

HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

August 21, 2023

A meeting of the Human Affairs Committee was held Monday, August 21, 2023, at 7:22 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman Thomas Lopez, Chairman, presided.

Members of the Committee present: Alderman Thomas Lopez, Chairman  
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly, Vice-Chair (via Zoom)  
Alderman Patricia Klee, Clerk  
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons

Members of the Committee absent: Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.

Also in Attendance: Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager  
Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer  
Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager  
Jennifer McCormack, Library Director  
Mark Wholey, Deputy Fire Chief  
Matt Sullivan, Community Development Division Manager

Chairman Lopez

All right great. So we'll begin by anyone wishing to make public comment on issues that are relevant to our agenda. Seeing no members of the public. Our first item on our agenda is a discussion, including environmental health and code enforcement, if you'd like to come up and have a seat.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

First there is a Public Hearing

Chairman Lopez

This is a public hearing?

Alderman Klee

Yes, she's got it on the agenda is a public hearing.

Chairman Lopez

Is this a second public hearing? Is it different?

Alderman Klee

Yes, this is for the annual action.

Chairman Lopez

Yep, thank you for the correction. So for the public's knowledge, we just had a Special Board of Aldermen with a public hearing on the library plaza and there's another public hearing. So I skipped over it because I thought it was a duplicate. That was my mistake and I'm glad you called attention so they want to skip a public hearing.

So the first order of our business is a public hearing on FY2024 annual Action Plan Development for the City of Nashua's Community Development Block Grant CDBG and Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME).

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PUBLIC HEARING

**FY 2024 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT FOR THE CITY OF NASHUA'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) AND HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM (HOME)**

Chairman Lopez

So any members of the public wishing to make testimony in favor, please approach the mic. Actually, Mr. Long would you like to make an initial presentation? Because I'm out of order, I kind of ruined my tradition typically but when we do the public we typically have a presentation just to kind of provide context and then we get testimony.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. This is in regards to the proposed substantial amendment to the FY2024 action plan for the CDBG and HOME programs. This amendment is really just to bring forward prior year projects that we were always intending to continue into the current program area. Those projects are the Pine Street Pedestrian Crossing Project from last year, the Ash Street Futsal Court Lighting Project from FY2022, and the Los Amigos Playground Renovations Project from FY2022.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Any clarifying questions from the Board? Okay.

Manager Long just a quick question. I remembered the Futsal Court Lighting and the Your Choice, Your Voice. I did not remember the outcome of the pedestrian crossing. That was approved as part of our HUD Plan for last year?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes Sir. That was approved as part of the plan for last year and all three project we are hoping to see completion this fall.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. And there isn't any additional funds being requested, we're just amending the plan?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

No, Sir. These are all prior year funds that we're just bringing forward.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Thank you for the clarifying.

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR - None

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION - None

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR - None

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION - None

The public hearing was declared closed at 7:26 p.m.

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Regular Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

Chairman Lopez

So we can move to discussion and invite Environmental Health and Code Enforcement up to participate in discussion. You're welcome to sit up here but I just wanted to ask fire if you're here for that discussion as well.

Mark Wholey, Deputy Fire Chief

No, we're just here for the one resolution for 139 which is a grant.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. So if you guys want to pick a seat, get comfortable.

Alderman Klee

Heidi if you could pronounce your name properly, I apologize. I knew you originally as Heidi Peek and then you go and get married and change your name.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

It's a long story. Heidi Peek-Ku-kul-ka.

Chairman Lopez

So some background. The Human Affairs Committee has absorbed what was historically the Substandard Living Conditions Committee. That Committee was started years ago when a number of media exposes on local housing support programs, motels, and that kind of stuff were kind of exposed for having a number of challenges for the people that were living there. The City's response was pretty effective. I think we created legislation that gave Code Enforcement a little bit more ability to intervene when we have actors that aren't necessarily as motivated to fix things, or manage their facilities as we would like without necessarily becoming obtrusive or interfering with anything. The Committee did good work. It persisted for a couple more years and became a vehicle for the public to talk about different experiences that they were having and for us to educate the public as to what the city departments do respectively to maintain the quality of living here in Nashua.

So last month at our Human Affairs Committee, we had 603 Legal and New Hampshire Legal Assistance talking about tenant rights. So this month I invited Heidi and Nelson to come and present on what their departments do to help maintain housing quality and then what kind of resources are available - kind of the right doors to go through for people who have concerns. So I'm not sure if you'd like to start maybe Nelson.

DISCUSSION

- Discussion with Environmental Health and Code Enforcement

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager for the City of Nashua. Basically, our Department right now consists of myself as the Manager and what I call two and a half Code Officers. We still have open position we're trying to fill. Basically our responsibility is to enforce any of the Nashua Housing Code within the Nashua Housing Code that we have. I say within Nashua Housing Code because other communities have their own type of ordinances and some of them that don't have Code Enforcement Departments follow the State standard of housing code. Nashua follows the Nashua NROs.

Basically the way we function is though we attempt to be proactive when we can, especially now with how shorthanded that we are, the majority of our department is reactive with complaints. Since COVID, our numbers and the types of complaints we've gotten a little different. We seem to get a lot of more neighbor complaints about each other than we have been getting tenant complaints though it looks like they're starting to go up now. That time of season. A resident who's a tenant in the City of Nashua they have an ordinance that they need to follow before they file a complaint with Code Enforcement. They call us and we explain that to them. This is an ordinance that was passed years ago by Alderman Clemons when he was here was any tenant that's going to file a complaint in Nashua must first give the landlord written notice, and 14 days' notice, and allow them 14 days to address their issue. We tell them too it's supposed to be a registered certified letter. Most of the time, we just tell them to just write the letter, give the landlord the original, they keep a copy, and give us a copy. We then put that complaint into our system and we keep it there until we hear from the tenant on that 14th or 15th day. The tenant will either respond, let us know that Nelson we called and we gave the landlord the notice. They haven't done anything. Once that 14 day is met, then we have every authority to reach out to the owner and say okay what's going on? We have a copy of the letter. This is one that you got it, allegedly got it. At that point, we will then either schedule an inspection or just see what the plan that the landlord has to address that issue.

The one thing we do is that when we do get a complaint even though it's still within the 14 days, usually the next day depending on what time we get it, we reach out to the owner anyway. It's what we call a "courtesy call". We let them know that just so you know a complaint has been made. Did you get a copy of the letter? Some landlords say yes. Some say no. If they don't, then we'll fax it or email it to them so they can have it because a lot of landlords do want to address the problem because they don't want the stigma of Code Enforcement over them. So we'll give them a heads up.

They got it and some of them will address it.

The 14 day comes, either it's all taken care of or they need an extension of a sort depending on what it is that needs to be done. We then reach out to the tenant or the tenant reaches out to us and we say this is what's going on so far, has there been any changes, have there not, and then we go from there. It all depends on what the violation is. The only complaints that are exempted from the written notice is an emergency complaint - ceiling collapses, no hot water, no water, something that's life needs to be addressed through there. Then the tenant is just required to give the landlord reasonable time to respond. A very reasonable time is if the landlord is in Boston working or somewhere else, reasonable time okay well two hours to get to work from there to here, or to reach their property manager, or get a tradesman to address whatever that particular issue is. So other than that, that is how a tenant complaint starts off in Code Enforcement.

Then once we do the inspection, we schedule a re-inspection for when everything is done. The landlord has to call us and say I'm done with the list or whatever the emergency is and then we go out and we re-inspect. If they pass, they pass. If they don't, we say well no you need to take care of this. If you run into a landlord that is hesitant or causes issues, that's when we get have to get in to well you have these many days now to take care of it or we will issue a citation. We haven't had to issue too many of them though we have issued them but we have been on a yearly basis if we issue 15 a year, that's probably a lot and I'm probably using a high number because most of the landlords do take care of them but we do issue them if they have to. So that's the general gist of a how they file a complaint which is basically, I think, what we're looking at more today than neighbor complaints and other complaints.

Chairman Lopez

So just to clarify, that's the process if somebody were going to make a complaint against like a large tenant or landlord type of thing. What about like just is there a 14-day waiting period for any tenant?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

There's a 14-day requirement for every tenant.

Chairman Lopez

Okay.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

And tenants also are not the one of the only few people who are not allowed to remain anonymous when they make a complaint.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ortega just to clarify for the public when we say tenant complaint that means the tenant actually still has to be living there. If the tenant moved out and complained about what the living condition was there you cannot go in and do anything is that correct?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Correct.

Alderman Klee

So they actually physically have to be living there. I asked this knowing the answer because I've had people called me and said I just moved out, it was horrible, I want to put a complaint into the City, and I'm like you needed to do it before you moved out. So I just want the public to know that that they have to be in residence because the City cannot go in if there's no tenant there, correct?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Correct.

Alderman Klee

Or the tenant complaining is not living there?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Correct.

Alderman Klee

Thank you.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Just a real comment.

Alderman Klee

Sure.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

We do have people that will call us and say well I'm moving. They'll go through this whole explanation and say we'll I'm moving out on Saturday. We still tell them if you make the complaint while you're a resident, while you're still a tenant, and the complaint is made, we now still can follow through with that but the complaint has been made while they're still there. Even if they move out in two days once a complaint is there, then the complaint stays.

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you. That is good to know because that that might change some people's minds. I know some of the residents that I've spoken to feel that there would be retribution from certain - and I want to make it very, very publicly clear here that I think the majority of landlords are very good people, and very caring, and so on. There's just a few that are a few troublesome so we're not we're not trying to pick on that. If I may?

