

A **PUBLIC HEARING** was held by the City Council and Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) in the City Hall Auditorium on Thursday, March 22, 2018, to solicit citizen input regarding the 2018 Community Development Block Grant Program. Present were Mayor Elinor Carbone and City Councilors Fred Simon, Anne Ruwet, Marie Soliani, and Frank Rubino. City Councilors Paul Cavagnero and Gregg Cogswell were absent. Mayoral Aide Tim Waldron and Small Cities Consultant Dr. Lisa Low were also present.

Mayor Carbone called the Public Hearing to order at 6:34 p.m. starting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Assistant City Clerk Jonathan Draper read the legal notice.

Presentation by Small Cities Consultant

Small Cities Consultant Dr. Lisa Low stated that the subject of the Public Hearing is the City of Torrington's application to the State Department of Housing for a Small Cities grant for \$400,000 to rehabilitate approximately twelve properties. She explained that the purpose of the Public Hearing is 1) to discuss the program income re-use plan, 2) to report on the status of any prior Small Cities grants that are still open, 3) to receive comments on the 2018 Small Cities application, and 4) to discuss questions of process, qualifications, and requirements, as applicable.

Dr. Low stated that any program income earned from the grant would be used for housing rehabilitation; the same purpose that it was originally applied for.

Dr. Low stated that the 2015 Small Cities grant is complete, having served approximately twelve households, and Torrington intends to apply for an additional \$400,000 in Small Cities funds this year to fund health and safety improvements for approximately twelve households.

Dr. Low described the grant application process stating that after an application is submitted in April the Town generally hears results in July and if awarded, the Town implements the application as written, generally with the assistance of a consultant hired for that purpose.

Councilor Ruwet asked if any of the eligible projects could be awarded to nonprofit agencies that do housing rehabilitation for people with disabilities.

Dr. Lowe explained that it would be difficult to qualify a nonprofit for any of the projects because the State Housing Rehabilitation Program is very rigid and intended specifically for property owners or tenants.

Mayor Carbone explained the value of the Program stating that it helps the City's underserved population access funds to do necessary upgrades and those funds support the community in other ways when the income is returned to the City.

Mayor Carbone asked if some of the funds could be used by homeowners to abate issues with asbestos and lead. Dr. Low confirmed that they could.

Councilor Ruwet asked how the availability of funds is marketed to the Torrington community. Mr. Waldron explained that the City has taken several measures to promote the availability of Small Cities funding throughout the community, including strong social media presence, press release dissemination to the media, newspaper and radio promotion, as well as targeted communication to specific community agencies and homeowners with blight violations.

Councilor Ruwet asked if unused funds get returned to the State. Mr. Waldron explained that the State likes to see that approximately 75 to 80 percent of the funds have been expended before the City applies for additional funding. Dr. Low added that the City must expend ten percent of the awarded funds in order to receive additional funding before the end of the first year and fifty percent in order to receive additional funding before the end of the second year.

Public Comment

There was no Public in attendance.

Meeting Closed

Mayor Carbone declared the public hearing closed at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jonathan R. Draper, Asst. Clerk

ATTEST:

Carol L. Anderson
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK