

**CDBG PUBLIC HEARING**  
**Borough of Edinboro**  
**July 12, 2021**

**Welcome to the Public Hearing:**

Mayor Gast opened the public hearing at 5:49 PM. Council members present were Mary Ann Horne, Aaron Gast, Jim Kiley, Pat Davis, and Fred Langill. Absent were Mark Eifert and Alyssa Dobson. Also present were Manager Kevin Opple, Finance Director Jason Spangenberg, Joe Berdis of Erie County Planning, and Curtis Hals. The meeting was turned over to Joe Berdis.

**Purpose of Hearing:**

This public hearing is the first of two public hearings regarding the Borough's FY 2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development. Notice of hearing appeared in the Erie Times News on June 28, 2021 as well as posted on the Borough's website. No comments were received prior to this hearing. The second and final hearing will be scheduled at a date and time to be determined. This hearing is to provide information on the CDBG program, review/update the Three-Year CDBG Plan, and discuss how the Borough may want to utilize its CDBG funding.

**Background Information:**

The Borough is entitled to receive an annual allocation of CDBG funds from the PA DCED pursuant to PA Act 179 of 1984. Since 1985 the Borough has received approximately \$4.9 million in funding. Exhibit 1 was reviewed showing allocations from 1985 to 2021. The FY 2021 allocation of \$119,694 is an increase of \$1,859 from FY 2020. A portion of the allocation will be set aside for administration which will be provided by County Planning.

**Eligible Activities:**

CDBG funds can be used for a wide array of activities which include, but are not limited to: water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, street reconstruction, sidewalk/curb replacement, recreation improvements, housing rehabilitation, homeownership assistance, property acquisition, fair housing activities, handicapped accessibility improvements, planning activities (subject to 15% cap), and administration (subject to 18% cap). Exhibit 2 was reviewed, which identified the eligible and ineligible activities. Exhibit 3 was also reviewed, which identified the Borough projects from recent fiscal years that have been funded by CDBG. The Borough's 2020 allocation of COVID-specific funding may end up having to be returned unused. The only eligible use for the funds, a Meals on Wheels program for severely disabled adults, has received no applicants to date. This lack of applicants is not unique to Edinboro, as other local municipalities are facing the same situation.

## **CDBG Program Requirements:**

Activities must meet one of the three National Objectives of the program:

- ✓ Principally benefit low-to-moderate income persons
- ✓ Aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight
- ✓ Meet a community development need having a particular urgency, because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health and welfare of the community, and other financial resources are not available to meet the need

The primary objective is to benefit low-to-moderate income persons and at least 51% of the funds must go towards meeting this objective. That means 51% of the persons benefiting from an activity are of low-to-moderate income. An LMI person is an individual/family whose income does not exceed 80% of median income. Exhibit 4 was reviewed, showing current income limits.

## **Determining concentrations of LMI persons in a community:**

Concentrations of LMI persons can be determined in one of two ways:

- ✓ American Community Survey (ACS) 2011-2015 Data: ACS data can be referenced when a project's benefit area coincides with a census geographic area - census tract/block group - that has an LMI concentration of 51% or above.
- ✓ Income Surveys – this is the most widely used method as most communities do not have census geographic areas that are 51% or above and most project benefit areas do not coincide with a census geographic area

The Borough is located within Census Tract 0122.02 and divided into six block groups. The Borough's LMI population is 48.12% which means that any project that would benefit the entire community will not qualify for CDBG funding. Block Group 1 consisting of the Lakeside area and Block Group 4 consisting of the downtown area are the only two block groups which meet the LMI requirements for CDBG funding. The Income Survey method has been attempted multiple times in the Borough with no success. It has become very difficult to have projects meet eligibility using income surveys; many people do not complete the surveys, and if they don't, they are automatically assumed to not be LMI.

There are activities which do not require a survey nor depend on census information to qualify for funding. These are activities which according to HUD will benefit clientele who are generally presumed to be principally low-to-moderate income persons. This clientele includes abused children, elderly persons, battered spouses, homeless persons, disabled adults, illiterate adults, persons living with the disease AIDS, and migrant farm workers. Examples of these activities include installation of curb-cut ramps, improvements to a senior center, and handicapped accessibility to a municipal building. Another activity which would not require a survey nor depend on census information to qualify for funding would be housing rehabilitation assistance for income qualified, single family, owner-occupied persons. The FY 2020 handicap curb ramp project was approved as part of this category of project.

**Review and update of three-year community development plan and discuss possible FY 2021 projects:**

The Borough's housing objectives were stated as follows, with Manager Opplé confirming there was no change from last year for this: the community's housing stock is relatively modern and there exists a well-established code enforcement program. As such, Borough officials contend there is no urgent need to undertake a single family and/or rental housing rehabilitation program. Continue to enforce building and related codes to promote sound maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing units. Mr. Berdis noted that single family housing rehabilitation could be added as a potential project if no other projects qualify. Manager Opplé stated that he would only want to offer housing rehabilitation for owner-occupied homes.


Mr. Berdis listed the public facilities needs and objectives. Street reconstruction or rehabilitation is an ongoing need of the Borough. Curb ramps, sidewalks, and public parks are additional needs, although the curb ramps were taken care of with the FY 2020 project. The second phase of the FY 2019 Thompson Park improvement project will be completed soon (adding lighting for the basketball courts).

For FY 2021, accessibility improvements to Nature's Outlet Park were discussed, including a sidewalk along the water with railing, and potentially handicap accessible picnic tables. Manager Opplé stated that the preliminary cost estimate for these improvements was about \$80,000. Mr. Berdis said that he would look into the possibility of using CDBG funds for expenses related to the sidewalk to Giant Eagle.

**Adjournment:**

The public hearing was adjourned at 6:32 PM.

ATTEST:

  
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Manager Kevin Opplé  
Interim Manager Jason Spangenberg

  
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Mayor Aaron Gast