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you. We're talking here tenants and I heard you mention something about that you had an increase in residents so neighbor to neighbor. That kind of call would be someone saying that the next-door neighbor is not keeping their property, there could be critters, or so on, and so on. Do you do that for Code Enforcement as well?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Yes. We have jurisdiction over the exterior of any residence. Residence not commercial properties or anything but any residence.

Alderman Klee

Clarification?

Chairman Lopez

Yes.

Alderman Klee

So that would mean if someone were keeping trash, or I refer to it as a residential landfill, or what about things such as overgrown grass? The truth is that we have a lot of people have overgrown grass because they're doing pollinators and some neighbors don't understand that. So you're not going to be coming down on someone who just doesn't cut their lawn for pollination, or whatever reason.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

No. Actually the way the ordinance actually reads when it comes to overgrowth of vegetation is uncontrolled growth of vegetation. So if we go by a property or someone calls and the grass is four feet tall, and you can't even see the front door, then we're gonna approach the home and say you know what's going on is there an issue? If we go to a place and it looks like it's overgrown here, and this size, if it looks controlled, or like you're saying someone pollinating, or something, once they explain it to us we would let that be.

Alderman Klee

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

With regards to the 14-day notice, I just wanted a clarification. You said it like as an example if someone was moving out in two or three days, then they could make a complaint while they're still a tenant. But you also said they can't make a complaint to your office until after their landlord had been given 14 days' notice. How is that even navigated?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Yeah no they are required to give the landlord a written notice allowing them 14 days to address the issue. If they give them a notice on a Monday and they leave on a Friday, the complaint has already been made and the landlord has already been placed on notice. So even if a tenant calls us and says we moved out, then we still have an open complaint there.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. So it's not if a member of the public says my landlord did this, that, the other thing, I gave them written notice that I was making a complaint to you're not going to just ignore it for 14 days and that doesn't mean that, you know, a landlord has 14 days to evict a tenant who would want to complain. It means the tenant complains, advises ideally the tenant works with the landlord first, the tenant informs the landlord that they're going to make a complaint and that they're making the complaint. They make the complaint but they still have to give the landlord 14 days before there's really any immediate issue.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Yes. They always have to give the landlord 14 days whether a written complaint but if a landlord decides - the only evictions we can't get involved in are non-payment of rent, willful destruction of a property. Other than that, the landlord if they decide to increase their rent, there was a time in my career here that I thought that landlords couldn't even increase your rent for six months but went back and reread that particular ordinance and they actually can still increase your rent. So for a long time even I was under the impression that the landlord couldn't do that but they can. But yeah the 14 days are given. Whatever happens between the landlord and the tenant if they work it out, a lot of times they'll call and complain to us. We'll document it and they'll say but I don't want you to reach out to him yet, or don't contact him yet because I want to see if I can work it out with him, or they're afraid of retaliation. When they say that they're afraid of retaliation, that's when we tell them well just so you know for anything other than these issues if the landlord attempts to evict you, you have to call us and let us know and tell us what does that eviction notice say because that'll let us know we can investigate it as retaliation because the complaint was made or not.

Chairman Lopez

So your office takes a lot of information calls too where people aren't sure whether they should complain or not.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Oh yeah. We log those in as questions and information and questions and that goes in with the address and who the caller is but we log it in that way. So at least we know that there's a record that this tenant did call in at some point.

Chairman Lopez

I'm going to call Alderwoman Timmons but before we leave can you make sure you describe what the qualifications are because if you're trying to hire somebody, maybe someone hearing this will be like oh I can do that. Alderwoman Timmons did you have a question?

Alderwoman Timmons

Yes, thank you Alderman Lopez. I do have a question - several actually but you clarified some of them so thank you. One is you said you was down a position?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

I'm sorry?

Alderwoman Timmons

You said you were down one position, right?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Right. At the moment, we have one position.

Alderwoman Timmons

How long have you been down for that?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

It is now going on 17 months or something like that.

Alderwoman Timmons

May I?

Chairman Lopez

Alderwoman Timmons.

Alderwoman Timmons

So is it fair to say that that one position is not hindering you from doing your work since you don't really have that many complaints?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Oh no. The lack of that one position does hinder us because we can deal with a lot more complaints at one time. Right now, we'll get - each Code Officer - one Code Officer right now probably has 100 cases. Another one has 50. I myself have 51 open cases right now that I'm working on on top of everything else that I do because we're short that one person. The other Code Officer might have had one has 61 cases. So it just varies but having that one position still vacant it does hurt us.

Alderwoman Timmons

May I? Okay that one position. So I'm looking at an HR piece. Is it because you're not getting enough applicants and why is that position you're just not getting enough applicants?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Yeah I think in this whole time period, I think I've gotten eight applicants or nine. Out of the ones that work would have been qualified, they couldn't take it because they were already either retired from within the system and they can't work over a certain number of hours for the municipality. I think out of the eight or nine, there probably were four that were qualified and three that I spoke to and they couldn't take it.

Alderwoman Timmons

May I? I have one other question. In the event that you cannot get a viable candidate for that position is it possible that you could put in for a part-time position until you are able to full a full-time position?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Well the way we're working is that the code officer who left the position is still helping us 15 hours a week until we fill a position. This is a position that's half paid by the City and half paid through the Lead Grant Program. So at some point in time, I would need to meet with Julian to see where we stand with that because those are federal funds that also have to be applied for. So there's a lot in that little...

Chairman Lopez

Alderwoman Timmons.

Alderwoman Timmons

Okay, thank you. This is about the retaliation piece. If a person makes a complaint and he's been retaliated against in his mind, okay, you said it depends on why the landlord wants to stay put in for eviction notice because he want him out for whatever reason. Do you have an amount of days or, you know, say next month your rent go up or you get an eviction notice?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

I guess I didn't - can you repeat the question? I guess I must have missed something.

Alderwoman Timmons

Okay. That's okay. When a tenant believing they're being retaliated against is it a matter of weeks, months, or do you have to have a specific letter saying why that particular landlord is evicting that person. You have to see if it's because he didn't pay his rent then of course but if it's something other than that, would you believe that's retaliation?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Anyone who files a complaint with Code Enforcement is kind of - they can't be retaliated against for six months from the date of their complaint but if in that six-month period if they're getting evicted for nonpayment of rent or willful destruction of property, we can't do anything about that. But if they're getting complaint for like no reason, they have to call and say, you know, Nelson or whoever the Code Officer is will tell them give us a copy of the eviction notice and if it sounds like a just because other than, you know, not renewing their lease because that's a civil contract between them, then we will look at it and say okay we will call the owner and say your evicting these people why because you know that there is an ordinance that says you cannot retaliate against the tenant in any way. Just like there is an ordinance that says a tenant cannot retaliate against the landlord either. So it protects them both. So yeah but it's they're covered for six months from the date of their first complaint to us if they're getting evicted. So the retaliation is really evicted because we can't do anything about the owner increasing the rent.

Alderwoman Timmons

Okay. All set. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

So I just I see Alderman Klee but I just want to point out and maybe offer a chance for Mr. Nelson to explain or for Nelson to explain. This Code Enforcement Department doesn't just - it's not just a hammer. There's a lot of tools and resources



particularly working with Urban Programs that might have to offer. So where you're describing that when a landlord/tenant relationship is sort of breached because the tenant hasn't gotten any resolution within the dynamic that was agreed upon and so they go to the third party which is the City. City Code Enforcement comes in, does their thing, and sure the landlord can raise the price. I mean the tenant can get evicted, he can file to have his eviction looked at, you can do any number of things to continue to perpetuate that negative dynamic but before all of that happens, there is the opportunity to kind of for Code Enforcement to get them working cooperatively. If the root of the problem is just maybe the landlord didn't understand the nature of a problem or didn't have the resources, the Code Enforcement isn't just coming and sticking a frowny face on something and it's sending them a bill. You're giving them resources in education to try to mend that relationship.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Oh, absolutely. Citing a landlord, or tenant, or going through the last resort of court is something that is usually the last resort. There's a lot of conversation with tenants or landlords. We consider ourselves mediators also because we will go to the home and we'll actually meet with both of them. We'll have the tenant literally show us and the landlord exactly what you're talking about so there's no misunderstanding of what it is that's being said. If it's something that the landlord maybe can't afford to do or is too costly, then we'll try and connect that landlord with Urban Programs to see if there's anything that a property owner can do to work in getting those units up to par whether it's the Lead Program or some other funding that they may have. We'll refer the tenants, for example, if they've just reached the point where they can't work with that landlord, then we say we'll refer them to either Legal Aid or we'll refer them to another source that might be able to help them more. But with tenants, it normally gets into the legalese of things and that's when we have to let them know that unfortunately we can't give them the legal advice they're looking for so we refer them to Legal Aid. Sometimes we may have a phone number of an attorney that we know deals with tenants and landlords and we'll refer them to those resources. But yeah, I think we do – there is a lot of back and forth before we get to a point of going after a landlord by citing him or taking them to court yeah.

Chairman Lopez

So in the greater context of the City's you know current struggles with larger than average populations of unsheltered people and an absolute unavailability of available rental stock, everybody takes it seriously and tries to prevent that eviction whether it's the person who is doing code enforcement and trying to make sure that the place is safe and you know fair to live in, whether it's a landlord who's trying to make sure that they have a stable tenant that they know, versus rolling the dice on trying to get a new one in there, or it's the tenant themselves who are not particularly motivated to starting a fight that's going to end up with them searching for housing that may not be there.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Oh, absolutely. We'll have a tenant, or a neighbor, or someone will call us and say hey this apartment needs to be condemned. Most of the time it doesn't because we go in there and we'll look at it. The first thing that we in today's world is we're just not going to shut a unit down and say - if we shut the unit down in today's day, it's unsafe and then we refer them - that our first phone call is to Bob Mack and let him know yeah this person is coming your way. We'll provide them the information and then welfare now knows that this person is probably going to come to them if they don't have another place to stay. So yes, we take we having a landlord put anybody out or evict them that is usually now one of the things we look at right away.

