

HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

September 19, 2022

A meeting of the Human Affairs Committee was held Monday, September 19, 2022, at 7:00 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  
Alderman Patricia Klee, Clerk  
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.  
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons

Also in Attendance: Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

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PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS

From: Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager  
Re: Urban Programs Department Updates – August 2022

***There being no objection, Chairman Lopez accepted the communication and placed it on file.***

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

**R-22-059**

Endorser: Mayor Jim Donchess

**AMENDING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL ACTION PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022 RELATIVE TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (“CDBG”)**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN KELLY TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Lopez

Mr. Long do you want to give a general overview?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Certainly. So both of these park projects were approved in prior CDBG Action Plans and this comes at the request of the Department of Public Works to transfer the funds entirely to the Sandy Pond Park Project, which will be installing a new fishing pier.

Chairman Lopez

Can you clarify where it was being transferred from?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes, the (inaudible) park project is where those funds are coming from and I'm afraid I don't recall the exact dates of that project offhand but.

Chairman Lopez

Okay but Public Works has requested it. They're in the middle of doing a fishing pier project. Any questions from the members of the Committee?

Just for the sake of thoroughness, if we could get an explanation of the project that it was part of just as a comment sent to the Board of Aldermen just in case anyone has any questions. So then without objection are we ready to vote?

**MOTION CARRIED**

**R-22-060**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.  
Aldерwoman Shoshanna Kelly  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman June M. Caron  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Aldерwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**ACCEPTING FUNDS AND ADOPTING AN ALLOCATION PLAN FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM FUNDS RECEIVED THROUGH THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT**

Chairman Lopez

So we have been asked to table this, but we'll need a motion and then it might be a good idea to have an introduction of what this is because once you move to table, it's not debatable.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN KELLY TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

ON THE QUESTION

Aldерwoman Kelly

I'll move to recommend final passage.

Alderman Klee

Nope.

Aldерwoman Kelly

Well he wants to talk about the first so we have to recommend...

Alderman Klee

Oh no, that's right. I apologize. I'll put that in here.

Chairman Lopez

All right. So Alderman Kelly has properly made a motion for final passage. Mr. Long if you want to give us a quick summary.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes. So through the American Rescue Plan Act, the City of Nashua has received about \$1.6 million in funds for our HOME Program and that is the program that handles affordable housing development. Unlike the (inaudible) HOME Program, the ARP funds are specifically for developing housing for specific qualifying populations. Those four populations are homeless residence, those at risk of homelessness, those who are fleeing sexual or domestic violence, and those at the greatest risk of housing instability. Before we can begin allocating the funds to specific projects, we have to adopt an allocation plan. That is the plan that has been brought before the Board of Aldermen and now before the Committee. We are planning to have a public hearing at the October committee meeting and a public comments period that should be get running next Monday for a period of 30 days.

Chairman Lopez

So the public comment, how would the public access that?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

That is posted on the Urban Programs website under news and announcements (<https://www.nashuanh.gov/1553/News-and-Announcements>). We're happy to accept comments however is most convenient for residents whether that's phone call, email, postal mail, whatever works best for folks.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. I can see if it's possible for the transcriptionist to stick the link into the agenda or into the minutes for this meeting. If not right here, then maybe she can at least put it in as an attachment that way it's easier for people to follow. I think there's gonna be a lot of interest in that, especially as the weather gets colder and, you know, how we're helping people in what we're doing. I know your department definitely wants to get solid feedback so that they feel like they're making the best choices to help our community.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Absolutely. Right now the bulk of the funds has been allocated towards affordable housing developments. That's the biggest need. There's a few other categories in administrative expenses, also supportive services, nonprofits that provide affordable housing, also provide case management which can be useful for certain of those qualifying populations. But right now in the draft plan, the bulk is set aside for affordable housing development.

Chairman Lopez

Just as a caveat though when we say affordable housing like the Housing Trust Fund took the word "affordable" off of it because it's not strictly speaking just focused on that. The HUD definition of affordable does go pretty high like single incomes up to 80,000. So is there a definition of affordable being applied to this? Is it specifically people who are low income workforce?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

So in general when you're talking about housing and urban development, you're looking at 80% of the area median income. That is also broken down by family size. So for a family of four for Nashua, I believe, it's about \$122,000. Somewhere in that ballpark. However, the HOME ARP funds are unique in that because it has to be for qualifying populations. Most of those populations, they're gonna be at lower income levels. Certainly homeless residents, you're gonna be looking at far below 80 percent for those at risk of homelessness very likely far below 80%.

Chairman Lopez

Okay and that's more probably something that the Housing Committee would be looking at?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

So certainly we should take a look at whether we can find funding sources with the Housing Trust Fund, but it does exist separately from the Housing Trust Fund.

Chairman Lopez

Okay, so they're the same thing.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

They are not the same thing.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Well, thanks for cleaning that up for me.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Of course.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

And then just for the record, our next meeting should be the second Tuesday if I remember right. Is this the second Tuesday or the third Tuesday?

