PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee Meeting was held on August 12, 2013, at 12:02 p.m. with Chairman Dixon presiding. Members present were Mr. Caldwell and Mrs. Horsey. Mr. Perza and Mrs. Williams were absent.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mr. Caldwell moved for approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Mrs. Horsey and unanimously carried.

Amendment to the 2013 Community Development Action Plan

Mrs. Tracey Harvey, Planner I, reminded members that the 2013 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Action Plan was approved with an estimated allocation due to having not received the actual grant allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) until May 29, 2013. This was after the City's submission deadline of May 15th for the Action Plan. She stated that the estimated allocation anticipated a 5% reduction in funding from the prior year, based on the guidance provided by HUD. The CDBG program was not cut as anticipated; therefore, the actual allocation exceeded the estimate used to develop the Action Plan. She advised members that the difference between the estimated HUD allocation and anticipated program income used to develop the Action Plan ($223,563) and the actual allocation ($244,815) was $21,252. She explained that the additional funding should be allocated among the funded projects, which would result in an amendment to the Action Plan.

Staff recommended increasing the funding for Program Administration to 20% of the allocation and dividing the remainder of the funding among the FY 2013 projects, excluding those projects that were fully funded, as follows:

CDBG FY2013 Funded Projects	**Current Funding Level**	**Recommended Increase**	**Recommended Funding Level**
Program Administration	$44,713	$ 4,250	$48,963
NCALL Research	$ 6,034	$ 2,900	$ 8,934
MHDC Homeowner Rehab	$32,658	$ 7,051	$39,709
Elizabeth W. Murphey School	$32,658	$ 7,051	$39,709
Total		**$21,252**	

Mrs. Horsey moved to recommend approval of staff's recommendation, seconded by Mr. Caldwell and unanimously carried.

Semi-Annual Review - Statistics Regarding Jobs and Businesses Gained and Lost in the City of Dover Since July 2012

Mr. William Neaton, Economic Development Director, reviewed the semi-annual report of employment statistics for the 15 largest employers in the Dover area and reminded members that this information is updated and presented to members on a semi-annual basis. The report provided statistics regarding jobs and businesses gained and lost in the City of Dover since July 2012.

Mr. Neaton noted that Bayhealth Medical Center (Kent General and Milford) was the premier healthcare provider in central Delaware and the second largest healthcare system in Delaware. He stated that as a result of its continued growth, Bayhealth now had over 3,200 employees. In addition to hiring additional employees, he advised members that Kent General Hospital created a "fit out" plan for the shell space on the fourth floor of their new building to increase the number of available beds. Mr. Neaton indicated that gross patient revenue was expected to be close to $1B and net patient revenue was expected to be approximately $500M.

As mentioned previously, Mr. Neaton explained that the decrease in the number of permanent employees of the Hotel and Casino at Dover Downs was the result of competition from surrounding states that had recently approved legalized gambling.

Mr. Neaton advised members that the increase in employees at Kraft Foods was the result of their securing Kool-Aid operations in Dover.

Mr. Neaton stated that a few large, future employers would be coming to Dover, noting that Dick's Sporting Goods was expected to open in October/November 2013 at the Dover Mall, and the Green Turtle was currently renovating a building and would add approximately 60-70 new part-time and full-time jobs, once opened. He also informed members that the final authorization for the sale of Lot #12 at the Garrison Oak Technical Park (GOTP), for a manufacturing facility, was scheduled for consideration by City Council at their meeting being held later in the evening.

Mr. Caldwell noted that concerns were relayed during the last report regarding several large commercial buildings being vacant in the City of Dover. Responding, Mr. Neaton indicated that there had been no changes in regard to this issue. However, he stated that City Council had authorized an incentive for vacant buildings which would allow tax abatement over a ten (10) year period when a certain amount of money is put into a building for improvements. In addition, he stated that the City had the ability to abate 50% of permitting and impact fees. He stated that he meets with commercial realtors on a regular basis and assured members that they are working hard to fill these buildings.

In response to Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Neaton noted that there was an 80% fill rate in the buildings located in the downtown area. In regard to the approximately 300 jobs starting up within the City limits that was reported at the last review, Mr. Neaton stated that these were construction jobs for the Calpine Project and that the minutes of the meeting reflected a $3M to $4M project; however, he stated that the Calpine Project is actually a $300M project. He indicated that this project was currently undergoing active construction and that he recently took executives from the DuPont Company on a tour of the Dover SunPark and to the construction site.

Mr. Caldwell noted that it was previously reported that the ILC Company moved its facilities to Sussex County and questioned why. Responding, Mr. Neaton indicated that the primary reason was that relocation reduced the cost of the facility by one-half. He assured members that the move was not due to tax or utility rates, which he stated were very good in the City of Dover.

Responding to Mr. Dixon, Mr. Neaton explained that the City of Dover had active code enforcement for vacant properties. Elaborating, Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, confirmed that a City employee was dedicated to vacant building issues. She stated that his primary focus was monitoring the buildings, assuring payment of fees, and registration and management of properties (for example, monitoring grass cutting and building security).

With regard to concerns about the effect that an additional grocery store would have on Food Lion in the Gateway West Shopping Center, Mr. Neaton felt confident that there was enough business on the west side of Dover to accommodate two (2) grocery stores. He noted that Redner's is a new grocery store, located at the Greentree Shopping Center.

Mrs. Horsey moved for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Caldwell and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 12:29 p.m.

Wallace R. Dixon
Chairman

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