

** Draft **
Consolidated Plan Advisory Group
April 2, 2018
Randolph, Vermont

Present: Rob Leuchs, Jonathan Bond, Peter Gregory, Angus Chaney, Sarah Carpenter, Emily Higgins, Kenn Sassorossi, and Beth Ann Maier. By phone: (call in option not available). DHCD Staff: Arthur Hamlin, Josh Hanford, Ann Kroll.

Josh explained that HUD will not be able to calculate our exact amounts on time for the normal the May 15 due date. We are not allowed to submit the plan until we have the actual amounts. We may want to wait for any written comments, and then decide whether the Advisory Group wants to meet again.

Sarah Carpenter asked if DHCD knows how much Vermont's CDBG and HOME will increase. Josh and Ann said they estimated the State allocations would increase \$700,000 each. Kenn Sassorossi asked if HOME had increased enough to change the small state minimum. Josh saw estimates showing that Burlington and VHCB would both get a bump to HOME funds. The NHTF has a different source of funds. Ron Rupp was not present to give an update. Emily Higgins said homelessness funding is increasing via the Continuum of Care. She's expecting ESG funding to be about the same.

Josh said that considering the increased funding DHCD will increase its goals and commented that one project alone already met the goal for businesses and jobs. The department probably won't change the allocation percentages on page 30 which show the percent of CDBG funds the department estimates will be used toward the goals.

Josh reviewed the VCDP's proposed program changes. Increasing the maximum public facility grant to \$500,000 will allow bigger more impactful grants but likely fewer of them. Establishing a scattered site residential rehab set aside, with an amount to be determined, would mean having only one grantee statewide instead of reviewing five applications. It would be more streamlined and efficient. The Department received a letter of support from the homeownership centers alliance. It's not an immediate concern since the RLF's have already been funded but DHCD wants people to know it's being considered. Has discussed with HUD and HUD supports.

Josh has not been as involved in discussion of defining the use of unrestricted revenue that some homeownership centers receive from loan repayments, but the homeownership centers are interested in whether they can they serve households above 80% of median with those funds. The department is also proposing to reduce the number of board meetings to three instead of four. One meeting is usually cancelled for various reasons anyway. DHCD feels that would serve everyone better.

DHCD has not received written comments suggesting other changes. Josh asked if the advisory group feel that another meeting is necessary before the department submits the plan to HUD.

Angus Chaney commented that the way the funding and reporting works it's segregated by activity; i.e. economic development, housing units. We heard about the challenges facing small communities around walkability, food, etc. He would like to see prioritization of multi-goal projects like the Johnson grocery store and Pete's Greens, but the draft plan does not support. Josh agreed that the draft is written around a few big themes and doesn't speak directly to Angus's point. The group discussed whether it could be added to the narrative. Sarah Carpenter commented that it does come up in application process. Emily Higgins said we should incentivize those kinds of projects. Peter Gregory asked about how to quantify the benefit. The group agreed to adding something to the narrative and Ann Kroll said that DHCD could also put it in the program guide.

Jonathan Bond expressed concern about mobile home park applications getting lower priority because most parks are in "less desirable" locations. Josh assured Jonathan that shouldn't affect the priority of housing applications including mobile home parks.

Sarah Carpenter asked how projects with first floor commercial and upstairs apartments get credit for meeting two goals. Inevitably, the housing looks more expensive in these projects because it subsidizes the first floor. The group discussed examples of projects. Kenn Sassorossi cautioned against painting ourselves in a corner. We don't want to reject a solid economic development application just because it doesn't include another benefit. Peter Gregory suggested that the department could draft something for the plan for consideration by the group.

Beth Ann Maier commented that it's hard for people to make the connection between the Consolidated Plan and their own community. It can be upsetting to people if it appears like someone is getting tax break who they feel doesn't need the benefit, but the reality is often no one else is willing to do that project.

Josh said the department will forward any additional comments it receives to the group and asked if the group wanted to meet again. The consensus of the group agreed to the proposed changes and not to have another meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30.