



TOWN OF WARE

Planning & Community Development

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Meeting Minutes from

Monday November 16, 2020

Select Board Room, Town Hall

CDA Members Present: Paul Opalinski, James Baird, John Carroll, and Danielle Souza

CDA Members Absent: Brandi Brsso

Guests: Ted Harvey (PVPC), Nick Peavey (PVPC), Sheila Cuddy, Judith Roberts, Melissa Fales, Monica Moran, Paula Kularski, Anthia Elliot

Staff Present: Rebekah Cornell; Director of Planning & Community Development; Jack Carolan; PCD Assistant

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 October 19, 2020

Motion by D. Souza to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by J. Baird. All in favor. Approved 4-0

PUBLIC HEARING

- Review of FY19 CDBG Program

T. Harvey stated that the grant program has been extended to March 2021. This public hearing is a performance hearing on the progress of the FY19 grant. All awardees of Social Services funding were invited.

Judith Roberts

J. Roberts thanked the Town for the financial assistance with this program and provided an update on The Literacy Project. All courses are being held online, which has been made possible

by a private donations of computers to help students. Testing centers have begun to reopen after being closed due to the pandemic. She read a letter from one of the students thanking them for the program. There is currently no childcare being provided because there is no in-person learning. They are still able to assist with college readiness and career pathways programs.

Anthia Elliot & Paula Kularski

A. Elliot introduced herself as the new Director of Domestic Violence Services for the PATCH Program at BHN. P. Kularski is the Domestic Violence Supervisor. They work with Ware, Warren, and Hardwick. They advocate for residents. The program is mobile meaning they go to the client when conditions allow them. This has been challenging during the pandemic, especially for the clients. The program has served over 100 community members since January 2020. Housing is a big concern for many clients, PATCH is able to assist them with rental and mortgage assistance through the state.

Monica Moran

M. Moran provided an update on the Domestic Violence Advocacy program and thanked the Committee for their support. They subcontract with BHN for domestic violence response and advocacy. They are continuing to work with the police department and coordinate with Police Chief Crevier on trainings.

M. Moran also provided an update on the new project consisting of 25 towns with Ware as the lead. The project is focused on providing a helpline for those who are at risk of committing abuse and domestic violence. Covid-19 has made the need for this service more urgent and the hope is for it to launch in early February 2021. There is also a regional team leadership program starting in December through Zoom for teens.

P. Opalinski asked what the percentage of domestic violence victims follow up with the Domestic Violence Task Force. M. Moran guessed about 20% have follow up contact with an advocate. J. Baird asked how common it is for the victim to decline help. M. Moran said that is the most common outcome. A. Elliot also stated that Ware Police have taken 102 domestic violence calls so far in 2020. M. Moran also stated that repeat calls are going down with increased help through advocacy.

Sheila Cuddy & Melissa Fales

S. Cuddy and M. Fales provided an update on the Senior Outreach Program which has been extended from Hardwick to include Ware and Warren. As a result of Covid-19 there has been an increased demand in errand services for essentials such as groceries and prescriptions. Chore Providers are part of the paid staff and provide services for seniors. There has been a marked increase in the demand for services during Covid-19 compared to pre-pandemic levels. There

are plans to expand the program to Belchertown. The program is being promoted through the Senior Center, postcards, and Turley Publications advertising.

D. Souza noted that Buy Ware Now is hosting a virtual 5k from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on November 21. They are fundraising for the Jubilee Cupboard.

P. Opalinski requested to close the Public Hearing for a few minutes in order to address another item on the agenda.

S. Cuddy provided an update on the microenterprise program. P. Opalinski asked how the word is getting out. S. Cuddy noted that there are currently 5 active applications in Ware. The funds are limited to businesses of 5 or fewer employees and business owners need to be moderate-low income.

P. Opalinski requested to reopen the Public Hearing

T. Harvey provided an update on the Housing Rehab Program. There are currently 11 units with town owner agreements. The Code Enforcement Program was determined that the original commitments will not be met by the end of March 2021 due to Covid-19 and other factors. He discussed reprogramming the funds in ways DHCD is keen on promoting.

R. Cornell provided an update on what the Parking Committee has been working on including new parking signage and lighting to improve downtown. She also provided an update on the potential demolition of 13 & 15 Parker Street in order to increase public parking. She stated that a previous quote for the demolition cost came in \$35,000. A rough estimate for the cost of lighting and concrete replacement along Bank Street would be about \$20,000. The code enforcement funds to be reallocated are roughly \$90K.

R. Cornell mentioned that an engineering study is required for the demolition of 114 Main Street. She also discussed how she would like to see improved lighting to make the connection between Parker Street and the Veterans Park parking lot more pedestrian friendly, assuming 13 & 15 Parker Street are demolished. P. Opalinski mentioned how developing a new parking lot is very expensive and was curious where the funds would come from for such a project. This same cost challenge has been brought up regarding the Pleasant Street municipal lot. He also mentioned possibly getting an updated quote from Western Mass Environmental for the demolition of 13 & 15 Parker St. T. Harvey said that this would have to go out to bid depending on the estimate.

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:05 pm.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

R. Cornell and N. Peavey are working on the Façade Improvement Program for FY21. There is currently a survey out for interested parties. P. Opalinski would like to see shutters and awnings added to the survey as well as a place for contact information and a specific end date to the survey. There was a discussion on what parts of downtown would be included in the Façade Improvement Program. Main St, W. Main St, E. Main St, and Pulaski St were discussed.

D. Souza announced that 101 homes have been sold so far this year which includes both single and two-family homes. Last year 107 homes were sold. These numbers don't include new construction.

There was a discussion regarding various properties in town that could be used as some sort of community resource center or potentially a YMCA type facility. The St. Mary's Church School was discussed given it is currently for sale. D. Souza brought up how there had previously been discussions about using the schools as a resource for programs such as Planned Parenthood and WICK. She also said she has worked closely with Cedarbrook Village and there is potential there for collaboration on downtown resources.

R. Cornell provided an update regarding the fencing around the Millyard. The portion that needed to be replaced due to a car going through it has been completed.

Motion by J. Baird to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. Seconded by D. Souza. All in favor. Approved 4-0

Next meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

Minutes from November 16, 2020
Respectfully submitted by,

Jack Carolan
Department Assistant

<i>Minutes Approved on:</i> _____	
Opalinski	_____
Carroll	_____
Souza	_____
Brusso	_____
Baird	_____