



# 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 15, 2015 Community Development Authority

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

**Authority members absent:**

**Staff present:** Karen Cullen

**Public:** Mary Harder (P&CD Advisory Committee), Chris Rice (Building Inspector)

D. Gravel called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

### 1. Administrative

- a. *Minutes of September 17* - **Motion** by P. Opalinski to accept the minutes as presented. Seconded by T. Opalinski. So voted 5/0/0.
- b. *Financial Report* - No formal report available tonight; CDBG info to be presented later in meeting.

### 2. New Business

- a. *Building Inspector introduction* - Chris Rice gave a concise rundown of his experience; quite varied and includes builder, part time police officer, home inspector, operating a para-transit service, among other jobs. CDA members gave brief introductions of themselves as well.
- b. *Property Pride* - Mary Harder and Chris Rice were here to discuss the implementation of the education and enforcement part of the recommendations from the PARP report. The goal of the program is to address the blighting conditions caused by abandoned houses, un-maintained or poorly maintained houses, and "junkyard" properties. Mary told the CDA that she met with town staff in the Building and Health departments and asked questions aimed at figuring out how best to utilize the money available (up to \$25,000). Her conclusion was that additional staff is not warranted, but

providing educational materials for distribution to new residents, chronic violators, and landlords as well as sponsoring seminars aimed at management and upkeep of rental properties (for owners) would be helpful. In addition, providing funds to the Building Department for the cost of boarding up condemned properties and funds to the Health Department for hiring local attorneys to handle housing court cases related to code violations and to set up a revolving fund for “clean and lien” properties were determined to be initiatives that would be helpful to assist the departments with the work they are tasked with. Discussion points:

- i.* The brochure should include pertinent information from both the Building and Health departments (Mary gave us a mock-up she had done with suggestions for the type of info to include).
  - ii.* The brochure should be mailed to landlords, certain residents, and given out to new residents in the target area.
  - iii.* Seminars could expand in the future into a series with related topics.
  - iv.* Landlords often get caught between a rock and a hard place when tenants complain to the Town about code violations; without rental income for 6 months it makes it more difficult to afford the cost of the repairs to eliminate the code violations.
  - v.* In comparison to some other programs around the region (in cities), this is a more positive approach to the problems we are trying to address.
  - vi.* This program will be developed by and run by the Building and Health departments; some concern about whether it will happen given the workloads of staff, but winter is a slower time of year and a good time to get this initiative going.
  - vii.* Other groups can be called on to help out; e.g. Boy Scouts could cut the grass at overgrown properties.
  - viii.* Karen will work with PVPC to submit the grant amendment to access the PI money needed to support this program. P. Opalinski made a **motion** to expend up to \$20,000 of Program Income funds for the Property Pride program as discussed tonight, and to direct PVPC and K. Cullen to submit said amendment to DHCD. Second by T. Opalinski. So voted 5/0/0.
- c.* Brief discussion about the Community Development Strategy in relation to transportation; no changes are being made this year but we will do so next year.
- d.* FY 16 CDBG application, discussion of alternatives. Given the high cost of the Prospect Street construction, K. Cullen reviewed the alternatives for using CDBG funds for the next grant round. This is a “construction” year in the current cycle we are in with CDBG funding (one year with full funding for infrastructure in the Northside neighborhood, the following year housing rehab). According to DHCD, Ware is eligible for a maximum of \$923,255 between a single community application and a regional application. After

discussion, it was the consensus of the CDA to move forward with two applications – a single community application for the construction of Prospect Street and a regional application for a few housing units and social services.

e. HR Priority Requests:

- i. Property on Church Street, out of the Target Area. Needs: insulated garage door and new central heating system. Building Inspector rated need as moderate. After much discussion about the current situation, heating alternatives, fuel types, etc., P. Opalinski made a **motion** to expend up to \$30,000 from the grant funds to, after full evaluation of the current heating situation, install an appropriate heating system and replace the garage door with an insulated one, and add insulation in walls as needed. Second by D. Gravel. So voted 4/0/1 (B. Cooper abstained).
- ii. Property on Monson Turnpike Road, out of the Target Area. Needs: roof replacement, ventilation, insulation, flashing, potentially sheathing. Building Inspector rated need as moderate. Chris Rice gave a summary of his opinion on this house; roof leak was from an ice dam and just putting new shingles on the roof will not solve the underlying problem – there is no ventilation in the roof now, and it is possible the insulation is inadequate too. After discussion, P. Opalinski made a **motion** to expend up to \$20,000 from the grant funds to support the work needed, including roofing (shingles), ventilation, insulation, sheathing, and potentially other related items depending on needs. B. Cooper seconded. So voted 5/0/0.

3. Updates

- a. *FY13 CDBG* – Karen provided the CDA with handouts from PVPC summarizing the status of the FY13 program. Bottom line is there is still about \$65,000 to spend in HR; \$35,000 of that is for one problematic project and the remaining \$30,000 will be spent on (the above) priority projects and/or other clients currently in the system. All funds must be spent by the end of January.
- b. *FY14 CDBG* – Again we reviewed a handout from PVPC. Bottom line is the High Street project is 95% complete and we will exceed the 80% timely expenditure threshold. We expect to have around \$12,000 in unexpended funds from this project which will need to be re-programmed (probably to HR). We will need to file for an extension of this grant since the Domestic Violence project will only be about halfway through their funding, and to allow time to spend the reprogrammed money.
- c. *FY15 CDBG – Ware River Valley* – Karen mentioned that the PARP project in Hardwick and Warren is progressing well.
- d. *Program Income Funds*

i. *Monroe St. Brownfield* – The environmental engineering firm submitted their report, which Karen will be discussing with them. Karen said she is not submitting a warrant article for additional funds to complete the evaluation work since the report is unclear on what work remains and she has run out of time to discuss with appropriate parties to figure it out.

e. *Other Initiatives*

i. *Main Street TIP* – Discussion about lighting; would like the final TIP design to include at minimum the footings for the future light poles (including electrical conduits). Discussion on the future parking lot for Milltown Properties and how it will affect the Main Street design. Karen told the CDA that they had requested Milltown to submit their parking lot design to the engineers so its entrance could be incorporated into the design.

4. Other (any discussion and action may be postponed until next meeting)

5. Adjourn – **Motion** to adjourn by P. Opalinski at 8:29 p.m. Seconded by B. Adams.

*Prepared by Karen Cullen  
Director Planning & Community Development Department*