



Albemarle County

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AGENDA DATE: 1/6/2016

TITLE:

Virginia Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Public hearing on availability of CDBG program funding and to receive input on community development and housing needs

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Foley, Walker, Letteri, Davis, and White

PRESENTER (S): Ron White

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Thomas C. Foley

BACKGROUND: The Virginia Community Development Block Grant (VCDBG) is a federally-funded grant program administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Since 1982, the DHCD has provided funding to eligible units of local government (non-entitlement communities only) for projects that address critical community needs including housing, infrastructure and economic development. Albemarle County has received numerous grants in previous years to support housing and community improvement initiatives. The VCDBG application process requires that two local public hearings be conducted. The purpose of the first public hearing is to provide information on eligible activities that may be funded by CDBG, the amount of funding estimated to be available, and past activities undertaken with CDBG funds, and to receive public comment on this information and potential community development and housing needs. The follow-up public hearing is held in order to consider proposed project applications and must take place prior to the application due date in March 2016. Applications are to be submitted by the County to the DHCD; however, the proposed activities may be undertaken by other agencies.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Operational Capacity: Ensure County Government's ability to provide high quality service that achieves community priorities.

DISCUSSION:

Albemarle County, as a non-entitlement community, is eligible to apply to the DHCD for up to \$2.2 million in CDBG funding for projects that benefit low- and moderate-income persons, prevent slums and blight, or address urgent community needs. Eligible activities include economic development, housing rehabilitation, housing production, community facilities and community service facilities. Community development projects can receive varying levels of funding, depending on the nature of the activity, or by combining multiple activities. The DHCD has not released estimates for 2016, but it expects the amount of available grant funding to be similar to 2015, which was approximately \$9.8 million for competitive grants and \$5,550,000 for open submission applications.

Over the years, Albemarle County has been successful in receiving a number of CDBG grant awards. The most recent grant was awarded in 2015 to install public sewer to twenty homes in the Oak Hill subdivision. In 2012 the County received a grant to rehabilitate twenty-four (24) homes in the Orchard Acres subdivision located in Crozet. This work was completed in September 2015 with 25 homes rehabilitated. Prior grants funded the installation of a sanitary sewer system and connection to 54 housing units in the Oak Hill Subdivision and the preservation and development of 134 affordable rental units, 38 of which are restricted to seniors at Crozet Meadows. Over the past 30 years, the County has received numerous CDBG grants to rehabilitate owner-occupied houses and to complete other community improvements.

The Office of Housing is currently working with the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program (AHIP) for a possible application for competitive CDBG funding for a housing rehabilitation project in southern Albemarle County. The Office is also working with Habitat for Humanity on a potential CDBG Planning Grant for the Southwood community.

For any project to be considered by the County for CDBG funding, the applicant must notify the County no later than January 20, 2016. This notice shall include a brief description of the project, the proposed use of CDBG funds, and a description of the beneficiaries of the proposed activity. A completed application that includes the proposed budget shall be submitted to the Office of Housing electronically by February 12, 2016, and the entire application, along with attachments, must be received by February 26, 2016.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no budgetary impact until an application is made to the DHCD and approved for a funded project. Projects approved for CDBG funding generally require some level of local funding support, which may include funding provided by the project sponsor.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board receive information on available CDBG funding and eligible uses, and hold the public hearing to receive input from the public on potential community development and housing needs. Staff also recommends that the Board set a public hearing on Wednesday, March 9, 2016 for the second required public hearing to review and approve the submission of any proposed applications.