

**Watertown Housing Partnership  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, January 20, 2015  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Planning Office  
Watertown Administration Building**

**Member Attendees**

Fred Reynolds, Chair, Cliff Cook, Brian Costello, Paul Fahey, David Leon, Jennifer Van Campen, and Judge Paul Menton

**Members Absent:** Torey Dean

**Others Present:** Calandra Clark and Debra L. Smith

**I. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

**a. Draft Minutes from November 18, 2015**

Mr. Reynolds asked for a motion to approve the draft minutes as presented. Mr. Costello moved to approve the draft November 18, 2015 minutes. Judge Menton seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**II. Discussion of Uses for CDBG/Town Match Money**

Ms. Adams noted that Watertown had received Community Development Block Grants in Fiscal Years 1999, 2002 and 2004. She said that with these monies, the Town had set up a Home Improvement loan. Ms. Adams distributed a 12/18/14 Email from Mark Southard at DHCD. She noted he had determined that the money was Town Match, and therefore not subject to the CDGB program requirements. Ms. Adams said the estimated amount of money was approximately \$269,000. She suggested the Partnership discuss possible uses for these monies. She noted the purpose of the original grants was housing related, and as such, Ms. Adams suggested the monies should be used to continue those activities, such as a new housing rehabilitation program, weatherization activities, and to assist the Housing Authority or Metro West Collaborative Development with one of their projects.

Fred Reynolds, Chair, encouraged Partnership Members to Email Andrea with ideas for the use of these Town Match monies.

**III. Draft Policy on Capital Improvements: For Existing First Time Home Buyer Loans**

Ms. Adams distributed a copy of a draft Policy that had also been included with the Meeting Packet.

Mr. Reynolds distributed a copy of proposed additions and changes to the draft Policy. He described them to the Members.

Discussion included:

- ◆ Whether or not a homeowner could perform the work, such as installing new windows?
- ◆ How to define “most cost efficient”? Does that mean the person asking for the Capital Improvement must show that they shopped around?
- ◆ Capital Improvements should include corrections of Code violations that would otherwise prohibit the transfer of the property
- ◆ Can delete septic tank replacement as a possible Capital Improvement because they are rare or non-existent in Watertown
- ◆ Add “*improvements to allow disabled access*” as an allowed Capital Improvement

- ◆ Change the language under *Section V: Documentation* Required to the past tense, as this Policy would only affect the 20-25 existing First Time Homebuyer/American Dream Downpayment Initiative loans, and the gathering of documentation would be retrospective, after work had been done. This is because any new loans would be subject to the Department of Housing and Community Development's Policy on Capital Improvements via their requirement for a Uniform Deed Rider
- ◆ Set a minimum value for the Capital Improvement to count, such as at least \$500.00

Ms. Debra L. Smith, a current First Time Homebuyer loan recipient distributed a copy of her proposed amendments to the draft Policy. She went through them with the Members. They included:

- Delete the depreciation table
- Add other work considered a Capital Improvement: glass, Plexiglas and windows; replacement of doors and storm doors; new appliances (not necessarily built ins), replacement of plumbing, pipes, toilets, tubs, and sinks; lighting fixtures; and blinds or other window treatments specially made for the unit.
- Allow the cost of labor, parts, materials, delivery and disposal to be included
- Allow decks, garages, flooring and landscaping to be considered, on a case-by-case basis
- Add a section that requires participation in Alternative Dispute Resolution

Ms. Adams noted the draft Policy adhered closely to the one from DHCD, given that Watertown's Policy, to be approved, would have to be reviewed by the HOME Consortium and the Housing and Urban Development field office in Boston.

Ms. Van Campen noted that DHCD's Policy was more restrictive in terms of what could be classified as a Capital Improvement because the properties that would be affected by DHCD's Policy were designed to be affordable in perpetuity. So, DHCD wants to restrict or restrain the growth or increase in the base value of such a property to keep it broadly affordable. She also noted that DHCD's Policy envisions that the proposed Capital Improvements are okayed in advance, where Watertown's Policy would be retrospective relative to the existing First Time Home Buyer loans.

Mr. Reynolds noted that Ms. Adams needed to attend another meeting, and noting the lateness of the hour, asked that the discussion of the draft Policy be carried over to the next Partnership meeting.

### **Adjourn**

Mr. Reynolds asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Cook moved to adjourn the meeting, and Judge Menton seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.