



# TOWN OF WARE

Planning & Community Development

126 Main Street, Ware, Massachusetts 01082

t. 413.967.9648 ext. 186 f. 413.967.9642

pcd@townofware.com

## Minutes from October 27, 2016

### Community Development Authority

Meeting held at Town Hall, 126 Main Street, Ware, MA

**Authority members present:** Dave Gravel, Chairman, Paul Opalinski, Brenda Cooper

**Authority members absent:** Bill Adams, Tracy Opalinski

**Staff present:** Judi Mosso, Assistant to the Director

**Public:** Stuart Beckley

D. Gravel called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. and made introductions of the CDA, P&CD staff and PVPC staff.

#### 1. Administrative

- a. Minutes of September 13, 2016 – **Motion** by P. Opalinski to accept the minutes as presented. Seconded by B. Cooper. So voted 4/0/0.
- b. Financial statement – There was discussion about the accounts. **Motion** by P. Opalinski to accept the financial statement as presented. Seconded by B. Cooper. So voted 4/0/0.

#### 2. New Business

##### a. Strategic Demolition Grant

S. Beckley reported that the grant is being offered by the Attorney General's office:

- "reuse grant" is \$125,000 for each western MA county and pays 50% of the demolition cost
- discussion about 73 West Main St house that was destroyed by fire in May 2015 (privately owned)
- if the property is town-owned, we do not have to pay the grant back if it was redeveloped; if privately-owned, owner pays back grant within 5 years

- demo cost for above address is \$70,000; grant would pay \$35,000
- discussion about what to do w property; owner has been unresponsive
- town can take property by eminent domain at town meeting next month
- town could lien the property but lien goes away after 2 years
- CDA agreed that building a house is most advantageous

b. Do you know DropBox? tutorial – tabled.

### 3. Updates

- a. Slum & Blight report – members were asked to review report and send all comments and revisions to J. Mosso by 10/31. S&B is language used by HUD and the state and does not necessarily mean that the entire area is in poor condition. S&B area in 2001 was much smaller than what is proposed now.

S&B designation benefits include:

- no need to income qualify within the area
- puts the town in advantageous position for future funding thereby helping with downtown revitalization
- does not need town meeting approval

There was discussion about burned out buildings on Main Street and how other town address it. Owners are not obligated to use the insurance money to demolish. There was discussion about South Street School: Behavioral Health Network is still interested in the property.

CDA was left w the following questions and will seek input from PVPC at next month's meeting:

- How did PVPC determine that 51% of the infrastructure is fair/poor?
  - For S&B is infrastructure only road/sidewalks or sub-surface as well (pipes, drains, sewer)?
  - What are pros & cons of having a S&B designation [D. Gravel and J. Mosso offered that advantages outweigh stigma, and that it's state language]
  - What other towns have or had a S&B designation?
  - Is PVPC recommending using the S&B designation for FY2017?
  - Is it true that we do not need to obtain individual income information within a S&B designated area?
- b. FY2015 High Street modifications – We have received 4/5 homeowner permission; work is expected to begin next week and take about 2 days to complete. *[Ed. note: we have since received the final homeowner permission].*

- i. HR Program – discussed most recent report and updates. J. Mosso explained the nuances of the program and the many factors involved.
- c. DHCD changes to FFY2017 CDBG program – DHCD’s final changes came out late this afternoon. Notable changes include:
  - Allowed to apply for multiple activities
  - Consolidated CDF I, II, and Economic Development grants
  - Omitted regional bonus points
  - Community Wide Needs Scores (CWNS) will not be used this year
  - Reduced administration from 20% to 15%; S. Beckley believes this will be further reduced in coming years to 10%. It is very possible that the CDA will need to determine if it is feasible to continue supporting CD on a local level
  - No Target Area requirement for FY2017
  - Funding limits for FY17 include:
    - Ware - \$464,948
    - Hardwick - \$468,112
    - Warren - \$909,878

Considerations and notes for FY17 application:

- housing rehab
- social services
- regional grant remains an option
- improvements to Bank or Spring (designed using FY16)
- Cottage Street design

CDA and PVPC will discuss in detail at next meeting.

Our CDS is current but needs to be updated next year for FY2018. Our 1992 ADA plan is in place but we do not have a copy; S. Beckley will follow up w John Lasek, ADA Chairman.

- d. Hitchcock building EDF – owner has been unresponsive; application deadline is November 8. For the *One Stop* housing application portion, the consultant was referred to the owner. EDF grant only pays for housing piece, not business improvements. The 21E phase (environmental study) and contractor selection appear to be a deterrent to the owner. The block grant portion of the application is in progress. We may ask for an extension. Cost estimate for renovating the building is \$1.5 Million.

- e. Director search – 6 candidates have passed the telephone interview; meeting salary requirements is a challenge for a municipality.
- 4. Other
  - a. November meeting date: decided on **Thursday, November 17, 2016**
- 5. Adjourn - **Motion** by B. Cooper to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. Seconded by P. Opalinski.

*Respectfully submitted by  
Judi Mosso, Assistant to the Director*

**Documents reviewed:**

Minutes of September 13, 2016  
October Financial Report

**Documents received:**

none