

Coös County Commissioners
Special Meeting
Coös County Nursing Home - Berlin, NH
January 23, 2013

Present: Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Donna Lane, CDBG Consultant; David Carlen, Norwich Corporation; June Kelliher, Brookside Apartments On-Site Manager and members of the press.

Commissioner Brady welcomed everyone and opened the public hearing for the CDBG Application for the Liberty Gardens Limited Partnership and/or successor in Berlin. Donna Lane read the CDBG guidelines. Informational packets were provided. The following was read into the record.

Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities through the NH Community Development Finance Authority. Up to \$500,000 annually is available on a competitive basis for economic development, up to \$500,000 for public facility and housing projects, up to \$500,000 for emergency activities that directly benefit low and moderate income persons, and up to \$12,000 is available for feasibility study grants.

The purpose of this Community Development Block Grant funding request: A proposed application to the Community Development Finance Authority for up to \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds. Of the funds, \$475,000 will be sub-granted to Liberty Gardens Limited Partnership and/or successor for improvements, primarily energy improvements, to the Brookside Park Apartments. The 120 units of affordable housing are located at 155 Maynesboro Street in Berlin. The remaining \$25,000 will be retained for the County's administrative expenses. The total project cost is in excess of \$1.5 million.

This project conforms with Coös County's Housing and Community Development Plan's Goal of: Encourage a varied stock of safe, sanitary, decent, attractive and affordable housing for persons of all ages and income groups, with a focus on the elderly and physically and emotionally challenged population. (Short-term and Long-term goal)

Commissioner Brady asked for public comments.

David Carlen, Norwich Corporation, presented an informational packet (*copy is on file*) to the members of the Board. Mr. Carlen stated that the proposal calls for investing at least \$1.9 million in renovations by seeking tax credits. He explained that the complex was built in the late 1970's and needs a major upgrade to be able to continue providing affordable housing.

Commissioner Brady closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Brady opened the public hearing to discuss the updated Housing and Community Development Plan. Donna explained that there were no changes to the Housing and Community Development Plan which was updated in 2010. The plan needs to be re-adopted every three years. Commissioner Brady asked for public comment. There were no comments. Commissioner Brady closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Brady opened the public hearing to review the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Donna explained the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. If any temporary displacement or relocation of persons shall be required during this project, a unit on the premises will be made available until the original unit can be moved back into, or a

local motel room will be provided and paid for by Brookside. The project will follow the anti-displacement and relocation plan if any permanent displacement occurs. Commissioner Brady asked for public comment and there was none. Commissioner Brady closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Brady called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

1. Community Development Block Grant:

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson, and unanimously approved to re-adopt the Coös County Housing and Community Development Plan.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson, and unanimously approved to re-adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan for the County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson, and unanimously approved to approve the submittal of the application **and** vote to authorize the Chairman to sign and submit the application, and upon approval of the CDBG application, authorize the Chairman to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract.

Commissioner Brady signed all necessary documents. Donna Lane, David Carlen and June Kelliher left the meeting.

2. County House Appraisal:

Jennifer reported to the Board that the property appraisal from Trumbull & Associates was received. The house was appraised at \$187,000 on 3.59 acres. Commissioner Grenier stated that price in today's market and at its present location will be hard to sell. Mr. Trumbull's report states that "the property's proximity to the county complex appears distant enough that its marketability and/or value would not be negatively affected." Jennifer disagreed with the statement as the recycling center which serves as a work center for inmates is located near the property. Commissioner Grenier asked if the Delegation had received the information. Jennifer stated that the appraisal will be discussed at the next Delegation meeting. Commissioner Grenier also noted that the lot is not subdivided, the water is from the county's water system and the septic system would need an easement as it is located across the road.

3. Granite Reliable PILOT agreement:

Jennifer reported that the Granite Reliable PILOT agreement states that the payment in lieu of tax in the amount of \$495,000 is due by January 1. This year, Brookfield Power's payment in lieu of tax was in the amount of \$249,175. According to the agreement, Brookfield has until February 1 to pay the balance. After that date, Attorney Jonathan Frizzell will prepare a letter informing them of the breach and of the tax lien process. Commissioner Grenier stated that Brookfield is in violation of the PILOT agreement and wants to force the abatement process. Brookfield Power has no intention of honoring the PILOT agreement. It's part of a universal effort by all of the utilities in the State to bring municipalities and counties to their knees with regards to taxable properties in various communities.

Commissioner Brady stated that the County has a good case. The agreement was reviewed by legal representatives and the Department of Revenue. Commissioner Samson stated that he read the agreement and agreed that the County does have a good case.

Commissioner Grenier stated that he hopes this becomes part of one large class-action suite so that the communities do not get bled one at a time; some communities do not have the funds to take on utility companies and pay legal fees.

Commissioner Brady suggested that the legal fees line item in the Dixville and Millsfield budgets be adjusted.

Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun, asked if Brookfield Power replied to Attorney Frizzell's letter. Jennifer replied that Brookfield's response was that they interpret the contract differently than Coös County. They believe they are fulfilling their contract.

4. Other Business:

Commissioner Grenier reported that Senator Jeff Woodburn met with the Berlin City Council and informed them that he agreed to co-sponsor legislation to establish one licensed casino in New Hampshire with the agreement that some of the revenue generated would be dedicated to economic development in the North Country. Senator Woodburn estimated the North Country could receive between \$2 million to \$3 million annually if the bill passes and the casino is built. Commissioner Grenier added that the "north country" still needs to be defined.

Commissioner Grenier stated that the Board should support Senator Woodburn on this bill. Commissioner Brady stated that he has never been a supporter of gambling but the County could profit from these funds. It will be a plus for the North Country.

5. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to enter into nonpublic session per RSA 91-A :2I(b) - (*Strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining.*) at 10:23 a.m. All approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to come out of nonpublic session at 11:30 a.m. All approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. All approved 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Samson, Clerk