

Troy HUD Consolidated Plan

Meeting: 7 PM, March 21, 2005 at W.K. Doyle Middle School

Subject of Meeting: Public Meeting #1

Attendees: Roger H. Murman and Mike Brown (Fraser and Associates); Viestarts Zubkovs (City of Troy), Jeff Buell (City of Troy); Bob Armet (City Council); Steve Couse (Troy Record); Jim Carras (Troy Record); Residents: Janet Roberto, Marcie and Mr. Haskell, Marcee Pascarella, Chris Davey

Questions raised as a result of RHM's program introduction/outline

Why wasn't the City Council or the public invited to the focus groups? The focus groups represent a broad range of input from individuals/organizations involved in the particular focus topic. They represent a focused starting point for discussing needs, constraints, opportunities and possible strategies and comments on the particular topic.

Are the outcomes/recommendations of the focus group meetings dominated by the participants of the focus groups? No, the recommendations include the planning dept/consultants evaluations of the statements of the participants in the focus groups.

What is the process, the time schedule, is it presented to the City Council, who makes the final determinations on the plan? The process then presents this information to the public through these public meetings for discussion and comment. The process then presents the draft plan to the City Council for a 30 day comment period and a public hearing. The plan is the adopted by the City Council prior to submission to HUD. The due date for submission to HUD is May 15, 2005.

How do the recommendations for the focus topics relate to the experiences and needs of the neighborhoods?

- a. Neighborhood Livability issues:
- b. Weed and Seed" grant in No. Central neighborhood has had problems that need to be better controlled for the benefit of the neighborhood
 - i. Poor management
 - ii. No. Central center at Douw and 6th Ave (former Lenco's store) pays \$1,000 rent, poor exterior appearance even after previous extensive bldg rehab, sits empty most of the time. Need more police walking the beat.
 - iii. Community policing –worked better before, needs improvement. Need more direct police involvement, not sitting in the new substations.
- c. Civil enforcement – (point system) – takes a long time to add up points before problem building is closed. **How can the process work better?**
- d. Targeted code enforcement – each neighborhood needs their own dedicated code enforcement office and community police officer
- e. Funding is not recommended for **absentee-owner** buildings (part of cost of doing business), grants proposed only for owner-occupied low-mod income buildings)
- f. Support special projects that increase pride in the neighborhood.
- g. How will trash, garbage, litter, other adverse neighbor or tenant impact problems be better addressed?
- h. Agency run youth/day care programs – need better accountability. Grant funding should not go to funding Exec. Directors, should go to the individuals actually providing/implementing the services. Agencies should provide complete financial statements regarding their organization at the time of grant application and details on how the program will be funded! For a program to be funded, their needs to be significant financial benefit to Troy low-mod income residents, above what otherwise would be provided. (City is currently asking currently funded agencies to provide these details.) (Assume everyone participating has to pay something. Evaluate programs on the same terms for better evaluation.)
- i. Investigate requirements of S Troy Boys & Girls Club property sale.

- j. Economic Opportunities Issues:
- k. Well funded existing projects – do not need additional funding.
- l. What is “land banking”? City acquiring property for development and/or resale
- m. Businesses downtown do not provide many job opportunities and/or pay low wages.
- n. Downtown as a 24 hour environment??
- o. Not-for-profits such as schools, hospitals are the largest employers, but do not contribute to the tax base. The concentration of other not-for-profit agencies in Troy compounds the problem, taking up significant, valuable for-profit space.
- p. Housing Issues:
- q. What is “de-densification”?
- r. It is a significant fact that Troy is now 58.3% low-mod income.
- s. Discussion of Section 8 and public housing.
 - i. Section 8 assistance is necessary, but discussion of when does it work and not work to the benefit of the residents and the neighborhood?
 - ii. Public housing discussion – brief discussion of policing, federal housing requirements of requirement to be employed unless exempt,
 - iii. Discussion of project based Section 8 and high rents and the high density of Section 8 housing in Troy
 - iv. Discussion of Section 8 and special housing rents and the high density of facilities in Troy
 - v. Brief discussion of ADDI and Section 8 – needs more analysis work
- t. Improve vacant building/in-rem tax foreclosure sale of properties process and outcomes.
- u. Train Fire Dept., as well as Code Enforcement, personnel in code enforcement. There will be an increased need to use Fire Dept. for inspection services, especially if HUD funding is cut.
- v. Homelessness and Poverty Services Issues:
- w. Is the City accepting what special interest providers indicate is the correct approach to solving the problems? Brief discussion of special provider interests
- x. What is “HMIS”?