Chairman Lopez

And just as a clarifying point, you're talking about rental properties where there's a tenant there. An individual with their home and their neighbor as you pointed out might be making complaints and everything is extremely unlikely to have their own home like condemned or that type of thing.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

We're talking specifically about tenants. Single-family homes if they're rented single-family homes, we have the same rules apply. If they're owner occupied, the rules change. I have no jurisdiction over the interior of a single-family home only the exterior of that home.

Chairman Lopez

It thinks it's important for families to know because they might have an uncle, or a grandfather, or somebody that isn't able to take care of themselves and they feel like there's this big nuclear option. All right well I'm gonna report this to the City

and then that's not gonna happen. So it's important to maintain that working relationship whether it's with an individual that you might have a connection to or whether it's a landlord and a tenant, that relationship and that agreement to work together to maintain housing is kind of where the focus is.  
Alderman Klee, you've been very patient?

Alderman Klee

No, no, you've been patient with me. Thank you so much. I have a couple of questions. I just want to make a clarifying statement first. I know Alderwoman Timmons had made a comment about that there weren't a lot of cases but we do do thousands and thousands of cases a year, correct?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Oh yeah.

Alderman Klee

With only 15 per year at high level going to citations meaning that we have to go to court with them. Is that correct?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Whether meaning whether we give them a hand-written ticket right on the spot or take them to court?

Alderman Klee

Right.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Yes. There have been years where we've had 3,000 complaints in one year. Since COVID, our numbers have gone down and we're just now starting to see numbers go up as far as tenants complaining but you also have a lot of tenants who are being threatened by eviction for whatever those reasons are. Then we had an uptake in neighbor complaints. Just this week alone, last week alone, we had 19 cases. Out of that if I remember, ten of those were neighbor complaints against each other. One today and the others, one was a commercial which we don't address the commercial part of it. So our numbers are lower than we normally see them but I think it's more - it's on its way back up because people are just starting to kind of recover from the COVID era.

Alderman Klee

May I continue?

Chairman Lopez

Yes but I just want to clarify. So you're saying that the numbers of complaints does not necessarily represent the scope of the problems in the City?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Yeah at the moment. We're starting to see it. One of the things that I think the public, especially when they call us, they need to realize is that our complaints when they come in, one complaint can take 20 minutes. One complaint can take three, four days, or longer to address because we're dealing with tenants and owners. Some of them are harder. Some of them involve bringing the Health Department, and working with Heidi, and working with Fire Department, and working with Bob Mack in Welfare. So there are those cases that are very inundated with a lot of things that we need to work with. Some examples are properties that are hoarders. That requires to bring in people – Adult and Elderly Services, bringing in the Health Department. So they can take hours and hours to work on. So one of our case - we may have 400 cases but those 400 cases have taken up hundreds of hours of work for one Code Officer.

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you for everything that you're doing. I just want to kind of back to one of the things you said about the overgrowth. So as an Alderman, and I'm sure other Aldermen get the same thing, I get the complaint the property owner's overgrowth I can no longer see safely to come to an intersection, or my child has go out into the street because the sidewalk is being blocked. Oftentimes I've said to them well you can call Public Works and see if they can work with the people to trim it down. Would that be Code Enforcement or would that be Public Works? I get a lot of those calls.

Chairman Lopez

Is Public Works really doing this?

Alderman Klee

I do call Public Works and I get a lot of hemming, and hawing, and kind of like well maybe this isn't ours maybe it's.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Well we get complaints from anyone and everyone regarding anything and everything. We then determine - we're one of the few departments that will say it's not our problem. We hear what it is and then we find out who they need to reach out to because we get a lot of thank you notices for that. But if it is a line of sight as far as a corner view, that is under the Nashua Land Use Code. So we will enforce that for the Zoning Department because it is they are part of Community Development and that is a violation. A corner it's what we call a "triangular view". Then we'll get complaints that's what you're saying obstructing a sidewalk and so forth, we'll get the calls and we will also either refer them or tell them to call DPW so DPW can see if they can go evaluate it. We'll still have a Code Officer sometimes go by. We just had one, I think it was Arlington, and the Code Officer went by, talked to the owner, he turned everything down but we cannot force that owner to do it.

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

That's the whole key is that when you're talking about the corner view, the triangular view, we can force them to do that because we have an ordinance that says that you can't do that. When it comes to obstructing a sidewalk or making people walk onto the street, we can tell you that you need to trim it down but we can't force you to. At that point, we would coordinate with DPW and Streets and see what can be done. I look at Matt for that because that's been a big topic in the last couple of years.

Alderman Klee

May I?

Chairman Lopez

Yes but I would like to remind the Committee we do have to get through to the other things.

Alderman Klee

I will make this particular comment real quick and then I do have one other question about the rent increase. When I worked with Public Works on it, the comment that I get from them is that they'll notify the owner. If the owner doesn't do it, then the City may come in and do it. The truth is this year has probably been inordinate because of the type of weather we've had - the rain, the heat, the rain, the heat, multiple growth. So I just after listening to this, I didn't want everybody calling you if in some situations they should call Public Works. One less thing off your plate.

But if I may and I'll try to make this my last comment because of a lack of stock, people are anxious about making complaints for fear that they will be evicted or rent increased. You made a comment about that you can talk to them about evictions but not rent increase. One of the things I heard most recently was that when a person complained to their landlord, the landlord said well you got a choice I can increase your rent and fix that or I can leave your rent as it is and you just deal with it. Is that something - would they still be allowed to do that? From the landlord's point of view if it's

something large and it's got to come out of their pocket, I can understand the need to go for rent. So I'm not complaining about that I'm just bringing it out so.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

A violation is a violation whether they've being evicted or not. So if it is a violation that needs to be addressed, for us we just keep at him until the landlord makes that repair. What he decides to do after that, that's their issue but in the interim while it's an active code complaint, our goal is to obligate that landlord obviously always better willingly but to obligate him and inform him or educate him that this is a violation whether you increase your rent or not or his rent, you still need to make that repair.

Alderman Klee

Thank you. If I have any other questions, I'll contact you. I'm not shy. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Director Peek? Did I get your title right?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

Nope. Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Nashua's Health Officer.

Chairman Lopez

Health Officer Peek.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

Yes. If you stumble over the Kukulka, it's fine. It's a really tricky one and I have to remind myself when I'm signing it. I have to do a KuKulka in order to get it. As far as - I think I can safely, quickly discuss our differences from code enforcement. We have other programs that we run that take the majority of our time. We're a small department as well. We have six people and three of those people are our Environmental Health Specialists who conduct foodservice inspections, pool sampling, pool inspections, go out to complaints that can be general complaints very much like what Nelson was describing, or they could be specifically food related or pool related some place where there is a license that gives us more ability to handle things. I will say that of the more housing like complaints that I've heard lately, there is a fair amount of fear of retaliation. I know in light of what's going on with housing stock, it's very - how do I say this - it's a more methodical, careful approach with some of these things. A lot of our complaints if it's addressed under the housing code, I will hand them or guide them to Code Enforcement because there is that protection that is offered the tenant.

I see that the cases are far more complex than what we've dealt with in a long time. We can deal with single family, owner occupied homes but it has to be something that is really threatening to the person who's there or it has to be something that affects the general public's health like a huge accumulation of trash, or raw sewage leaking, something along those lines. It has to be fairly dramatic for us to get involved in something like that. It's determining what is the general public's health. It's not necessarily the person living there so that's kind of a subtlety as well.

Our complaints have been increasing as well. We have had some neighbor disputes and some people who request anonymity because they don't want their next-door neighbor to know what they're complaining about. So it's a little tricky and it's been some careful navigating in some of these things because we don't want to jeopardize tenancy. We've never really been so mindful of that having been directly involved with the encampment meetings and some of the activities that are going on. We don't want that for people. We're also seeing a very vulnerable population be more affected by things that are going on in the community such as our aging population. I know from the Fire Department, we get a copy of a lot of the lift assists that the Fire Department makes and we follow up when it's appropriate. Those are some complex cases that sometimes the resolution is pretty quick. Sometimes it's months because we need to make referrals, get Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services involved, see what's offered but a lot of what we do too is we act in an advisory capacity.

So say if it's something that isn't necessarily under our jurisdiction, or there is no real law like mold, we know it's a health hazard. We understand that but there are no federal standards. So we typically look for the source of the moisture and we have them approach Code Enforcement if it's something that sounds valid. Then what we do on our end is we will tell people how to clean it if it's for them how they can protect their belongings. It's pretty much like what we do for bedbugs as well since the bedbug law changed. We act in an advisory capacity and we refer people to legal assistance and the

other entities out there who can offer them advice. So there's a lot of hand holding. There is a lot of time spent with people that isn't necessarily condemning a property as unfit for human habitation because that's the last thing we want to do and it's got to be an immediate threat in order to do that or there's no good solution. Because I work right across the hall from Bob Mack, he always knows what's going on with us.

I think that's really - it's more the differences. We will also, especially if a license is involved, we can deal with commercial properties. I'm trying to think of the last one that you sent my way. I am looking to start a ticketing process for some of the non-food service dumpsters in the area that are overflowing and just might be might call rodents come here and eat. So we're looking at doing some of that as well.