Alderman Klee

Right now, this is the third Tuesday.

Chairman Lopez

Okay.

Alderwoman Kelly

Oh, that's right.

Alderman Klee

So it would be the 17th. That's what I have - October 17.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. So we anticipate our next meeting being October 17 for the hearing. Is that correct?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

That is correct.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Do any other committee members have questions?

Alderman Moran

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So when it comes to these projects are anything going to be involved with public housing? Anything that really mails the lower income side on top of that? Is there a way to prioritize people earning family support earning less than \$120,000? I don't know if like it's like a first come first serve that these agencies will set up or anything like that but if there is a sliding scale on how they determine, how they allocate, gets it weighted differently. Sorry.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

No, no. Yeah so it's a very unique program in that it's really focused on those four qualifying populations. They're not by definition income based. But given the nature of them, you're talking about lower income. You're not talking about that 80%. You're talking more about 30% of the area median income.

When you're talking about a homeless, especially chronically homeless residents, when you're talking about those who are at greatest risk of housing instability for that you may be looking at about 50% of (inaudible) income. We do have the ability if we want to, to specify in the plan whether we have preferences. As far as I'm aware, we could put income preferences in there as well.

Alderman Moran

That'd be wonderful. Follow up.

Chairman Lopez

Yup.

Alderman Moran

Can any of these funds be directed to rental subsidies?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes. Tenant based rental assistance is an eligible category funding for the HOME ARP funds.

Chairman Lopez

I have no idea how to do this but my input probably at whatever vehicle you have for collecting it is it's challenging for some people in different ways than others. For example, single individuals who are coming out of homelessness or facing homelessness, they generally a little bit of prevention is worth a pound of rehabilitation. If we can keep them from entering homelessness, then that usually pays off more than having to help them recover all their stuff from wherever it was stored, and reconnect all of their employment, and all that kind of stuff. So those particular needs and that being on an individual basis when it comes to families, though one of the things that I've been seeing very regularly is families that need three bedrooms or four bedroom apartments need to be really nimble because when one becomes available and they have to have that one otherwise, they're getting split. They're getting sent in different directions. You're adding those complexities and layers. So I'm not exactly sure how this particular money would be able to specifically ameliorate that but that would be my thought is probably it's not going to be one specific strategy works for the whole population. Don't put all the money into one single effort, but really look at what's happening in the community and figure out how we can move some of the larger populations that are presenting themselves while recognizing the ones that may be larger just because they've been homeless longer. I know families generally experienced homelessness, longer contiguously because we don't have sufficient space for them and because we don't have larger scopes of apartments.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Know certainly and there are several categories of funding that will give us quite a bit of flexibility I think in terms of different projects aimed at meeting different needs. Currently, the tenant based rental assistance is not funded under that. So I will be adjusting some of our funding numbers and presenting the draft at the October meeting that is revised based on the comments from the committee members tonight.

Chairman Lopez

I will definitely be looking forward to that.

Alderwoman Kelly

Yes. So I know that multiple programs that you operate and, you know Carrie did before, have a lot of strings to them. This one sounds like it's under ARPA so does that make it a little bit more accessible to people in terms of being able to take advantage of the funds?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

A lot of the HOME Program rules and regulations still apply. So I'm gonna say unfortunately not really but any additional money is good. I imagine probably folks who are already familiar with how the whole program works are going to be the primary applicants is what I would foresee.

Alderwoman Kelly

Okay, follow up.

Chairman Lopez

Yep.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. I appreciate that clarification because I know that there's a lot of different tools you have but sometimes it's harder and has more strings attached depending on what program you put people in. So there was mention of putting this together with the Housing Trust Fund. My concern there would be that the Housing Trust Fund is run by the city and can be a little bit more nimble in terms of how we put together partnerships. What I heard from you just now is that there might be too many attachments to this money to try to put the two together.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

I think a lot of it will be project by project, which is an unsatisfying answer. A rough rule is, you know in my experience, is there already federal money in the project? Because if there is you might as well put more federal money. Most of the rules and regulations are similar across programs. So you're not really putting on more restrictions but if it's the only source of federal money, then you want to take a much harder look to see is it worth those funds compared to all the tradeoffs.

Alderwoman Kelly

Actually can I have one more follow up. So I just want to make sure I'm completely clear because ARPA gets a little bit confusing. Is this one time funds or is this something we get every year but we're getting supplemental because of ARPA?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

This is something we're getting supplemental to ARPA. This is separate from our annual HOME allocation.

Alderwoman Kelly

Okay, great.

Chairman Lopez

But it is a one-time not a recurring?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

It is one time. That's correct.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

It could be a shot in the arm for somebody who needs it, needs more of what they have, or it could be a boost if somebody's trying to get something up and running. Mr. Long is that correct or am I?