2. Presentation of Priorities :

RHM discussed listed priorities identified by participants in each focus group; discussed that priorities are HUD-fundable recommendations.

Priorities caused many to comment on points and questions already addressed.

Troy HUD Consolidated Plan

Meeting: 7 PM, March 23, 2005 at AME Zion Church, 189 5th Avenue, Troy

Subject of Meeting: Public Meeting #2

Attendees:

Roger Murman and Mike Brown, Fraser and Associates

V. Zubkovs, City of Troy

Thila Bell, So. Lansingburgh Association

Tina Urzan, No. Central Association

Bob Armet, City Council

Ralph and Marcie Haskell, Trojans for Troy

Marcia Pascarella

Kai Henderson

Marion Field

Jack and Claudia Mahoney

Gerri FitzGerald

Michele De Lar

Anna Cappabance

David Saebrig, City of Troy

Charlena Kees

Winnie Dukes

Rev. Linda Thornhill, Pastor, AME Zion Church

Roger discussed program overview, how, why, where, when, etc.; discussed goals, outreach, preliminary priorities directly reading from hand-out provided to all attendees.

V discussed CAPER and that it refers to prior year.

Roger spoke of President Bush's proposed plans for HUD and that funding cuts could result should Congress approve his plan to move CDBG funding to Dept. of Commerce; discussed Mayor's outreach initiatives, neighborhood meetings, and focus group make-up.

3 attendees asked what "land-banking" means. Roger responded- means assembling parcels of land to make larger tracts available for redevelopment.

Roger discussed that plan was only preliminary at this stage; that these neighborhood meetings will assist the development of the final plan to be adopted by the City.

Bob Armet thanked Roger for the hand-outs, noting they were not available at the first meeting.

Kai Henderson asked how brownfield and Hoosick St. plans fit into the Con plan. V discussed that Hoosick St. had no CDBG component at this time; brownfield projects are funded from different sources; discussed other sources that are separate from CDBG but that do assist Troy; V responded that economic development funding is a component of the CDBG funds; primary focus is to use Economic Development funding in Downtown.

Kai Henderson asked about using CDBG funds for business development.

Marcie Haskell asked why other city employees and department heads were not at the meeting; is not happy that citizens were not involved in focus groups; asked for explanation about Fraser's compensation to assist with the plan's development; firmly stands for residents to be beneficiaries of bulk of majority of HUD funds.

Janet Roberto questioned City's public participation plan; discussed the plan and that minutes must be taken as per the plan's guidelines; discussed that funds should be exclusive to the needs of residents in particular those with housing needs and neighborhood cleanup needs; remarks were supported by Marcia Pascarella.

Marion Field discussed that in addition to CDBG funds, other funding sources are available; supports the city's desire to hire a Grant writer; discussions were random in the sense that a Grant writer is something that should be paid for with CDBG funds and should be a major Con Plan priority.

V discussed that HOME funding would remain available and that would be significant in securing funds for homeowners and neighborhood groups.

Roger went over the HUD funding and associated funding amounts; discussed HUD mandates related to low to moderate income households.

Discussion about code enforcement and the need for better city practices in code enforcement; Bob Armet discussed his support for zero tolerance in code enforcement; discussed the benefits of the Troy Fire Department participating in code enforcement assistance.

V discussed absentee landlord matters.

