

**MINUTES  
PUBLIC HEARING  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021  
6:00 P.M.**

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{Summary minutes of City Council meeting. Audio tapes of the meeting are on file and are included by reference as part of this meeting. An agenda of this meeting has been either mailed or made available to persons, organizations and local news media as per their request. The agenda gives the date, time and place of the meeting as well as the order of business. This disclosure is in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws of 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e).}

A public hearing was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. in the City Municipal building with the following present:

**COUNCIL:** Mayor Harold Thompson; Mayor Pro Tem Robert Garner; Councilmembers Tommy Anthony; Vicki Morgan; Ricky Todd Harris; Pamela Sloss and Greg Addison

**DEPARTMENTAL STAFF:** Gloria Rogers – Municipal Clerk/HR Director; Joe Nichols – Utility Director; Laura Hembree – Finance Director; Robbie McGee – Public Safety Director and Rebecca Lance – Accounting Supervisor

**NEWS MEDIA:** Chris Woodson – WBCU and Graham Williams – Union County News

**OTHERS:** David Lance and Jeff VanNorwick

**1. Call To Order**

Mayor Thompson called the meeting to order.

**2. Business**

**A. Hearing To Solicit Public Comments In Connection With The Needs Assessment For The City Of Union.**

Angela Kirkpatrick, Community Development Planner of CRPC addressed council via telephone regarding the Needs Assessment and the CDBG Program. She made everyone aware that the City of Union does have a Citizen Participation Plan that is on file in City Hall and is available for viewing by the public. The public is always notified in advance of public hearings through a notice of public hearing that is posted in City Hall and other places at least ten days prior to the hearing. The City always tries their best to keep the community informed through a series of public hearings. This Needs Assessment public meeting is one such meeting that the public is invited so that the City can solicit comments about their needs for their community. If they do make an application on behalf of the City of Union, then they will hold an application public hearing that will review the grant application before it is submitted and the public will be made aware of that hearing as well. If during a project, there are any substantial changes to the project after it has funded, another public hearing would be held to inform the public of those changes and finally at the end of any completion of a project that is funded through CDBG, a close out public hearing will be held to let the citizens know what has been done on the project. She also wants to make all the residents aware that the City of Union does support fair housing and each year the City passes a Proclamation designating April as Fair Housing Month in an effort to create public awareness of fair housing and to support fair housing and affordable housing for all persons. Next Angela gave an overview of the Community Development Block Grant Program. She states that CDBG is a federal program that is funded by HUD in the State that

is administered by the SC Department of Commerce Division of Grant Administration. It is designed to provide assistance to units of local government and provide economic opportunities and meeting community revitalization needs particularly for low and moderate income persons. Units of local government only are allowed to apply for these grants in the towns, cities or counties. The project must meet a national objective and address an eligible activity. There are three national objectives; one of which is to benefit low and moderate income person; the second is to aid in the prevention or limitation of slums or blight and the third is to meet other urgent community development needs. There are different programs within the CDBG Program. They are very competitive and offered twice a year. The minimum amount for the community development program is \$50,000 and the maximum grant amount depends on the type of project. Each project has a 10% local match requirement. The match can be met in a variety of ways. It must be an eligible activity and be one of the national objectives that were just mentioned. Within the community development program, there are several categories: one is community infrastructure, another is community enrichment, and another is neighborhood revitalization. There are special projects that are designed as ready to go as well as business development projects. In the community infrastructure program statewide, there is a little over 11 billion dollars available. The grant maximum for these is \$750,000 eligible activity for infrastructure program would include items such as water projects, sewer projects, road improvements or drainage activities. Application for this round of funding is due April 16, 2021. Under the community enrichment program, there are about 3 million dollars available in that program. The maximum grant amount is \$500,000 unless you are doing a Streetscape project which would include infrastructure and \$750,000 is the maximum grant available for that. Those applications for that type of projects are due in September. There are several eligible activities and those are normally awarded on different priority levels with Brownsville Project and demolition of obsolete buildings, being the number one priority; downtown Streetscape improvement, where there is a significant business activity or prior investment would come in number two. Also in community enrichment, there are activities such as indication and workforce development which would include improvement to libraries and other facilities to expand library services or computers to enhance skills, trainings and education. Also public owned facilities that offer educational opportunities for adult literacy or to serve LMI youth or children. Another priority is safety and healthy communities. Under this category it would be public safety facilities in LMI areas, such as a police substation or a fire substation that service LMI residents. The demolition of vacant or dilated residential structures which the City of Union currently has grant going on right now for the removal of some blighted homes. Another option would be the health clinic facilities or equipment in other served areas or public facility modification to ensure accessibility for disabled person. Another category would be under neighbor revitalization. The maximum grant amount for that is \$500,000 or \$750,000 if the project includes infrastructure activities. There is a planning phase required for this and then implementation phases would follow. Applications for that project area are due in September as well. Under the special project program, there is a maximum grant available for \$200,000. These funds would be used for alternative grant activities that meet community development needs of municipalities. It would include something like historic preservation; innovation; energy conservation; parks, trails or greenway. Those projects applications are also due in September. The ready to go public facility grant, the maximum for those are \$500,000. A waiver can be considered and requested for those if infrastructure is included in those projects that address urgent and compelling needs or a reasonable solution or if a system wide improvement is being offered as well. Activities under this category must be eligible under the community infrastructural or the community enrichment program and for this particular funding; CDGB funds can only be used for construction cost. Under the business development program, there is a grant maximum; these are normally associated with job creation and retention and the maximum for this is \$10,000 per job that is created or if it is an economic development program, the maximum grant amount is \$500,000. Eligible activities would be infrastructure to assist new or expanding businesses that

