. Barr suggested that consideration be given to funding a police position by implementing a transmission tax.

The motion to substitute failed by a show of hands vote.

The motion to send the CDBG budget to Council as recommended carried by a show of hands vote.

Mr. Pollock stated that CDBG Budget approval will be on the agenda of the May 17, 1993 Council meeting.

The Committee recessed at 9:37 p.m. and reconvened at 9:50 with all Members previously in attendance still present.

Earl O'Shea, 606A South Glover, addressed the Committee regarding property at 602 and 604 South Glover. He said existing zoning on the lots allows industrial activities in the residential neighborhood.

Railroad Right-Of-Way Discussion

Community Development Director/City Planner April Getchius updated the Committee on the status of Norfolk and Western Railroad right-of-way between Florida Avenue and Washington Street. She said that in February, residents of the area approached the City Council requesting assistance in acquiring the property to be attached to their existing properties. Nuisance complaints, vandalism and drainage were cited as recurring problems on the abandoned site. Other citizens suggested that the property is a potential location for a rails to trails program. Ms. Getchius said the area could be eligible for transportation funding designated for bicycle trails. During the earlier discussions, staff was directed to determine the costs of correcting grade and drainage problems along the rail road right-of-way and to assess the cost of platting.

Ms. Getchius stated that the actual projected costs of \$71,500 is considerably less than originally anticipated and that there would be an additional \$40,000 cost for surveying and platting.

Regarding the status of ownership of the property, Ms. Getchius stated that it is unclear at this point. The railroad claims ownership rights and would sell those rights. As is done with other railroad property, the City has secured the property by paying taxes on it and could convey it to individual property owners with a quit claim deed.

City Attorney Jack Waaler stated that when he investigated the situation, it appeared that the railroad had an easement and upon their abandonment of the railroad tracks, the easement disappeared. He does not believe they have any title to the property. He went on to say that a quit claim deed would have a practical effect because under Illinois law such documents once recorded and once taxes have been paid for seven years, provide a reasonably defensible title through adverse possession. In the past, the City has accepted quit claim deeds from Norfolk and Western Railroad at no cost, parceled the property to owners and charged a pro-rata share of the surveying costs to property owners.

Responding to Mr. Whelan's question regarding negotiating a price for the property, Mr. Waaler said Norfolk and Western Railroad representatives have not been receptive.

Mr. Pollock suggested that a neighborhood meeting be arranged to explain the costs and risks involved with acquiring the property and to discuss alternatives.

Ms. Getchius noted that an alternative response to assisting residents in their pursuit of acquiring the property would be to take the position that the situation is a private dispute which must be resolved by the railroad and property owners.

Mr. Whelan moved to request that staff provide recommendations on how to proceed in two to four weeks. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hayes and carried by a voice vote.

Mr. Pollock stated that the item will return to a committee meeting in two to four weeks.

Ordinance Concerning Public Hearing Before Street Vacation
An Ordinance Concerning Public Hearings Before Street Vacations

Mr. Pollock noted that an amendment to an Ordinance Concerning Public Hearings Before Street Vacations was referred to the Committee from the previous Council meeting and a proposed budget amendment transferring \$10,000 from the Capital Improvement Fund to a new line item to be used for neighborhood representation costs at public hearings regarding street vacations was submitted by former Alderman Charles Smyth.

Mr. Pollock stated that the amendments are premature and suggested that a request be made for staff to embark upon a neighborhood study to identify boundaries, review the traffic study, determine housing difficulties and consider long-term communications between the neighborhood residents and Carle Foundation staff.

Mr. Singer stated that the proposed budget amendment should be considered during the budget process; however he suggested that public comment be heard and a vote taken on the amendment to the ordinance on public hearings before street vacations.

Jane Burkhardt, representing the League of Women Voters of Champaign County, commented on the proposal suggesting that the League of Women Voters serve as the distributing organization for funds earmarked for neighborhood representation at public hearings. She stated that the League of Women Voters for the State of Illinois has served as a distributing organization in the past. It was determined through that experience however, that they would not care to handle disputes that could arise, preferring that such matters be directed to the City Council. She indicated a need for specific direction at the time each vacation occurs.

Mr. Singer explained that his proposed amendment to the ordinance concerning public

hearings before street vacations pertains to establishing procedures for a case where the street is not ultimately vacated.

Mr. Whelan moved to delay consideration of the amendment to the ordinance concerning public hearings before street vacations for six months. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Whelan moved to table the proposed ordinance amendment indefinitely (delete from the agenda). The motion was seconded by Ms. Barr and carried by a voice vote.

Mr. Singer moved to delete the proposed budget amendment from the agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Barr and carried by a voice vote.

Mr. Pollock moved to request that staff engage in a study of the Park Street neighborhood that would accomplish the following:

- 1) Identify the boundaries of the area;
- 2) meet with area residents and Carle Foundation and Carle Clinic staff;
- 3) include at least six months of internal traffic studies to insure multi-seasonal impact of the closing of Park Street;
- 4) identify areas to address for neighborhood improvement, traffic control, housing needs, parking needs and long term relationship between Carle Foundation and the residents of the area.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Whelan and carried by a voice vote.

Mr. Pollock stated that this item will return to committee in six months to one year.

Council Appointments

Mr. Singer moved to send to Council the nominations of Michael Pollock as Chair and James Hayes as Vice-Chair of the Committee on Administration and Finance, Michael Pollock as Mayor Pro-Tem and John Taylor as Chair of the Rules Committee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Barr and carried by a voice vote.

Mr. Pollock moved to send to Council the nominations of Mr. Singer as Chair and Marya Ryan as Vice-Chair of the Committee on Environment and Public Safety. Mr. Pollock clarified that the intent of the motion is that the Chair of the Committee also serve as Chair of the Traffic Commission. The

motion was seconded by Ms. Barr and carried by a voice vote.

Mr. Singer moved that the Mayor recommend an appointment to the CATV Commission and suggest names for appointments to the Urbana-Champaign Economic Development Corporation, Champaign-Urbana Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Intergovernmental Solid Waste Disposal Association. There was unanimous consent for the motion.

Mr. Pollock stated that the Council appointments will be on the May 17, 1993 Council agenda.

A Resolution Relating To Participation By Elected Officials In The Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund

Mr. Waaler stated that the resolution proposed is a standard IMRF resolution that would enable the newly elected City Clerk to participate.

Mr. Singer moved to send the resolution to Council. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hayes and carried by a voice vote.

Mr. Whelan requested that IMRF Participation for Council Members be placed on the agenda of the next committee meeting.

Mr. Pollock stated that the resolution will be on the May 17, 1993 Council agenda. IMRF Participation for Council Members was referred to the Chair of the Committee on Environment and Public Safety.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chairman Pollock declared the meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Menges, Secretary

*This meeting was tape recorded

**This meeting was broadcast on cable television

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