Marcia Pascarella discussed the deplorable conditions in her No. Central neighborhood, the worst they have been in the 50+ years she has resided there; discussed Community Police not helpful, city Code Enforcement as very helpful; discussed neighborhood groups for housing and community enhancement programs as not caring and that monies provided to these organizations were abused; this was supported by Janet Roberto and Marcie Haskell (Trojans for Troy).

Marcie Haskell discussed unhappiness with the city in terms of addressing residential needs; stated that her neighborhood needed to be helped; referred to her neighborhood as a district.

A question was raised regarding how City can address sidewalk conditions and the resident can be helped by the city. Rev. Thornhill spoke of her experience w/city sidewalk program and how city helped some religious owners but not hers (AME Zion Church); never got a call back from City Engineering Department about her request for sidewalk repairs.

V spoke of how focus groups addressed the sidewalk program problem.

Rev. Thornhill discussed income eligibility issues and that they are defined well enough regarding LMI; programs should be available to those just above the 51% threshold.

V spoke of how funds are dispensed to LMI residents and that historically they have been reserved for LMI applicants.

Discussion returned to that in support for hiring a full-time grant writer to address all of the city's grants needs; programs available in the past should be resurrected.

A question arose about lighting on city streets and why some lights have not worked in years; can funds be used to repair these lights? Bob Armet stated that NIMO has been lax in addressing the light problems.

Rev. Thornhill inquired about the repercussions should HUD cuts actually be made; how will a 30% reduction over 5 years affect the city? V and Roger discussed that priority programs will receive available HUD funds.

A question was raised on how administration fees will be taken from the proposed \$2.5 million made available; will funds be available for housing interior programs as well as exterior? Paint program was discussed and how it was crafted by the CEO to address elderly homeowner painting needs.

Rev. Thornhill discussed that grant programs and information need to be made more available to residents.

Bob Armet agreed that City's response and communication to inquiring residents need to be improved.

Jack Mahoney discussed Section 8 program; rents are set and sometimes too high for the tenant.

V discussed numbers of residential vacancies on tax rolls and that homeownership should be encouraged for city renters.

A resident discussed needs for grant programs to assist potential homeowners; current programs are misleading; V spoke of city training programs for first-time homeowners in the city.

Rev. Thornhill asked about definition of 24 hour city; V responded with answer: city goals should include making the city more alive and how improvements to the city's image could be beneficial to making it more resident friendly 24 hours a day; spoke of city's ordinance to close businesses after midnight (ie convenience stores).

A resident asked about parking and image improvement programs and if this will be addressed in city Con Plan. V discussed initiatives to improve both the city's image and parking programs.

Troy HUD Consolidated Plan**Meeting:** 7 PM, March 24, 2005 at PAC 3rd Street, South Troy**Subject of Meeting:** Public Meeting #3**Attendees:**

Roger Murman and Mike Brown, Fraser and Associates

V. Zubkovs, City of Troy

Marion Field

Jonathan Cassidy

Steve Potts

Claire Davis

Joe Connors

Marge DerGurahian, City Council President

Randy J. Mellentine

Carolyn Collier Skriptshak, City Council Member

Mark Wojcik, City Council Member

Lucy Lerner

Stephen Muller

Jude Goldin

Jim Lewis

Paul Mayomayatto

Roger discussed program overview, how, why, where, when, etc.; discussed goals, outreach, preliminary priorities directly reading from hand-out provided to all attendees; Roger spoke of President Bush's proposed plans for HUD and that funding cuts could result should Congress approve his plan to move CDBG funding to Dept. of Commerce; discussed Mayor's outreach initiatives, neighborhood meetings, focus group make-up.

Comments made about lack of parking and transit initiatives; V discussed that focus groups discussed this problem and that HUD Con Plan would address this and available parking/transit alternatives.

A question arose about NYSDHCR Main St. grant program and why only 3rd St. will be addressed; V explained that other areas are priority but that 3rd St. downtown is close to business district and has a number of historical properties.