Chairman Lopez

With regards to both presentations, it seems like a common factor here is that the complexity of calls is this is much more than an inspection at this point and there is a degree of case management. It sounds like both of you work with Welfare Assistance but would it be an area for the City to explore to have maybe more Public Health rather than City Welfare level case management, or navigators, or people to kind of pull together these different cases and do the longer-term follow up because Public Health versus City Welfare. I understand that City Welfare is a subdivision of Community Health but it's not the same mission.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

Right.

Chairman Lopez

City Welfare is basically acting on the constitutional mandate we have to help people without resources as there may be people with resources and particularly they need resources pulled together and organized in order to resolve some issues to the City sees.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

Yeah and when I say that I'm across the hall with Bob trying to figure some of this out, I should say specifically it's what would you theoretically be able to do if I have to say that this person can no longer live here. So it's a heads up and kind of I'll have gained some of the knowledge when I'm on site talking to the people at stake and just kind of trying to figure it out, kind of doing some of that case management on the site just while they're there and engaged.

We do have if it comes to a language difficulty, we do have Community Health workers who can go out with us and will be able to translate for us. But yeah I don't know what it looks like to move ahead with something like that.

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Yes to piggyback on a comment that you've made, Mr. Ortega made it made it clear that he does not deal with commercial properties. You made a comment about commercial properties and you specifically said a dumpster. So my question is going to be not necessarily a commercial property per se but maybe a construction site where there's a dumpster, the workers putting food in it, plus there's a variety of different things and so on. While I won't divulge the location, I can tell you that was one in Ward 3. As I'm talking to constituents and the wind is blowing out there, the trash from the dumpsters and so on and the amount of flies that I'm going like this as we were talking, I got a hold of the contractor and did that. But for those residents involved if they could not reach me or something like that would that be something that would fall within your area? It's not necessarily - it could be a construction of a home or a bunch of properties not necessarily commercial but would that be something that they could deal with you? This was pretty bad.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

Yes. Yes, absolutely.

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

Where it is potentially a health hazard certainly we can.

Alderman Klee

The amount of flies was absolutely bouncing off me was driving me crazy. I personally did get a hold of the contractor and the people involved but I think if this ever happened again I would like them to involve your office so thank you very much. I did not know that and I appreciate that knowledge now. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Timmons any questions?

Alderman Timmons

No.

Chairman Lopez

Always discouraging to hear that there are things that we can't do something about. Bedbugs particularly it's not generally understood by the public that is not a health risk so there isn't legislation requiring landlords to do much with them. Can you speak to that?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

Sure and I'll let Nelson bump in if that's okay with any additional comments. I find that we end up doing a lot of okay this is the law, these are your resources. If you qualify for legal assistance, these are the people you should call. I think Nelson has a better grasp of the form and all of that but what we end up doing is okay make your bed an Island. Sometimes we do visits to try and figure something out for them but we spent a lot of time on educating what they can do, what they should not have thrown out, what they shouldn't get rid of, what they can keep, and how to navigate dealing with a pest company, and what to ask, and what you need to do yourself.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

I can quickly try and let you know a little how the bedbug law works. When it was passed, Code Enforcement years ago used to go out and actually do bedbug inspections and we're all still shocked that we never took any home but it used to be pretty bad and it sort of kind of still is. When a tenant feels they don't have to know that they have if they even believe they have bedbugs, the RSA says that they are to notify the landlord be it in writing, verbally, or through a third party. We sometimes function as that third party. So we can let the landlord know that the tenant is complaining. So no matter which one of those three choices they make, the landlord must inspect the apartment within seven days of that complaint. The landlord must also inspect the abutting units to that.

If the landlord doesn't do any of that within seven days, then the tenant is required to go to District Court and file a 540a complaint against that landlord. If the landlord does address it and does hire a pest company, there's nothing that says that it has to be a pest company but if he does, most of them do, then if three months down the road or something that the tenant just feels that it's not working or it's not enough, the landlord they just have to show that there's been a substantial reduction of bedbugs. What the substantial reduction number is at that point, it depends on what a judge decides because it does become a court issue. If the tenant just feels that the landlord hasn't eradicated enough of them or it's not doing it on a continuous basis, then they go to court and they file a complaint either themselves or through an attorney. Most of them will call Legal Aid. Obviously a lot of individuals that we work with can't afford to go hire an attorney. Then at that point, the judge decides okay what is the evidence?

We don't get involved other than notifying the landlord, potentially notifying the landlord, hey your tenant at this location filed a complaint. Even though we don't investigate it, we still take the complaint. We still log it to show that there was a record of a bedbug complaint made at this property and we hang on to that. So if anybody calls us later on and say do you have any records of bedbugs here? We will look. If we do, we let them know. I had one today that she called and I left her copies of the past complaints of bedbugs in the development not necessarily in her building but in the development that she lives in and whatever issues for that because the landlord wanted to charge her - at one point did

charge her for the eradication of bedbugs.

But a landlord can try to charge a tenant if they feel that they started it. But the rule and I'm not an attorney, but the short version of the law, is that the way it looks is that if a tenant if they've been there six months or less if they can show that six months prior to them moving in there were complaints in there for that six-month period, then that throws into doubt of whether they actually brought it in or not. It could have been a tenant upstairs or downstairs that actually bought it in. So that's kind of just the gist of how that law's supposed to work.

Chairman Lopez

As a point of clarification, you also mentioned that they had to hire someone to treat it but that person doesn't have to be exterminator?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

No actually what I mentioned is that as far as our ordinances go, they don't have to hire an - they can try and do it themselves. If they do it themselves according to our Legal Department from years back when I asked, they still at least have to follow the recommendations or whatever the Department of Agriculture is for that particular pesticide.

Chairman Lopez

Okay so energy healing isn't good enough. They actually have to use products.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

What was that?

Chairman Lopez

Energy healing isn't good enough. They actually have to use procedures and okay.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

Yeah you'd be surprised to see what some of the "do it yourself" solutions are.

Chairman Lopez

I would not think most people would be. Any questions over here?

Alderman Klee

No, I'm good. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. So like I said, our Committee's main purpose is to focus on human affairs and to make sure that we're attending to the issues that were previously addressed by the Substantive Living Conditions Committee. I know that your Departments come and present annually on what the City is doing and what they're working on is important because as you both pointed out, the situation and the conditions change. So try to stay (inaudible). Major audio...

Alderman Klee

It's been like this for a couple weeks.

Chairman Lopez

So your Departments are a huge resource as part of that so we appreciate it. Ultimately, we see when our system starts to break down and people are forced to be evicted, or can no longer maintain housing situations, and the problem doesn't go away, the people don't go away. It just takes on an even worse form. So any final comments? Anything else you want to let us know about?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Not from my side right now.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Well I appreciate both of you coming in and taking the time to give us that information.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

Actually a one point I wanted to make is that from my years of working in the City, and with Nelson, and other entities across the City is that Nashua has a unique flavor if you will of coordinated work and working together. I hear other jurisdictions, they don't have that going for them so I'm very proud of the effort that we all take in reaching out to different departments and divisions to try and address problems for the benefit of the tenants and the residents.

Chairman Lopez

Mr. Ortega you want to give us an idea of what it takes to be a code enforcement person?

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Well in today's world being able to work with angry people. No, it does take a - there are very few complaints these days that we take that don't end with if you don't do something I'm gonna go punch them or we're gonna go to war. So I mean, and I mean this seriously, code officers now have to watch what they do. I mean there was just a code officer shot and a resident because of a lack of understanding. A resident killed because of that in Texas. So we're careful but we look for someone who's very good in either they have a law enforcement background, code enforcement background from another municipality, psychology degrees, CJ degrees. We look at those more than we do like business administration degrees type thing. We need someone who isn't afraid to go out and talk to the community, isn't afraid to knock on the door, and talk to someone be it on the phone, in person, or public speaking. Unfortunately, I haven't been getting from the few applicants that did apply I have not been getting that type of response but look on the Nashua website and see what the requirements are.

Chairman Lopez

We also have a job fair coming up on September 12<sup>th</sup> at the library so if we give people an idea of kind of what's involved. I mean you'd said someone with a psychology degree or law enforcement background. It's not impossible. You can get case managers who might be sick of doing medical billing all the time or you know in one area but they have skills that are transferable to another so.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

And we look at that. I do look at that because many, many jobs deal with if you're a customer service person here, it doesn't mean you can't work with the general public in person. There are just a lot of little things that I look at when an application comes before me. Former firefighters, former well-rounded people who've worked in the construction field. It has to fit with the community. I just don't want to put someone in there that just is not going to work with the community.

Chairman Lopez

Well I think we definitely appreciate that. It keeps the department standards high and I don't think anybody would fault the Code Enforcement Director for being discerning on a resume. Kind of your job is to be attentive to detail. So hopefully you'll get the help that you're looking for. We'll get your department up to full strength and we will just tackle this issue collectively as a community instead of just as a department.

Alderman Klee

May I make a comment?

Chairman Lopez

Sure.

Alderman Klee



Thank you. Mr. Ortega I know there's a number of open cases in Ward 3 that you and Director Sullivan have been working with. I know they haven't always been the most pleasant cases sometimes. I appreciate all that you do and I want to reiterate something you said. Sometimes you guys are put into harm's way and I don't think the public realizes that. When you have to tell someone they're doing something wrong and they don't think that they are. In today's society, there's a lot of anger out there so I really appreciate and the same thing with you Miss Peek. I know if you've got to go to a business and tell them either you do this or we're shutting you down, you're gonna get a lot of anger and nastiness so bless you and your staff and thank you so much for all that you do.

