

**CDBG ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 21, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Buford George, Chair
Anita Dawkins
Twyla Williams
Rufus Davis
Vanessa Harris
Patsy Greenwood
Victor Laurie
Edna McLoyd
Kristopher Doss

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Maurice Head, CDBG Administrator
Todd McDonald, AICP, Director Planning & Development
Janice Palmer, Secretary
Barbara Alford, Wiregrass Foundation

Chairperson George called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. Minutes.

Approve February 18, 2016 meeting minutes. *Motion to approve by Ms. Williams, seconded by Ms. Greenwood, passed unanimously.*

2. Overview of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice by Mosaic Community Planning, Consultant for the City of Dothan

Ms. Melissa Mailoux and Mr. Jeremy Gray are consultants working on the city of Dothan's Fair Housing Study. The study is required by HUD every five years and identifies any barriers to housing choices. Ms. Mailoux gave an overview of The Basics of the Fair Housing Act covering who is protected, the forms of discrimination prohibited and how to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing. The barrier to housing can be an action (direct) or a decision (indirect) that restricts choice. She interviewed about 18 people who work with protected classes or work in the housing market. The next step will be to assemble the quantitative information with other data sources, such as Census, Home Mortgage Disclosure information, State of Alabama EEOC office and etc. After the barriers are identified, the consultants will present a range of recommendations the City can implement or investigate over the next five years.

Regarding housing issues in the city, Ms. Mailoux asked the board what organizations work with Fair Housing in Dothan (i.e. education, investigating complaints, testing). Mr. Head responded that locally Dothan is deficient in this area, but Montgomery has agencies. It was pointed out by Ms. Dawkins that property management companies should give out the Fair Housing Rights booklet to tenants as part of the lease agreement and disclosure. During the recent storm, people were dislocated from their homes and did not know how to get help from their landlords or to receive refunds for hotel stays, etc. Mr. McDonald said that the City does receive complaints through an online system. Mr. Laurie stated the CDBG monies primarily are distributed to Districts 1 and 2 where there is low to moderate incomes, and most of the complaints are generated from these areas. Ms. Harris suggested that the Chamber of Commerce would be a good organization to get this Fair Housing information out to businesses as well. In addition, the CDBG office held a Fair Housing Forum on this matter a few years ago with approximately 70 people in attendance. Another recommendation by Mr. McDonald was to have utility companies conduct energy efficiency audits in the older homes/neighborhoods to keep the cost of energy bills at a minimum. Mr. Davis discussed the need for transitional temporary housing in the community for the homeless and disabled. Ms. Mailoux also stated that her study will include Dothan's zoning

ordinance and how it relates positively or negatively to the Fair Housing Act (i.e. housing costs, accessibility).

Ms. Mailoux asked about protected classes and if they experience negative factors when looking for housing in Dothan. Ms. Dawkins said it has happened in Dothan, but it was an issue of steering applicants to a certain price range of housing. She stated that 95% of her loans to minority applicants are completed in Montgomery, AL or Columbus, GA, so this is a local issue with mortgage lending companies. Other members agreed that the national banks in the area do not provide the customer service for financing home purchases, compared to local banks. Ms. Dawkins said that the Homebuyer Workshops she is affiliated with help to educate first time buyers about the process of home buying, both before, during and after the purchase (home inspectors, appraisers, attorneys, mortgage lenders).

Ms. Mailoux wanted feedback concerning accessible housing to disabled persons. Mr. Doss stated that it is up to individuals to construct ramps, etc. as needed and incur the extra costs because most existing homes don't accommodate these requirements. The Board agreed that new apartment complexes are required to offer ADA accessible housing with parking, but older apartments do not offer access to these individuals, with the exception of parking.

Ms. Mailoux asked about segregation aspects of the city regarding race and economics. Mr. Laurie said definitely economics impacts where minority citizens live. Ms. Dawkins said it is influenced by the monthly payment people are willing to pay, and where they can find these homes that drive their decisions. She continued by stating the downtown, eastside, and south side are rental areas, versus the north and west areas which are predominantly homeowners. Mr. McDonald said inside the circle (Ross Clark Circle) the homes are older and smaller, but outside the circle offers cul-de-sac, landscaped subdivisions with connectivity being an important issue. Inside the circle there are no sidewalks or public transportation offered, which is not the case in larger cities. In 2008, the City commissioned a study for a fixed transportation transit route, but the ADA rules prevented it from being cost efficient due to mandating deviated routes.

Ms. Mailoux wanted feedback on parks, schools, roads, police and fire protection services being available to all neighborhoods. Mr. Laurie commented that the west side of town (newer developments) has these services, but inside the circle and the east side does not have the same offerings (less development). Mr. McDonald said that this is typical, as development follows the transportation corridors and the location of the utilities. The east side of town lacks the infrastructure here in Dothan, and there are land constraints (wetlands) which prohibit building.

Ms. Mailoux summarized by stating the board's feedback in all the discussion points was consistent with their interviews, and that she had a better sense of the substandard housing in the downtown area and neighboring communities.

3. Fair Housing Forum Discussion by the Community Development Advisory Board and Public in Attendance

Reference discussion notes in item 2, above.

4. Questions and Comments on the 2016 CDBG Applications

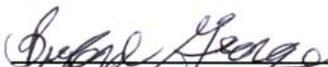
Mr. Head stated the reprogramming of funds from the Competitive Process Worksheet totals \$145,008.31. The total allocation is \$578,063.31. The interviews start at 6:00 pm on Monday, 4/25/16 and Tuesday, 4/26/16. The final deliberations will be made on Thursday, 4/28/16 beginning at 6:00 pm. Mr. Head concluded by saying he had received all financial audits from the applicants, with the exception of Aunt Katie's Garden. This organization is not applying for public service dollars, only building improvements.

5. Public Comments

Mr. McDonald stated that regarding the Brownfield application for grant, Dothan made the first round cut, and the application is now in Washington, DC. It should be released by June 2016. The first award is for property assessment.

6. Adjourn

The Chair called for a motion to adjourn. ***Mr. Davis made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Williams seconded and the meeting was adjourned.***



Buford George, Chairperson



Kimberly Vann, Administrative Assistant