Alderwoman Kelly

Great, thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Okay.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's not relative to the same questions that everyone else has been asking but more relative to the comments that you will be getting throughout this 30 day period until we have the actual public hearing. Is it possible for this body or actually the Board of Aldermen to see those comments? I'd be very curious as to what other people are suggesting and so on. Do you feel the same Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Lopez

100% because if my constituents are telling me one thing and then the data shows another, I can kind of know how that happens.

Alderman Klee

Yeah. That's possible for us to get it before the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

No, absolutely.

Alderman Klee

Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Alderman Moran

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I guess one of the caveats is that this money won't be recurring and it's limited obviously. What are the chances that any of these programs that get created or suggested become sustainable and if not sustainable, would there be something built into the funding mechanism that says the transition period is something to make it less harmful when the money's gone?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Well certainly the limits of the program will be very clearly communicated to any potential applicants so they're aware. This is one time funding allocation so there's no confusion on that point. One of the things will be doing and it's written into the allocation plan is financial and organizational capacity of applicants will be a criteria of evaluation. We'll be reviewing applications after we've adopted the plan and we're at that stage.

One other funding category that's allowable is nonprofit capacity building. That's something we might want to consider funding as well to hopefully, you know, not shore up some of the existing agencies doing this work but also possibly bringing others into support them in developing that capacity.

Alderman Moran

That's great. One - a statement. This must be one of the worst committees you come to discuss these things. You've got two social workers and three very well educated social service advocates on the board. So good job with all these questions.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

I know, off the top of my head, I can think of like there's a rescue mission opening on French Hill. There's a number of extensions to domestic violence support services that have been kind of propped up in the worst of times during the pandemic and could probably use expansions. We know pretty famously the Soup Kitchen is going through a large scale expansion. Then there's programs like Stepping Stones that are trying to do targeted things like helping creating youth transitional housing processes. So I would imagine any of those entities would probably be interested in a boost to kind of get them up to level where okay well now we have enough people in the room. When the Mayor's advisory committee looks at resources that he's going to be allocating, they typically take into account I guess it could be bluntly summarized as are we the ones who need to do this? If you have a nonprofit organization that has a built in revenue structure, like they charge fee for services, or they bill insurance, or that kind of stuff, they can't necessarily be looked at with the same lens as the organization that like has to have a golf tournament or whatever where they lose a staff member. But then additionally when you're looking at are we the ones that is the city the best way or the only option that they have.

The other criteria to look at is does this benefit, specifically the city or does this go towards a program that is able to present a lot of high quality programming, and connections, and all that stuff because maybe they're more of an like a larger national affiliate than something that's homegrown, was born out of the needs of this community, and that are

like there's no intermediaries between how they function and what the needs are in our community. So I'm sure you'll take all of that into account. Like I said, I'm glad we're having this conversation and that we're going to have that opportunity for the public to weigh in on the Urban Programs page. I think it would probably be a good idea for any committee members to try to help with dissemination. So if you could point us to share with us the correct link and then we could share it with our respective constituents that would be very helpful because if we all just try to find it, it'll be a bunch of people playing pinball ending up in the wrong areas. So if there's no further discussion.

**MOTION BY ALDERWOMAN KELLY TO RECOMMEND TABLING PENDING A PUBLIC HEARING ON OCTOBER 17, 2022**

**MOTION CARRIED**

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE – None

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Chairman Lopez

Seeing no general discussion which as Chair I'll remind people. General discussion is back and forth. Let's introduce a topic and talk about it. Aldermanic comments are ah you've made your comment. I'll make my comment.

Any members of the public wishing to make comment?

PUBLIC COMMENT

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

I was able to look up the Labine Park Project. It was bathrooms.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Bathrooms for where?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

For the park. I don't know the exact location.

Chairman Lopez

Oh, okay. So we're not talking about the same park you're talking the same park. We're switching a fisherman pier for bathrooms?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes in different parks.

Chairman Lopez

Thanks for that clarification. Seeing no further public comment.

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Alderman Moran

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a big day for the City of Nashua and I'm gonna talk about this more tomorrow at



Planning and Economic Development. But the Haluwa has officially reopened.

Chairman Lopez

The most asked question on (inaudible) what's happening...

Alderman Moran

I know Director Cummings has probably been working very hard on that one and I'm sure we'll point it out at tomorrow night's meeting. If you want some great Chinese food, head up to Exit 6.

Alderwoman Timmons

Okay. I missed what officially opened.

Alderman Moran

The Haluwa has reopened after almost three years being closed. The Haluwa Chinese restaurant. You've got to check it out.

Chairman Lopez

If you go there, you'll be like oh yeah it's this one.

Alderman Moran

It's a great day for Nashua.

Chairman Lopez

Any other comments? All right. I'm making my final comment then. I would like to congratulate Alderman Timmons on her hard work on the Cultural Connections Committee. They had a great cultural festival. We also had a great festival in Alderman Klee's Ward - part of the Egyptian festival. Some great activities this past weekend and hopefully more to come. Can I get a motion from anybody?

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERWOMAN KELLY TO ADJOURN  
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Alderman Patricia Klee  
Committee Clerk