Nelson Ortega, Code Enforcement Manager

Thank you.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Health Officer

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

All right. Thank you all for coming. Next on our agenda. Oh, and if you want to have a seat if you want to stay for the library presentation.

Next we'll be talking about the HOME Program, American Rescue Plan. Manager Long if you want to come up and have a seat or if you'd like to use a podium, you're welcome to do whichever you're more comfortable with.

- HOME Program American Rescue Plan Act (HOME-ARP)

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Good evening. Again if you have your packets, the HOME presentation should be right after the agenda in the packet. I believe at the last meeting I was requested to put together a little bit of information on the HOME ARP Program. That is the \$1.6 million we are receiving through the American Rescue Plan Act specifically for our HOME Program. For anyone who might be listening now or later, our HOME Program is that's federal grant money through US Department of Housing and Urban Development specifically for the creation and retention of affordable housing.

HOME ARP Funds are very interesting. It's very different from the regular HOME Program. So the \$1.6 million we've adopted an allocation plan kind of broadly outlining our community needs and how we will be spending those funds. We allocated \$100,000 for supportive services; \$100,000 for tenant based rental assistance; a little over \$1 million for development of affordable rental housing - the actual construction bricks and mortar; a little under \$81,000 for non-profit capacity building; and \$242,000 for administration and planning.

The biggest thing to know about these funds is whereas general HOME Program is affordable housing for low to moderate income. So you're looking at 80% of the area median income and below. But HOME ARP is for specific qualifying populations. That's homeless residents, residents at risk of homelessness, residents who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and trafficking. The last populations, other populations for whom supportive services would help prevent homelessness or serving those at greatest risk of housing instability.

I'm not going to go over the slides one by one unless you'd really like to but one of the things to know is like what does homeless mean? What does greatest risk of housing instability mean? These terms all have very specific definitions outlined by Housing and Urban Development. They're very program specific. A lot of the people who will be applying for these funds might be unfamiliar, especially if it's the kinds of organizations you're used to applying for regular HOME Program. They're mostly not already serving homeless folks so they'll need guidance for that.

On the other hand people who don't normally apply for HOME but would be interested in playing for HOME ARP, I'm thinking kind of homeless shelters, homeless services providers, those kinds of organizations. They'll be familiar with these definitions. They are familiar with other HUD grants but they won't know necessarily how the HOME Program generally works. So that is why we allocated the funds we did for non-profit capacity building because kind of those two separate kinds of non-profits will probably need guidance and possibly specific staff to help them implement these projects.

So unless there are questions about the definitions for the qualifying populations, I was going to just go ahead and skip

over that. Okay.

So eligible uses what we can use these funds for. So the biggest bucket of funds we set out is for the actual construction of affordable housing. So we can do new rental housing units, we can acquire existing housing units, and we can also do refinancing of existing affordable housing. We generally don't do refinancing. I would be surprised if we got any applications in that realm for this. I anticipate that most of what we will receive applications for will be construction of new housing.

We did not choose to allocate funds for non-congregate shelter and we did not choose to allocate funds towards non-profit operating expenses. We did choose to allocate funds as previously mentioned for non-profit capacity building. We are also choosing to require for an agency to apply for those funds, they must also be applying for a rental housing development project.

We also set aside funds for tenant based rental assistance. That is something that you can do under the regular HOME Program but it's not something we've really done in the past. So there's a number of different forms of assistance that that can take the form of. That's payment of rent itself, security deposits, utility payments, a few other categories of funding, and we are also anticipating that this will be in the form of kind of the grant will go to an agency that does tenant based rental assistance so that agency will manage the funds.

Supportive services. We also chose to allocate funds towards. There are three categories of that. These include McKinney-Vento Services. McKinney-Vento Act is one of the larger pieces of legislation that controls homeless services. You might be most familiar with it in terms of it's called the "McKinney-Vento Liaison". All school districts must have one. That was part of that legislation and there's specific definitions of homelessness that McKinney-Vento contains. Homelessness prevention and housing counseling.

Again, a lot of technical assistance and capacity building I think will be required for the provision of these services because there is a lot of technical details related to each of those categories, how they're defined, what is housing counseling, what is not housing counseling. So, again, that's why we've set aside the capacity building funds.

The last slide in the packet is on eligible uses in terms of McKinney-Vento Supportive Services. What are those? It's pretty broad. There's a lot of different services that can qualify - just for your child care, education, food, employment assistance, life skills training. These are life services that many of our area non-profit agencies already provide. That's kind of the quick overview of HOME ARP. If anything was unclear if there's any questions, I'm happy to help clarify.

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you. I have to go back to my notes. Oh, I know what it was. You commented about that would one of the things we don't usually do or don't usually see are refinancing. What exactly will be refinancing? The reason I'm saying it is because knowing that interest rates are skyrocketing and if someone needed to be able to do additional housing or something like that would this...?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes. So in terms of HOME ARP, it would be only refinancing if it's also paired with making it so the housing is serving lower incomes. So it couldn't just be if refinancing to retain the housing at the current income level for those tenants. It would have to be so that it becomes even more affordable. So like if it's affordable at, you know, 60% median income if that particular property owner or developer wanted to instead serve 30% area median income, that's something we could do.

Alderman Klee

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Just with regards to the City's decisions about non-segregated shelter, care, and then also non-profit operating. Is this plan proposed in application form or is it a plan that's already been accepted that your presenting that

we have and this is what we applied for specifically for?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

So the allocation plan was adopted by the Board of Aldermen in March of 2023. So these are this. If we want to change this, that's something we can do. It would require a substantial amendment process but we can absolutely change that if we want to do so.

Chairman Lopez

I didn't necessarily have anything in mind. I just wanted to know whether we could if a stakeholder showed up and said hey we have a project in which we might say want to have individualized housing programs for a specific reason and/or another organization were saying, we're willing to expand our programs to accommodate something the City might be facing but we don't have the staff to do it. That might be non-profit operating versus capacity building. For example like last year, we were able to engage a number of non-profits in sharing support for cooling stations or no warming stations but the biggest concern was there wasn't money to pay additional staff. There wasn't really a mechanism for doing that and so most of the cold weather emergency warming stations essentially were only operating 9:00 to 5:00. So good for a time and then there's a problem.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

No, totally understandable. I believe when we were having our discussions about how to allocate the funds, I believe part of the factor there was that that might be a better under Community Development Block Grant than the HOME Grant since both non-profit operating expenses and shelter projects are both very - they're the bread and butter of CDBG.

Chairman Lopez

My purpose wasn't to advocate for any particular thing. It was just to point out that there may be situations that are encountered. If we see emergency rooms for example starting to overflow and we have a partner who has a facility that may at one point have been like meant for medical hospice care but then they don't have staff to run something, then there may be a scenario where the City needs that flexibility. So your answer was that it could be changed if we needed to it would just be a bit of a process.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes, that's right. It would be a substantial amendment process. That's not a hardship. It was just, you know, we would have a public input process as much as we did during the initial adoption.

Chairman Lopez

Just a comment for the public that might be listening and you can verify this I guess with the slides as well, McKinney-Vento's definition of homelessness doesn't just mean you're living outside. It could mean you were recently discharged from a like an institutionalized kind of situation like maybe a mental health center, or a nursing home, trying from memory so I don't want to be wrong - if you had multiple instances of homelessness in like the last two months because of economic needs like you had a start and a stop kind of situation, or if you're living in a place in someone else's home basically where you don't have any kind of lease, or guarantee of stay, or anything like that.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes. So the McKinney-Vento definition is actually about two pages worth of text briefly summarizes a few different categories of what do we mean by homeless? The first definition is individual or family who lacks a fixed regular and adequate nighttime residence. Then there's a bunch of text explaining what does and doesn't count for that, or an individual or family who imminently lose their primary nighttime residence provided that a number of different factors. There's a specific carve out for unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age. They're included in the definition. Also individuals and families fleeing domestic or sexual violence.

Chairman Lopez

So someone can't say oh you have a house on paper but like the abuser is living there so they don't.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes, that's included in the definition of homeless.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. I just wanted to clarify because having worked with homeless for many, many years, I find that people don't recognize that they're in a situation of homelessness until it's identified for them in a lot of cases. They're like I mean I guess I really been homeless a lot longer than I thought I was. I've been staying with this friend, and then that friend, and that friend, and that friend but I had a roof over my head and that's not always the same thing as having a home.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

No, that's absolutely correct. We're in the process of ironing out all the details of the grants, application process, and the notice of funding availability. When that is ready to go out, we will be having pre-application workshops for agencies to discuss all of this in detail, especially the ones who maybe don't work with homeless populations on a regular basis to be like here's what we mean when we say homeless. Here's what homelessness means for HOME ARP. Hopefully so everyone understands populations that need to be served and what the money can and can't be used for.

Chairman Lopez

Now is your office working directly with the Continuum of Care's Executive Committee as they go through their NOFO process? Because if I remember at the last meeting that they had, they actually pointed out they needed people who weren't going to be recipients of the HUD Grants that they're doing to help them rank and score. That might also be a good opportunity for the City to see okay well if these programs aren't going to make the cut, maybe we should help find a way for them to make the cut a different cut you know.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

So at this point, we've discussed HOME ARP at several (inaudible) care meetings. We don't currently plan to merge it with the Continuum of Care processes mostly because Continuum of Care is very – the coordinated entry process of selecting clients is very embedded in the Continuum of Care and we cannot use coordinated entry for HOME ARP selection. Instead the plan was to, you know, when our NOFO was ready to go out to – to very prominently to the Continuum of Care since we imagine that most of those agencies will be very interested in this funding.

