

**MINUTES**  
**Central City Revitalization and Housing Committee Meeting**  
**April 6, 2011 – 10:00 a.m.**  
**Council Conference Room – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor City Hall**

The Central City Revitalization and Housing Committee met on Wednesday, April 6, 2011, at 10:00 a.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Council Conference Room, City Hall. The following Committee members were present: Chairman Walker Reid, Councilman John Howren, and Councilman Dale Burkett. Also in attendance was Councilwoman Brenda Craig. Chairman Reid welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Chairman Reid addressed Ms. Myra Messer, Housing and Neighborhoods Administrator, to begin staff's presentation.

**Item 1: Community Development 2011-2012 Annual Action Plan (HUD Budget)**

Ms. Messer recognized Mr. Chuck Walling, HUD Compliance Officer, for the presentation of the Community Development 2011-2012 Annual Action Plan. Mr. Walling referred to copies of the 2011-2012 Community Development Annual Budget Narrative Statement and Executive Summary for Year Two of the Annual Action Plan. The Annual Action Plan describes the specific local plans for HUD funds, including CDBG and HOME Investment Partnership Program. The Action Plan reports the activities Community Development plans to undertake during the program year. It also identifies HUD-funded activities and other actions that will be implemented to meet the objectives of the five-year Consolidated Plan. Public hearings, as required by HUD, are being held throughout the planning process with a thirty-day (30) comment period from March 28, 2011 – April 29, 2011 to allow for public input and participation in the budget process. The Annual Action Plan and budget must be submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development upon Council approval and not later than May 12, 2011. Council will be notified of any changes regarding legislative approval of HUD funding.

**Committee Recommendation:**

The Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend to full Council the Community Development 2011-2012 Annual Action Plan (HUD Budget) with numbers as presented.

**Necessary Council Action:**

Accept or reject the Committee recommendation.

**Item 2: Updates:**

Chairman Reid recognized Mr. Jim Palenick, City Manager, and for staff's presentation. Councilman John Howren was excused from the remainder of the meeting.

**Downtown Conference Center and Parking Deck:** The Conference Center construction is on schedule. The Gaston County Sports Hall of Fame has committed to the Conference Center and will occupy a portion of the lower lobby. The Conference Center is scheduled to open in October, 2011. The parking deck access has been approved by Council and will contain 229 controlled spaces.

**Nick's Steak and Tap House:** Furnishings and equipment are in place, and staffing is being finalized. The opening is scheduled for mid to late April.

**Highland Hospital and Marietta Street Apartments:** Tentatively, the State has awarded the City of Gastonia \$950,000 in NSP3 funds. These funds have not yet been officially confirmed at the Federal level. If the funds are confirmed, the next step in the final approval process is to obtain low income housing tax credits from the North Carolina Housing Finance Authority, and basic commitment and approval would be needed from the Gastonia Housing Authority. If everything comes together, construction may begin late in 2011 or early 2012.

**Highland Grocery:** The development of the Highland Grocery site should be completed by late June. At present, a 36" water line is being installed, and storm work is almost done. Currently, the City is moving forward with two grocery store entities to possibly occupy the site.

**First Legacy Credit Union:** The temporary office is on site. Building permits are about to be finalized, and construction could possibly start by the end of the month.

**Marietta Street Bridge and Pedestrian Walkway:** The City continues to voice their concerns to NCDOT regarding the delay of completion of the Marietta Street Bridge and Pedestrian Walkway.

**Loray Mill:** The FHA application for the development of Loray Mill has been submitted to HUD. The City is awaiting approval from HUD before final financing can be arranged and closed.

**Builders for Hope:** Builders for Hope is a growing non-profit entity that works in communities to provide quality, affordable housing. Builders for Hope would like to expand to areas across the country, and they have been recruited to expand to Gastonia. They work in communities to take older homes that might otherwise be demolished, acquire them sometimes without cost, rehabilitate the homes, and relocate them to a new lot. Another benefit is that Builders of Hope often hires rehabilitated prisoners, the unemployed, and those who are learning a trade. An area of interest to Builders of Hope is the Gray Street/Beatrice Costner neighborhood. Discussions are ongoing at this point.

**Logan/Marietta Street:** This area would be a great place to develop affordable housing; however, the City does not currently have funding to purchase this property.

**Anntony's:** Anntony's Caribbean Café is under renovation and is waiting for their equipment to arrive. The café is planning to have a soft opening sometime around May 1, 2011, and shortly thereafter, the grand opening will occur.

**Arts on Main:** There has been an outpouring of interest in Arts on Main. About 19 artists can be accommodated on the first floor of the 212 Main building. Right now, there are approximately 30 artists interested in renting studio space. Volunteers from the Art Guild have contributed approximately 200 man-hours to get the gallery ready.

**Other Items of Discussion:**

**Presentation of Downtown:** Councilman Burkett recommended a before/after presentation be developed to showcase accomplishments of the revitalization of Downtown Gastonia. This presentation could be utilized as a communication and promotional tool, possibly by Tony Swainey during speaking engagements. Mr. Palenick stated this demonstrates a thoughtful, cohesive plan, where each element came together making an impressive difference in Downtown Gastonia.

**Neighborhood Stabilization:** Councilman Burkett stated that before Councilwoman Craig joined the Council, the issue of neighborhood stabilization dealing with rental properties was discussed by Council. Recently, the Police Department and Councilwoman Craig have been working on a system to identify these troubled areas in rental properties around Gastonia through calls of service. Once troubled areas are identified, the Police Department would work with landlords to lessen these calls of service in the specific rental properties. Councilman Burkett requests recommendation to full Council that staff prepare an ordinance regarding this proposed program.

**Committee Recommendation:**

The Committee voted unanimously (2-0) to recommend to full Council that staff be directed to prepare an ordinance for neighborhood stabilization dealing with rental properties with a system triggered through calls of service administered through the police department.

**Necessary Council Action:**

Accept or reject the Committee recommendation.

Having no other items of business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.