



# TOWN OF WARE

## Planning & Community Development

126 Main Street, Ware, Massachusetts 01082

t. 413.967.9648 ext. 186 / f. 413.967.9642

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Meeting Minutes from

**Monday, January 11, 2021**

Select Board Room, Town Hall

<b>CDA Members Present:</b>	Paul Opalinski, John Carroll (remote), and Danielle Souza (remote)
<b>CDA Members Absent:</b>	James Baird, Brandy Bruso
<b>Guests:</b>	Ted Harvey (PVPC), Nick Peavey (PVPC), Eileen Kennedy
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Rebekah Cornell, Director of Planning & Community Development; Jack Carolan, PCD Assistant; Stuart Beckley, Town Manager; Anna Marques, Building Inspector

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### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

Chairman P. Opalinski called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### ADMINISTRATIVE

Approval of minutes from December 14, 2020

**Motion** by J. Carroll to approve the minutes from December 14, 2020. Seconded by D. Souza. All in favor. Approved 3-0

### REVIEW FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

Brief discussion and update of current CDA accounts. Roughly \$15,800 available in Miscellaneous/Cash account with roughly \$6,000 in the Housing Rehab recapture fund that will be transferred in to the Cash account in April.

### UPDATES

#### CDBG FY19

- **PUBLIC HEARING:** Public hearing regarding the transfer and reallocation of FY19 Community Development Block Grant funds from the code enforcement program other projects: engineered demolition plan for 114 Main Street, demolition of 13 & 14 Parker Street, and new lighting on Bank, Pleasant, and North Streets.

FY19 CDBG funds had \$93,000 allocated for the inspection and code enforcement of multi-family homes. Due to the pandemic, inspections were on hold for several months. The completed inspections have not need the legal assistance for enforcement the funding was allocated to be used for. The use of these funds that has been anticipated to be used for legal assistance of code enforcement would not be spent in the timeframe of the grant funding. Landlords and owners of completed inspections have been cooperative thus far.

The discussion of the proposed reallocation of these funds began in September and explored numerous potential eligible projects. This public hearing is a requirement of DHCD for the transfer of funds from one project to a different project. The propose reallocation to be discussed at this public hearing are as follows:

1. \$23,000 for an engineered demolition plan to be produced by Tighe & Bond for the building at 114 Main Street, which is privately owned and has ordered to be demolished by the Select Board. Tighe & Bond has already completed a structural analysis of the building during the process of declaring the building unsafe. This demo plan is necessary for the demolition permit due to the height of the building and the other hazards in close proximity.
2. \$34,000 for the demolition of 13 & 15 Parker Street. 15 Parker Street is owned by the Town through a tax taking. 13 Parker Street is an unsafe structure that has been deemed uninhabitable.
3. \$36,000 lighting improvements to Bank St, Pleasant St, and North Street upon recommendations from the Downtown Improvement Committee. Some of these funds may be used for contingency for the demolition on Parker Street.

#### Discussion:

Anna Marques, Building Inspector gave an update of the buildings on Parker Street. 15 Parker Street is a former garage and is owned by the Town of Ware. 13 Parker Street is a former home in dilapidated condition. It was included in the PARP study of 2013 as a property in poor condition. The property has been in Land Court since 2011 and is expected to be owned by the Town in the next several months as the land court lawyer is moving forward with the taking process. At the next Select Board meeting she will be requesting the Board to hold a public hearing to order the building demolished. Stuart Beckley, Town Manager, stated that the timeline for a tax taking is predicted to be three months.

At one time there was discussion to combine cleanup efforts of 114 Main Street to include 92-104 Main Street. Although the two owners have been put in contact with one another, but this effort has not concluded with any forward progress. The advice of Town Counsel is to proceed with 13 Parker Street in the same manner of 114 Main Street – the Building Inspector to request the Select Board to order it demolished. The public hearing would be held on February 16 to allow time to notify the heirs of the property of the demolition.

A question was asked about the possible extension of time on FY19. DHCD has already extended the grant to March 31, 2021 due to the pandemic. It may be tight to get the

demolition completed in this time. T. Harvey thought it would be feasible for DHCD to grant a 90 day extension, which would give the Town more leeway to bring down the buildings.

Question about the engineered demolition report by Tighe & Bond. Is the report ready to go? Tighe & Bond have worked on the building already in collaboration with the Building Inspector and are ready to start the engineered demolition plan as soon as they have the go ahead. This report would only take a few weeks to complete.

There was discussion of reallocating all of the funds into 114 Main Street. The \$93,000 is not enough to cover the entire demolition, estimated at \$400,000. It is also strongly recommended by Town Counsel that the owner, not the Town, pay for the demolition. However, there has been no indication that if the funds were reallocated to the demolition of 114 Main Street that the building would be taken down in timeframe required to expend the funds by DHCD. At this time, there is no clear indication from Town Counsel that this is guaranteed to happen. It is still an ongoing conversation.

The Town is meeting with Graybar, a lighting company, to discuss the specifics of the lighting project. Currently, additional lighting would be installed on North, Pleasant, and Bank Streets. If there are funds available, decorative pedestrian scale lighting would be installed at Veteran's Park as well. This may be determined after the details of the demolition are finalized.

There were no comments from the public.

**Motion** by J. Carroll to approve the \$90,000+/- for the three projects which include the engineered demolition study for 114 Main Street, the Parker Street demolition, and new lighting along Bank, Pleasant and North Streets and for the rest to be used as contingency funds. And to close the public hearing. Seconded by D. Sousa. All in favor. Approved 3-0

## **FY20**

This grant of \$800,000 will fund the reconstruction of Bank Street and Social Services. Bank Street design should be all set and ready for a summer/fall start date. Contracts are in process.

## **FY20-CV**

Majority of funding the Domestic Violence call line this project is on track to be activated soon and job posting are available for the positions. The Adult Literacy Project, Senior Outreach Program are both going well.

## **FY21**

Application date has been pushed off a quarter at least, putting the application deadline to June. This would primarily be the façade improvement program with Social Services and Housing Rehab. The survey is out and 13 of 59 businesses have responded. Next steps will be to reach out to property owners within the S&B area and reach out to QV CDC to spread the

word. By the February meeting, the CDA should make a decision on what to do with the façade improvement program for the FY21 application. Should there be design standards, renderings, verbiage used to direct the improvement program.

D. Sousa updated the CDA on behalf of the Buy Ware Now committee. There were 125 homes sold in Ware in 2020. This number was up from last year and the median price of homes has gone up as well. There was a point in summer 2020 there were zero single family homes on the market. Commercial space need is decreasing everywhere during the pandemic. It is predicted by the real estate agents that there will be a shift from office space into apartment style buildings due to the flexibility of protective safety measures for worker health.

There are four First Time Homebuyer Grants available.

**Motion** by D. Sousa to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by J. Carroll. All in favor. Approved 3-0

Next meeting is scheduled for February 8, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

Minutes from January 14, 2021  
Respectfully submitted by,

Rebekah L. Cornell  
Director

<i>Minutes Approved on:</i> _____	
P. Opalinski	_____
J. Carroll	_____
S. Souza	_____
B. Brusso	_____
J. Baird	_____