Chairman Lopez

Yeah and I wasn't necessarily suggesting you try to merge the program but so much as that development office, your office, your department be a participant in the assessment process that continues doing because they need people. The Continuum is made up of agencies that are receiving funds mostly. So as part of their review process, they actually need the decisions to be vetted by people who are not receiving funds. So they struggle sometimes within their own membership to find people and that might be an opportunity for you to serve two goals where number one, you're helping rank the programs but number two, you're finding out from those rankings who might be a better fit for the HOME Programs.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

No, that's a great idea and certainly we're well positioned to do that since we do not receive funding through the COC.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Just a suggestion. I think their meeting is next Thursday. Alderman Timmons.

Alderwoman Timmons

Thank you, Chairman Lopez. Thank you for listening. Anyway. Hello Director Long. Some of the things seem a little problematic. Okay. One is I think the program is great and varied but in the application, I find problematic. The reason why I find it problematic because we don't have housing. He even said construction new rental housing units but they're at market rate and not affordable. Acquisition of existing housing units - we can't find units. We can't find housing. Perfect example, today my granddaughter went to the library to return some books and she said, Grandma what are we going to do about the homeless? I said what a coincidence. We're working on that tonight but she had a point and she said ask Mr. Long are mental health services extended to them as well? I know they have shelter but what about mental services after you get the shelter and if they can stay in those shelters until permanently without falling back

homelessness. That's the biggest issue. One - we don't have space. We need to build space for affordable housing. We just don't have them. We don't space, we don't have the location, we don't have a lot of things so an application this may not work. In theory, it does look good. So can you answer those questions and how are we going to deal with homelessness when we don't have the capability?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Right. So technically the first part of the question, the housing to be built through HOME ARP Funds, it must be affordable for these populations. That will be a requirement. As I mentioned, I think what we're going to be looking at is creation of new housing versus renovation or refinancing because we need more. So I very strongly suspect we're going to be getting applications primarily for creation of new housing.

In terms of services, I know many of our homeless shelters provide case management to their clients. I don't believe most of them provide direct mental health services. They'll refer out to our area mental health agencies for that but that's absolutely a component of care provided. Everyone's very aware that those services are very, very desperately needed. I will mention a little bit outside the scope of HOME ARP but the model of permanent supportive housing which HUD has been pushing for many years now that is intended to incorporate ongoing, long-term case management which in many cases will include mental health services for folks once they've been safely housed in a permanent housing situation.

Alderwoman Timmons

Could I just have one follow up please?

Chairman Lopez

Sure.

Alderwoman Timmons

Mr. Long you did not answer my question about where are we going to build these houses? Where in Nashua? We're not talking about Greater Nashua – not Greater Nashua but Nashua. Where?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

That's a good question. I'm not sure I have very specific answers at this point which I apologize for. I think probably what we'll need to be looking at is density. I think is one of the answers to that in terms of kind of a model for that is the Bronstein Redevelopment what's now Monahan Manor's replacing fairly low-density housing with higher density housing. So I'm guessing we'll be seeing projects - project applications for either in the downtown or close to the downtown because that's the area kind of most conducive to that kind of density. Obviously, we'll accept applications for anywhere in the City assuming that's a location that the agency has, you know, either owns or things that can reasonably own.

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Timmons.

Alderwoman Timmons

May I? One other question. I think Mr. Sullivan may be able to answer this question better because he may know where and what kind of shelters we have available. Can we do this as soon as possible like started before the cold weather sinks in if he may answer my question about where we're going to put these people?  
It's really concerning.

Chairman Lopez

Director Sullivan do you have an answer for that?

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

So Alderwoman Timmons to partially address your question and I'm going to speak specifically to several unsheltered encampments that exist around the City, some of which in the Temple Street corridor and some in smaller forms and other areas of the City. I'm going to give you a somewhat non-answer but I'm doing that because we are actually actively

working on this problem. We're just not ready to talk specifically about what the solution might be. There's a coalition of City Departments and Divisions meeting on a regular basis to discuss specifically how individuals might be displaced when the colder winter months allow, or other circumstances change in the areas where encampments have been identified, and some level of unsheltered individuals census has been developed as well. Specifically our Emergency Management Director, the Police Department certainly, the Fire Department, Public Health, and others are working actively on identifying what exactly the process will be whether that will involve an actual created shelter area, whether that will involve more of a warming station approach, or a combination of those two. That has not been yet determined. But what I can say is that over the last two to three months, there's been a very real focus from a sort of a multi-jurisdictional level about being prepared for the winter of 2023-2024 and not being in a position where we need to necessarily rely on existing nonprofits and other agencies to stand up shelters on an emergency need-by-need basis. I think there's been a pretty clear recognition of the fact that that approach worked for a period of time but that the City has to take a much more proactive approach heading into this winter season. So again, I can't say exactly what the solution will be but all I can do at this point is assure you that we are having that conversation and also looking to other communities in the region and nationally to learn lessons both in the positive and for the negative about how this has been responded to elsewhere. So to Manager Long's comments, we're not exactly sure what the solution will be or what the sort of the affordable housing silver bullet might be relative to the unsheltered population. We're working on trying to resolve that and be prepared for the winter.

I'd be happy to answer specific follow up questions too because I expect you might have them based on what I've said.

#### Alderwoman Timmons

I do. Maybe it's not time right now but I do have a lot of questions regarding the homelessness because I really concerned about them. We see them everywhere and they seem like they're growing in population. So I just want to know what do we have in place for them - not to send them to Manchester or any other place but to help them right here in Nashua and that's my concern.

#### Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Mr. Chair if I may just maybe follow up. So that's certainly our concern as well. You referenced sort of the idea of moving folks along to another community. That's not the approach that this leadership is taking or this administration is taking. We're very much trying to be able - we're trying to create an environment where they feel comfortable remaining in the community with access to services that they so desperately need. We don't want to call this a downtown challenge but it really is because that's where our services and that's where a community has been built of unsheltered individuals and so we want to have a solution that's conducive to them being able to live in that space where they're comfortable.

I want to just emphasize, again, that in order to implement something that will be successful long term, it's going to take the cooperation of all of the partners here in the City internally but also the folks involved with the Continuum as well. So I want to acknowledge their efforts. This is such a massive problem as we're seeing in other communities. Everyone has a bit of a different perspective on just how to solve it. We're trying to come up with the perfect solution but I think we're quickly realizing that it's going to be a level of compromise to have something that actually works. All agencies involved have already done tremendous work. We're just willing to as the City looking to fill in sort of a final gap to have a more permanent solution created that we feel comfortable with. I'd be happy to connect with you offline and talk about our progress as we as we go along. We're actually going to probably be having some more formal reports to the board or to some sub-committees about what we're doing. We're just not in a position yet where we can do that definitively. So happy to follow up individual or individually or with this committee moving forward.

#### Alderwoman Timmons

Thank you.

#### Chairman Lopez

I would like to make some comments quickly. The urgency that Alderman Timmons and her family feels is I think in my opinion very, very valid because she's right. It is going to start getting colder. We got a little taste of that a couple of days ago and that's only a taste. We've had throughout the summer a number of weather-related emergencies whether it was heat emergencies, or random monsoons that people who are unsheltered and living outside are very much vulnerable to so the urgency is warranted. I think Director Sullivan you'd be the first to say that some caution is warranted too because there are a number of programmatic landmines we can step on and that we may already be experiencing shocks from. When one partner isn't collaborative and decides for example that it's going to contain people who might be at various campsites into one area and super concentrates an issue and increases its sustainability that creates problems for the

rest of the community. When another entity comes and threatens to disperse campsites because they've decided that that they don't want it where it is, that creates a problem for the whole community. That has happened in neighboring communities. So a large number of the people that are in those campsites are Nashua residents but a large number of them are also from other places that were displaced or are Nashua residents that have been ping ponged around the State over the past couple of years.

So immediate solutions without planning and without collaboration don't necessarily do anything for people who are actually experiencing difficulty. A number of the emergency shelter programs that operate in the City and the emergency shelter - the Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter is the most obvious one but there are other different levels of respite care, or peer supported programs, or transitional housing programs that meet that criteria including the rescue mission which are major players. They may look at the fundamental concept of mental health care differently. The residents who are in the shelters may have their own opinions about whether they want mental health treatment. Not a small number of them may have had very bad experiences recently with being involuntarily admitted and then losing housing while the State hospitals try to figure out what to do with them. So you add that to the fact that a lot of our mental health service capacity has been impaired over the last couple of years. There isn't an easy solution. You can't just provide mental health services to everybody in the shelter. I know because I've been trying to. I know Greater Nashua is struggling with capacity issues and organizational challenges where maybe some funding would be helpful but maybe it's similar to our Code Enforcement where you can put an ad out there for months and you're not going to see somebody who actually has the qualifications for the job ready for it. There are regional issues to where licensure is weren't accessible to mental health practitioners, to substance abuse counselors. The Governor had to threaten to dissolve the Board of Mental Health if they didn't move forward. So we're seeing some pretty seismic shifts and addresses that are finally addressing issues that have been long term systemic but we're also seeing the danger of people moving too quickly and coming up with short term solutions which we have seen in other communities where they tried to stand up shelters in a short order and those shelters collapsed pretty spectacularly and unfortunately for the people who were involved. So as Director Sullivan said, we need to make sure that we're creating a solution that addresses the needs of the people as they present today but also stays with them and is effective.

