

Minutes for Kansas City Neighborhood Advisory Council on 12/9/2003

*** Budgetary meeting ***

KCNAC members in attendance: Lynda Callon, Dennis Carroll, Steve Eklund, Forestine Beasley, Cynthia Canady. Jay Stock, Bruce Pennington, Rodney Sampson, and Greg Hugeback were not present. Non-members present: Bob Fisher (former PMAC member). NCS staff in attendance: Renea Nash.

Started off with a discussion of illegal dumping problems that exist all over. **Lynda is starting a "Neighborhood Expectations" program in the Westside, both for parents and for children.** Some people complain that it is making it "too hard to live here". This led into the start of the talk about the proposed NCS budget. Jay also asked Vicki Noteis (City Development) to provide a copy of their preliminary budget, but it was not present today.

Dennis Carroll noticed that Dead Animal Pickup (pg. 2) is now under Environmental Management. **The budget also states "Animal Control will only pick up dead animals on the call of a licensed veterinarian's office"; this is a point of some confusion.** There is also great concern about the delay in picking them up; some people have taken to simply throwing them out in the trash, since they seem to be treated as refuse already with the move to EM.

It was asked if the KCNA Roundtable still meets; Lynda assured everyone that it did, and suggested that those KCNAC members who were part of both use that as a place to disseminate more widely the information learned/decided in KCNAC.

Next one Dennis was concerned about was the Center for Community Solutions entry: it looks like the LLEBG is going away and that office funded by the General Fund; are there any guarantees? He mentioned that the education component is much more important than the equipment/devices, if that cut needs to be made. **Lynda seconded the idea that the CCS office cannot be cut any further;** they are the first line of contact with neighborhoods. Renea mentioned the CERT money being made available through DEM, along with CCS/Fire/Police. Staff seems to be the crucial component in many different departments; there is only one person picking up dogs in Animal Control, for example.

Possible cuts of approx. \$15,000 were discussed for the Foster Grandparent Program. Lynda mentioned that she knows nearly nothing about the Social Services Division of NCS; asked Renea what they do. Federal and Regional funding sources are decreasing, and local opportunities are being explored. The Healthy Initiatives Program is new; responsible for getting meals to children in non-school hours, particularly after school. Sometimes their only nutritious meal is the one they get at school. This program is coming from the State and from Federal funds, and is working through existing agencies that work with children. This item is grant-funded though so it doesn't come from the General Fund, and thus isn't in danger of being cut from the budget.

Steve asked about a newsletter item (unclear which ones). Renea explained that those are considered separate from CCS newsletter printings; (explanation unclear).

Regulated Industries is fully supported by their fees; they are asking for Technology Improvements for an online application system.

Neighborhood Preservation is asking for money for 8 additional inspectors, as well as money to abate code violations for indigent citizens who cannot afford to solve the problem themselves. There seems to be some question what programs will remain for these inspectors to refer people to. There is a long waiting list for the programs that do exist so far (although it does generally stop the inspectors from making further citations). They have an image problem because they are a complaint-driven service. Another problem is that the current inspectors are vastly overworked; each inspector has 250-300 cases on their docket at any one time, when optimal efficiency would apparently be at 160 or so. The improvements to be done include getting them hand-held devices that will enable them to be more efficient in the field and get more done while they are out. Dennis suggested that they revisit this in a year, as it is too early now to see how the technical changes and addition of inspectors will affect their productivity and service reputation. The key aspect seems to be to make NP more pro-active and less re-active, instead of relying on a complaint-driven system. However they can't possibly be pro-active in their current staffing capacity; they've tried that before and the caseload jumped to 400 instantly. Additionally, Judge Cagle has little to no jail space to send people to if they are unwilling to take steps to remediate the problem.

Dangerous Buildings expects to spend down their current year's budget by the end of the fiscal year with nothing left over. Based on the budget projections for the coming year and the rate of demolitions, funds will then be exhausted by midway through the fiscal year '04-'05. **They are requesting that the total budget for DB be \$1.2M**, half from the General Fund and half from CDBG funds. According to one KCNAC member, DB is apparently also dealing with the consequences of an adverse ruling that made it much more difficult for them to proceed with demolitions. Once that is cleared out of the way, there may be a huge backlog of demolitions that come due and wipe out DB's budget. Another concern is funds being taken from DB to pay for other projects.

Social Services is looking at having to undertake minor improvements to make rental of LMPC be more attractive and therefore increase revenue. Since the move of existing staff over to LMPC, phone charges have doubled while the level of service and usage remains the same. When asked, IT explained that the phones in the Center are different from those at City Hall; thus the current year's appropriation for phones will not cover the cost projections (part of this may be forwarding charges for moving calls from one number to another: \$0.75/call adds up in a hurry).

Council Commitments: Funding for the 16 Tow Service positions, 2 Regulated Industries positions for the Sidewalk Café ordinance, and the anticipated approval of 10 Animal Control officers, is not included in the current budget proposal from NCSD but is on the City Manager's agenda. The department is in the process of recruiting and filling those positions.

Lynda asked about the "Social Worker" positions in the budget; Renea explained that those were employees of the Social Services division who verified compliance with program guidelines. The title is somewhat misleading, and does not refer to MSW-Social Workers.

The Municipal Corrections Institution is requesting funding for 6 additional staff; 5 officers and 1 administrative. They are facing staffing shortages, which make it unsafe to operate with insufficient staff, both for staff and for the inmates.

The Homeless Coalition is administered via MARC and coordinates the different agencies in the Metro area to provide services, pursue grants, etc.

Senior Adult Services has 5 grant-funded positions; 3 FT and 2 PT. This provides approximately 4800 meals per month, including the Meals-on-Wheels program.

The KCNAC members consider neighborhood Newsletter Printing Services absolutely critical; it is provided for those who met CDBG eligibility requirements. Not only does it provide newsletter printing, but labels and property listings for neighborhoods to do their own direct mailings. The amount is small and considered very valuably spent.

Dangerous Buildings and Neighborhood Preservation were already discussed; they are both seeking partial funding to come from the CDBG funds as well.

The budget overall is not extravagant, and the KCNAC members did not see many places it could be cut. Steve asked about whether the moneys talked about could be related to the overall budget for each division; what percentage change are we talking about? **He also reiterated the question about how NP inspectors are going to help indigent citizens;** Les should be able to come to the next KCNAC meeting, and may be able to answer more questions then. This is still a very early stage in the budget process; nothing is written in stone, and vocal support can still help.

Lynda suggested waiting to have the next meeting sometime after the holidays, to give everyone a break; Steve asked if they needed to have another one next week because of the tight time frame of things coming down the track. They will check with Les to see what works best. **Also Renea mentioned the City Manager's meeting with Budget & Audit to make his proposals known; she went to check the website upstairs on what date; it is actually next Tuesday (Dec. 16th), not this Wednesday.**

Lynda has also heard word of budget changes coming down from the State that won't be announced until mid-year; they will likely devastate more of these budgets, particularly things like Adult Services & Municipal Corrections.

Meeting adjourned after about 1h 20m.