A question arose regarding need for better press in Troy; how downtown businesses can work with city to create better press (ie RiverSpark Center to do more media coverage).

Jim Lewis discussed city Weed/Seed program; Community Policing is good but could be better; asked about in-rem properties; disappointed with city demolition of properties; better services are needed for homeless and is highly supportive of downtown homeless facilities; supportive of city housing programs (TRIP and TAP).

Claire Davis supports Jim Lewis' comments on city demolition practices; wants more controls implemented by the city to preserve historic buildings and neighborhoods; advocates the entire city becoming an historic district; discussed a 2nd Street address which was a historic building but was ruined with vinyl siding; discussed conversation with an expert who stated that Troy has most intact historic housing stock.

Carolyn Collier discussed that residents cannot live by strict historic guidelines; advocates historic properties being preserved but not in every area.

Marion Field discussed support for city permit initiative; residents will need to speak with city engineer to get permits to ensure appropriate renovation of historic properties.

Joe Connors asked if permit system will be a city-wide initiative; supports block-by-block preservation; V stated that historic preservation guidelines do exist in Troy.

Question arose as to how Con Plan funds will be dispensed; V stated percentages for public services and administration breakdowns; spoke of HUD's criticism for Troy about TRIP's housing program/use of HUD funds; that housing is a major HUD priority.

A resident stated that CEO is now certified, as is TRIP.

A resident discussed that de-densification is laudible; don't need to make Troy an entire historic district; city needs to enforce residential preservation initiatives.

Carolyn Collier Skriptshak discussed urgency for city to be cognizant of resident's rights in terms of renovating their houses.

A resident stated that City needs to better control/enforce property preservation in terms of landmarks/historic districts; Claire Davis discussed better controls for property preservation.

Discussion about city's role to better enforce and/or propose vinyl siding laws.

V stated that 5 year plan includes initiatives to preserve historic properties.

A resident discussed people's need to respect City Engineer's position and why code enforcement is crucial in Troy.

V discussed target areas of South Troy and North Central; Troy is 58.3% LMI and most are located in South Troy and North Central neighborhoods.

Claire Davis discussed how façade preservation programs have benefited city economic development.

Steve Potts raised question as to why LMI is what it is in Troy; Jonathan Cassidy responded with his perspective; opined Troy being a "vacuum" for the needy.

A resident discussed the City's Section 8 condition; that NYC subways advertise Troy as a good place for eligible Section 8 people/families to relocate.

Steve Potts discussed his belief that Troy is a "Gold Mine" of opportunity; disappointed in the city's dependency on HUD due to high LMI percentages; waterfront is key to growth but that neighborhoods along waterfront deter visitors (boaters) from going ashore to shop in Troy.

Lucy Larner discussed status of earlier economic development plan to establish waterfront commission; original commission appointed in 1993 but was disbanded. Why? V discussed that plan is in existence but that the Mayor has not or re-instated the commission.

Jim Lewis stated that things are happening in Troy but city government lacks organization to continue this (ie economic development commission); V responded that plan is still alive and can be viewed at planning office.

A question arose regarding Section 8 housing goals; balancing decent housing for homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless should be a priority; Jim Lewis supports facilities downtown for homeless as being a good societal value; V discussed that the city has become a place where homeless from surrounding communities migrate to because of the numerous shelters in downtown Troy.

A question arose about city accountability issues; residents support better code enforcement; why is auction buying of homes for sale by the city difficult?

Claire Davis supports empty nesters initiative; cultural attractions are key to keeping empty nesters from leaving Troy.

Jim Lewis discussed RiverSpark as being underfunded and should get more funding to help promote the city better.

Paul Mayomayatto asked what the city is doing to better promote small business start-ups and retention in downtown Troy; V discussed on-going initiatives including city's assistance programs to help and keep small businesses in downtown.

Discussion about the need for the City to be sure that target areas are addressed; problems cannot be pushed to other areas once a neighborhood is rehabed.

Claire Davis discussed better code enforcement needs and better Section 8 housing controls.