Finally, I would point out that we've had several attempts to try to do the housing first model and we've had a number of programs that have come up with an abundance of vouchers, and giving people vouchers, and handing them out, and now we have a problem where lots of people have vouchers. There's no housing stock. But in the past, we had problems where vouchers were given to people and then those follow up supports weren't provided. Many of those people are the ones who are not so enthusiastic about mental health providers at this point because two years ago, they were part of the movement to end chronic homelessness and nobody followed up. So now they don't qualify for any of the things they qualified for before and their vouchers expired. So we do have to maintain a collective partnership with the different organizations that are addressing this and we have to be very forthcoming in what we can offer as a City and very discerning in what they're asking for as non-profits. I think we're seeing much closer partnership and collaboration than I've seen in years but that urgency, we can't release it. We have to continue to work on this as a crisis not as a day to day operations.

Director Sullivan is there anything you wanted to add to that?

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

No, I think well said Alderman Lopez. I think that all we know is that we need to do something. We're not sure exactly what that something will be but to Alderman Lopez's points, I mean there are a lot of very successful models across the country. There are a lot of very unsuccessful models and in many cases, it's been the same model that simply hasn't worked in a unique community. We're exploring sheltering will that be what we ultimately decide to do? I'm not sure at this point in time. More to come over the next three months without question because if we recognize the cold weather is certainly coming, we'll start to see some signs of that soon but I think certainly what I'm hearing is it warrants further conversation with this Committee. It will warrant further conversation with the Board of Aldermen. It likely won't be me representing the City in those conversations. I'm not the expert but and I'm definitely a partner in those conversations and we'll be happy to connect you with the appropriate folks to talk to you.

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Alderman Lopez. Thank you Director Sullivan and Manager Long. I don't have questions I have thank you's is what I have. Thank you for all that you're doing. Thank you for all you're doing. You've come to this board a number of

times. I know we're probably your main gig but and you take the time to explain and you come back what you did today with the HOME and the ARP Program. I do appreciate it. Director Sullivan I appreciate you being put on the spot. I know you're just one cog in that wheel and so on. I want to thank Alderwoman Timmons' granddaughter for taking the time to go to her grandmother and say what are you doing about this? I think that's a wonderful thing.

Ultimately, I want to thank our Chairman here. I know he works a lot with the homeless and the Continuum of Care Group as does Alderwoman Timmons being on the on the committee and so on. But thank you for explaining all that to everybody. I think it's important and pushing the urgency but also understanding that at the same time we have to be hesitant to not open up a can of worms that shouldn't be opened up yet.

Chairman Lopez

There also has to be a sort of stop loss approach which is why as the Chair I've been bringing in the City Departments because it's very important to address homelessness when it presents itself. Anybody who's ever worked in the shelter knows and will tell you the best way to prevent homelessness is not to become homeless. So we need to make sure that our elderly residents and our vulnerable populations are aware of their rights and are being supported by the City so that we don't add to the problem.

Alderman Klee

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Timmons.

Alderman Timmons

No. I do want to thank Director Long. Him and I work together pretty good. He knows how I feel about a lot of things and I like to thank you for doing what you do. You have a lot of energy.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Thank you very much.

Chairman Lopez

All right. So that concludes our presentation on the HOME Program. I'd like to make a Motion to accept the communication for our...

Alderman Klee

It's not part of our communication.

Chairman Lopez

It comes up later. So for now, I'd like to invite Library Director Jennifer McCormack to do her presentation. We have to keep an eye out for Alderman Kelly. Yeah.

Alderwoman Kelly

I was gonna mention that I appreciated Director Sullivan's remarks especially around working to support homeless people who are here and not displacing them elsewhere. I'm very involved in all of this work as well and I think the work that you guys are doing is incredible and really important.

Chairman Lopez

Thank you, Alderwoman Kelly. So Director McCormack do you want to take it away?

- *Reconstruction of the Nashua Library Plaza*



Jennifer McCormack, Library Director

I will. Thank you. So thank you for inviting me to make this presentation. I love to talk about the plaza renovation project. You're seeing my slideshow in kind of raw form here but that's okay.

Alderman Klee

I apologize.

Jennifer McCormack, Library Director

No, it's all right. The menu bar is kind of in your way.

Chairman Lopez

Too many windows? It's crazy.

Alderman Klee

I know. I'm trying to not get her. I think I got your first one.

Jennifer McCormack, Library Director

Okay. So next slide, please. I wanted to start by offering a little bit of a timeline for the renovation project. It feels like it's been going on forever. It's easy to lose track of what's happening. I did leave one date off. I should have included first September 1971. That's the day the month the library opened and that's when the plaza as it stands now was originally constructed. There have been very few improvements in the intervening 50 - how many years 52 years 53 years.

In January of 2019 thanks to the Mayor, there was an RFP issued to design a renovated plaza and JAIBI was selected to do that design. They worked with community input and City Departments for several months and in July presented the final concept that was chosen after the community input.

In March of 2020, the City issued an RFP for constructing the renovated plaza and there was some funding allocated. I don't know the exact amount and it doesn't matter because then COVID-19 happened and the City had to pull back from so many, many projects and the Library Plaza was one of them.

Then in September of 2022, I got a pleasant surprise and discovered that the plaza project was getting some ARPA funding. I believe the amount I think Director Sullivan reported accurately is \$1.5 million and that was enough to do Phase 1 of the project. I have a picture coming up that will show you what phase one was. Then thanks to Congresswoman Kuster, we were awarded an additional \$3 million later on in 2022. In just this early this spring, we went to work on redesigning the project and getting updated pricing.

Next slide please. I took some pictures this week of the current conditions. I know most of the people in this room come to the library frequently but for those of you watching online if you haven't been there recently, the first the slide on the top left is the walkway from the parking lot up to the front door and that is a steep slope that is not handicapped accessible.

The next photo to the right is the stairs leading from the main plaza up to that upper plaza. As you can see, it's pretty badly deteriorated. It's in pretty terrible condition. It's still safe to use.

That next slide is the fountain. That fountain stopped operating in 2018 or 2019 and the masonry has collapsed and it's the Board of Trustees determined it was not worth trying to repair since a renovation was planned. It's sprouting a little bit of grass now. On the bottom left, that slide shows you the upper courtyard space between the library and the Court Street Theater.

And then that last slide is what it looks like when you were leaving the library and headed back down to the parking lot. I tried to capture in that photo the way the pitch of the plaza has changed which causes runoff and we've had to just this summer install a rock apron along the side of the walkway because it was a trip hazard. So things are not looking good. Fifty odd years later, the plaza has really seen a lot of great use in it needs some TLC.

Next slide, please. Wanted to remind folks the kinds of big city-wide events that happen on the plaza. This is besides the one off programs that we have or families using the plaza, or Tai Chi using the plaza, or the Peacock Players running out

there for lunch during camp. Pride Festival happens on the plaza in and our parking lot every year. Nashua Goes Back to School - big event coming Thursday. Don't forget. That happens every year. We have an outdoor concert series. We have a big summer reading kickoff party out there. Last year, the library plaza was one of the sites of the Art Walk. We hosted the first annual Sustainability Fair on the plaza this year and we're also a venue for the Holiday Stroll. This is a heavily used, heavily used park and it should be a feature that we can be proud of that attracts people.

Next slide. I threw in this slide. It's a little hard to see because of the scale but this was the concept that was approved in 2019. If you're looking at that slide the area to the left, the left edge is the library parking lot. That first rectangle is active space. So those multicolored spots that's play and fitness equipment and immediately adjacent, the concept was about a sports court could be futsal or some other activity. The center square is where we currently have concerts and other performances now. The concept is to use the natural grading of the site to create an amphitheater feeling in that area and introduce infrastructure for performers like water supply, electrical supply. On the very far right, that's the upper plaza between the library and Court Street Theatre. The concept at that time was to invent some reading rooms. So some spots, paved spots, hardscape spots where people could sit, and read, and enjoy some quiet study time.

Next slide. Because of the deterioration of the stairs which I showed in a photograph up to that upper plaza, we did have to redesign that upper part that had the reading rooms. If you see, this drawing by the way is completely reversed from the last one I showed you. So now the left-hand side is the Court Street side. We've worked with IBI to design - they call it "a walk in the woods" but more meandering pathways with plenty of green space and a few trees. That introduces the possibility of a pathway for an accessible pathway for people who leave the Court Street Theater and get down to the library, enter that space from the sidewalk, and get down to the library. Also the hope is that that area will house some of the sculptures that currently live on the library plaza. That middle space remains pretty much the same although we're considering where a stage might fit in there and whether it's possible to create some kind of permanent stage structure rather than use the Parks and Rec mobile stage.

We're also reconsidering on the far right the details of that active space. The active space remains a high priority but we are considering whether the materials for the resilience surface of the sports court is a good decision for that site. Are there some universal design principles we can apply and change up the equipment as Director Sullivan referred to? So rather than playground equipment have opportunities for interactive play and other kinds of active use and not just playground equipment.

There're also some environmental conditions to take into account, and Director Sullivan might be able to speak better to that, but there's areas we had hoped to address in the plan which we are not able to because of the asbestos cap on the site. So all of these are still in development. We've met with the architects recently. We'll meet with them again and there'll be opportunities for public input for people to see what we have in mind and let us know what they think.

Next slide. So these are our next steps. Some environmental testing to do and we'll schedule one or two public input sessions. Those will happen at the library. They're not scheduled yet so stay tuned. We'll let you know. Then we'll go into the final design and have the bid documents prepared and hopefully rubber rabbit's foot or cross your fingers construction will happen in 2024. The rain this year has been really great to the grass but really not great to the plaza itself and its deteriorating rapidly. Your support and the Board of Aldermen's support is much appreciated.

If I may - I'm sorry. I meant to address - I don't recall who asked earlier. Someone asked about security cameras.