would result in the creation or retention of jobs and 51% of those jobs must be available to low to moderate income persons.

Next Angela asked if there were any questions from council before she reviewed the priority list of needs that the City did from 2019 which is the most recent list.

Mayor Thompson asked if any member of Council have any questions or comments.

Angela asked if council wanted to add any other projects to the Needs Assessment before she reviewed the list whether it qualifies for CDBG funding or not; however if it is an item that council would like to apply for CDBG funding, one of the criteria in the grant application is that it must be a top priority on the Needs Assessment List (1, 2, or 3) or it won't receive the maximum points available from the Department of Commerce. She reviewed the 2019 list as follows:

1. Infrastructure improvements and continued revitalization efforts in the Union Mill Village (to include Ravenscroft, Evans, W. Main Street, Monroe, Hillcrest Ave., Bailey St., South St., Westview Dr., and O'Shields Streets) and the Monarch area in cooperation with Union County.
2. Demolition of dilapidated houses in the City of Union.
3. Continue revitalization efforts in downtown Union to include additional streetscape, side street sidewalk improvements, building renovation and facades, farmer's market, and beautification projects.
4. Upgrade of sidewalk, water, sewer services, and drainage and street problems in the city.
5. Seek ways to conduct neighborhood improvements in the Carson and Cornwell Street neighborhoods.
6. Increase available housing options to include workforce housing and expand affordable housing options for low and moderate income, disabled and elderly citizens.
7. Continue activities to support economic development in order to create jobs for low and moderate income persons.
8. Roadway safety improvements
9. Improve and expand recreation, health care and cultural facilities (possible dog park).
10. Implement a gateway and beautification plan
11. Promote fair housing opportunities to all citizens.
12. Address concerns about potholes, street resurfacing, and sidewalks on streets not in the central business district.

Angela asked if council is there any items on the list that need to be removed that have been already done or any items that council want to add to the list. She states that in light of the Corona Virus, would it be okay to add something to the list that the City of Union would like to continue to make effort to prepare for and respond to the Corona Virus in the community, just in case there are any grant opportunities that may become available that the City would like to apply for. Council states unanimously that they did.

City Administrator Joe Nichols states that College Street, Spring Street (part of Union Mill project) need to be added. Also he states that City has been looking at putting picnic shelters at James F. Moorer Ball Park; also looking at Carson and Cornwell (sewers issues on those areas). Also the City needs to start looking at storm drainage grants. There are a lot of issues in a lot of the neighborhoods concerning storm drainage. Even on the Mill site, there are infrastructures with storm drainage.

Mayor Thompson asked Angela if there is anything that would consist of sidewalk improvements. Angela states that there are not any CDBG stand-alone grants for sidewalks that you can apply for unless it is connected to the Streetscape and the Downtown area.

Angela states that she will make the revisions to present to council.

Mayor Thompson asked if anyone from the general public have a question or comment in connection with the Needs Assessment.

Jeff VanNorwick, 117 Circle Drive made comments. He states that he had Councilmembers Addison and Anthony came out to his residence. Mr. VanNorwick states at one point the street was elevated; about 18 inches or 2 foot in and around his property and his car rubs every time he goes out of his driveway and his neighbor does not have parking for a two unit apartment building. He states that if that road was brought back down to the proper elevation, it would allow him not to bottom out anymore and he would allow his neighbor to put in some adequate parking. Mr. VanNorwick states that he wishes that would be put on the Needs List because at some point someone made a decision to raise that road and it has been cumbersome. The neighbors have to park in the street well beyond the property line limits which creates a bit of a safety hazard as well as fire hazards should any large trucks or emergency vehicle needs to come down the street.

City Administrator states that the area has to be LMI and it won't meet the grant criteria. The City would have to look at the area; it would be under "CTC" funds.

Mayor Thompson states that the meeting is adjourned.

**3. Adjournment**

Public hearing adjourned at 6:28 P.M.

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Gloria J. Rogers  
Certified Municipal Clerk/HR Director

Minutes approved \_\_\_\_\_ 2021