

**HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE  
MINUTES - February 5, 2010**

Members Present: Dan Picard, Anita Scott Jones

Others Present: Larry Mulligan, City Manager Gilleland, Community Revitalization  
Director D. Adkins, Clerk Parr

**Minutes Approved** Minutes from December 4, 2009 were approved.

**Chairman Selected** Dan Picard volunteered to chair this subcommittee.

**Monthly Housing Report**

Doug Adkins distributed several documents. The first report reviewed was the Revolving Loan Fund. The summary distributed showed month to date, year to date, number of applications received, approved and denied along with loans in default and the status of each. Mr. Adkins said these reports are also posted to the City's website under the Community Revitalization Department information page.

**CDBG VIP Fund** - Twenty-nine (29) families assisted

**People Working Cooperatively** - Ninety-one (91) families were assisted with year to date expenses of \$165,080.43.

**Downpayment/Closing Cost Assistance** – There were sixty-one (61) applications – forty were assisted; eight are pending and thirteen were denied.

**LifeSpan Home Buyer Classes** – Year to Date Attendance – 157

**NSP** – Mr. Adkins stated that most of the 2.1M dollars has been geared toward demolition. 2010 will focus on acquisition and rehabilitation.

**Demolition** – Demolition funds were discussed. To try and balance returns on sold properties, they can put that money back into funding for demolition. Any money that comes back for the NSP program can be used for any NSP program. There was thirty-three year-to-date demolished properties.

**Code Enforcement** – Mr. Adkins reported that computerization of code enforcement efforts is still underway.

Mr. Adkins said the purpose and effort behind establishing this Housing Subcommittee was two-fold: 1) to respond to questions regarding CDBG and 2) the long term mission of the program.

There was some discussion whether the need exists to continue meeting in subcommittee since council is having Public Housing Agency meetings. The subcommittee may want to continue to meet monthly, quarterly or semi-annually.

**Building Inspection** – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2009 – report was distributed and discussed.

**Code Enforcement**

Mr. Adkins and Information Systems are in the process of setting up software called *CitizenServe*. Residents will be able to enter requests, complaints, see updates, etc. online. This will be a great tool for the City because we will take laptops in the field where photos can be taken and downloaded immediately to all computerized databases. Citizens will be able to see updates, resolution, pending and active cases. The software will generate letters throughout the workflow. The software also has scheduling programs for more efficient code enforcement efforts.

### **Commercial Code Enforcement**

The City of Middletown has never had a complete commercial code enforcement program. They are trying to get one up and started. There is a fine line between beating up on businesses and being business friendly. The City does not want to put any businesses out of business. The City's efforts are better than they were, but still not where they should be. Being business friendly doesn't mean businesses should get away with code or zoning violations. We need to pay attention to commercial properties and are trying to build this system. With commercial violations, the tools are in place to site, access fines, etc and the ability to go out every day and cite for violations if necessary.

There was some discussion regarding how aggressive these commercial code enforcement efforts should be. The subcommittee could make recommendations on any unresolved violations.

### **Housing Incentives for Public Employees**

Mr. Adkins distributed information gathered about incentive programs offered in other municipalities. He said sixteen of Middletown's 84 firefighters are residents and thirty of 80 police officers live within the City. Many communities used to have requirements for residency and the Supreme Court has overruled that. He asked committee members to look at the information and they can have further discussion. There was discussion about taking this to the bargaining units during contract negotiations. Staff is exploring ideas that would bring youth and people back to the City. Discussion included a lottery of NSP homes that could be spread broader based and create some excitement in the program. Staff will continue to look at programs

### **NSP Update**

As reported earlier, Mr. Adkins explained there will be a shift from demo to acquisition and rehabilitation. The theory is to stabilize neighborhoods. He is working with Fannie Mae, HUD and the largest REO realtor to find homes for purchase and rehab. He explained the process that starts with a Cost Estimate Report, includes a Rehab Feasibility Analysis, and Appraisal. Homes acquired and rehabbed could be incentive homes. If the program does not get all its money back from the rehab, that's OK. HUD recommends you lose \$75,000 per home. When you take an empty house and possibly turn it into the last vacant house on the street; putting a taxpaying family in the house, HUD feels these are investments in the neighborhood and community. They will tell you if you are not losing money, you are not doing a good job. There was discussion about housing stock and looking at three or four bedroom \$100,000 homes for this project. HUD will carry a second mortgage to put better housing stock in the neighborhood. Middletown has done some of these, but not without some criticism. Maple Park is a good example with better quality homes and a nicer neighborhood within a neighborhood. The policies need to be well wrapped and understood.

**Adjournment** At 9:03 A.M. After establishing the next meeting date of Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m., the meeting adjourned.