Alderman Klee

Alderman Dowd.

Jennifer McCormack, Library Director

Yes. There are already security cameras on the library building that focus on that space.

Chairman Lopez

All right. Any questions from the board? Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you so much for this. I know it's just a high level. I don't want to say wish list but of concepts of potential and just for the public this listening, you will firm it down more as you have the public hearings, or input sessions, or however you want to address those, and that will be part of the library will be holding that not the Board of Aldermen. So people can attend those and put those notifications and so on. That's probably on the website I would assume and we'll get that

information out. So I do appreciate that. I know there have been a lot of comments, complaints about the overgrowth and so on. To your comment about the rain, it's been horrific throughout the City. I know in Greeley Park I had to ask them to put those as you did the rock formations alongside any of the asphalt because it's just washing all away and even Greeley Park, it was becoming quite dangerous for someone. I do appreciate it. In some respects, it kind of looks nice like we're actually doing something but it's more of a necessity. So thank you for doing that.

Yes, I do hope that we can get construction 2024. It's a beautiful space. It would be nice for the public to be able to use it.

To Alderman Lopez who is a the Alderman in that location, I got actually at the Park Fest someone was asking me if we could have a Greeley Park in Ward 4. I said I don't know if there's enough space for it. This would not be a Greeley Park in Ward 4 but it would be if you had the stage it would be something for the residence there. If you had a playground kind of area for residents that live in there that don't necessarily have that, I mean Bronstein is coming up and they don't have that kind of playground type of thing. I know it's not going to be big but anything that we can do to help the kids around the area. Thank you.

Jennifer McCormack, Library Director

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

To Alderman Klee's point, I was gonna actually point out that it's a pretty insightful idea to have the amphitheater there because there are all kinds of people and stakeholders trying to organize events and activities in the downtown area. I know personally having tried to organize the Tree Streets Block Party, downtown art festivals, Richelieu Club's fair, the cultural festivals like all those different things. Finding a space and then getting the City stage to set up you need so many different factors. The library would not only be a place with all of those amenities but that could be very helpful for taxpayers dare I say and having quality programming on an ongoing basis that isn't entirely reliant on, you know, the library's staff and organizers and all that kind of stuff. Although, I would say that like the organizing staff and the planning for events that are at the libraries is second to none. So you don't need any improvement but it would be a very well used and welcome area. While I wouldn't necessarily want to exactly a Greeley Park in that area because we have Mine Falls which is like Greeley Park only bigger, we would like an amphitheater and performing area. We've tried several areas to kind of like replicate that and it's problematic. We have a great little location over at Los Amigos Park, for example, but there's no parking there. You have a little stage and a playground right there but it doesn't matter if only eight people can go to it. You have French Renaissance Park which has, you know, great horizontal strip kind of location but then the parking becomes a problem and it's practically invisible from Main Street.

So a lot of great events have been taking place in the library recently. Definitely can be a nod to your leadership Director McCormack. I think people are starting to see the library and the concept of a library has changed and has something that they can still access which is, again, very, very important for public libraries and a testament to the work your team's been doing.

Jennifer McCormack, Library Director

Thank you.

Alderwoman Timmons

Yes, thank you. I'm one that's in favor this. I can't wait to 2024. One - the library is so important to our community. We need libraries. We need books. We need everything that it can to enhance our community. Without our libraries, we're nothing. So I'm in favor of anything library. The more you beautify the library, encourage more people to come to the library, the better the community will be. When you renovated the insides a few years back if you remember that, it was - but when you renovated it, it was welcoming - the children room in there, and downstairs, and all the rooms that's downstairs was great. You just need to do the outside now.

Chairman Lopez

Director McCormack would you like to comment on the inside as well?

Alderwoman Timmons

So yes, we're not getting rid of our libraries and we're just not going to do that. Library is important and we need them. Thank you for everything.

Jennifer McCormack, Library Director

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Kelly I see your hand but I feel like Director McCormack could respond. Any response? Okay. Alderwoman Kelly then.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. So I just wanted to echo a lot of the sentiments here. I wanted to thank you for your perseverance on this. I know COVID was unexpected for everybody and we had big plans and you guys really took ownership in terms of finding alternative funding and adjusting how we were going to go about this. So as someone whose business was literally right there and I saw it for almost 10 years every single day, it's definitely an underutilized part of our City. I think that the improvements that you guys are working to create will make a huge difference. So I think the library under your leadership and through the last few years especially has become this symbol for community. There are books there but we also come there for festivals, we also come there for (inaudible) and community meetings. So this will only allow us to have a bit more broader sense of community and a place for everybody to be able to come and enjoy it. So I am fully behind this and I'm very excited to see it come to fruition.

Jennifer McCormack, Library Director

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Any more comments from the Committee? Seeing none.

COMMUNICATIONS

From: Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager  
Re: FY2024 Community Development Block Grant Annual Action Plan – Substantial Amendment

From: Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager  
Re: Urban Program Department Updates – July 2023

***There being no objection, Chairman Lopez accepted the communications and placed them on file.***

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

**R-23-139**

- Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
- Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
- Alderman John Sullivan
- Alderman Patricia Klee
- Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
- Alderman Thomas Lopez
- Alderman Richard A. Dowd
- Alderman June M. Caron
- Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
- Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF UP TO \$200,000 FROM THE NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN KLEE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE BY ROLL CALL**

Chairman Lopez

And as a note we do have a member who is on Zoom so we would do a roll call vote for these. We've had a lot of substantial discussion so as long as there isn't further comments, I'm just going to move to the vote.

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Klee, Alderwoman Timmons,  
Alderwoman Lopez 4

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**R-23-140**

- Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
- Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
- Alderman John Sullivan
- Alderman Patricia Klee
- Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
- Alderman Thomas Lopez
- Alderman Richard A. Dowd
- Alderman Tyler Gouveia
- Alderman June M. Caron
- Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
- Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
- Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$3,000,000 FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE NASHUA LIBRARY PLAZA AREA**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN KLEE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE BY ROLL CALL**

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Klee, Alderwoman Timmons,  
Alderwoman Lopez 4

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**R-23-141**

- Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
- Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
- Alderman John Sullivan
- Alderman Patricia Klee
- Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
- Alderman Thomas Lopez
- Alderman Richard A. Dowd
- Alderman Tyler Gouveia
- Alderman June M. Caron
- Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
- Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**AMENDING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL ACTION PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 RELATIVE TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ("CDBG")**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN KLEE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE BY ROLL CALL**

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Klee, Alderwoman Timmons,  
Alderman Lopez 4

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES – None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE - None

GENERAL DISCUSSION - None

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Alderman Klee

Just a quick one. Once again, I just want to extend thank yous to everyone who works so hard. I want to really give kudos to our Chairman for ringing in all these departments has been wonderful. I've been on the Human Affairs Committee and everybody's done a great job but you're bringing these departments in to help explain things to us as well as the public and I truly appreciate that. So thank you so much for your doing.

I did want to add one thing to Manager Long. You kind of got thrown in this just as the last CDBG grants were coming in and you kind of put on the hot seat. So I appreciate all the hard work that you're doing. Doing great job. Thank you.

For Mr. Wholey who sat through this so patiently. I appreciate you coming. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Alderwoman Timmons, anything?

Alderwoman Timmons

No, I said enough.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. So my comments are first to let everybody know September 12<sup>th</sup> at the library we will be having Employment Connect. It's in its 16th year like I didn't realize I've been sharing it for that long. It's crazy but it's a job fair event that's meant to highlight in-person interaction so employers who are looking for talented employees, employees that are looking for great placements. This is an opportunity to kind of get around the giant survey that every business has and to kind of show your skills and ask the questions that the computer may not think to ask. So Employment Connect September 12<sup>th</sup>.

Leading up to that if you're looking downtown at all, you're seeing a whole bunch of bins that are out that have a slogan called "First Impressions". We're doing a job development program as well to help people get ready to make their first impressions. So we're collecting new and gently used professional business clothing like polo shirts, buttoned down shirts, blouses, skirts, belts that kind of stuff. There's a bin right over here at the Mayor's Office if my fellow Aldermen would like to drop some items in there. They are definitely appreciated and very effective for people who are walking into a job fair not feeling 100% and then getting those last couple of things and personal touch that really makes them feel confident to get their new opportunities.

Then finally, I just want to advise the public that in two weeks you're going to see a removal of the extended outdoor dining and paving begin on Main Street. So be cautious and mindful of how you're going to plan your routes. That work is definitely long overdue and we're looking forward to having a Main Street that's nice and smooth. Maybe some railroad tracks that are fixed as well but everything takes work so there's going to be a process of adjustment.

Finally, I would like to thank Alderman Klee our Clerk for showing up tonight because without her we wouldn't have had quorum. She literally just had a root canal so I mean when we talk about dedication to the job, she's knocking it out of the park.

Back to School will be next Thursday.

Alderman Klee

This Thursday at 6:30.

Chairman Lopez

Back to School. Check out the library. They have the advertisements.

Also Nashua Soup Kitchen backpack drive is beginning so check with them if you are a Nashua Soup Kitchen client.

Alderwoman Timmons

All right. I have 5:00 to 6:30 Nashua goes back to school.

Chairman Lopez

Director McCormick?

Alderman Klee

She's gone. I do think it's 5 to 6:30 I'm sure.

Chairman Lopez

All right, consensus is 5:00 pm but don't trust us. Go check the library. An opportunity to sign up for things at the library.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERWOMAN KELLY TO ADJOURN BY ROLL CALL**

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Klee, Alderwoman Timmons,  
Alderman Lopez 4

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Alderman Patricia Klee  
Committee Clerk