



ROCK COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
Monday, May 3, 2010 - 8:30 A.M.
P & D Conference Room 270
Second Floor, East Wing
Rock County Courthouse
Janesville, WI

1. **Call to Order**: Board members selected Anda O'Connell to chair the meeting in the absence of both Chair Christianson and Vice Chair Grahn. Acting Chair O'Connell called the meeting to order at 8:55 A.M, after confirming that notices of the meeting have been published.

Members Present: Anda O'Connell, Jackie Wood, Anna Marie Johnson

Members Absent: Vice Chair Billy Bob Grahn, Chair Brian Christianson

Staff Members Present: David Somppi, Neale Thompson

Staff Members Absent: None

Others Present: None

2a. Paul Benjamin, the Director of the Planning and Development Agency, was introduced to the Rock County Housing Authority by Mr. Somppi. Paul explained that he was hired in February, 2010, approved by the County Board on March 11th, and has worked for approximately seven weeks. He had worked in Nepal with his Nepalese wife for approximately six months until local unrest and instability required that they leave. He is delighted to work with Rock County and admits that he knows very little about housing. He has worked in planning for rural development but feels there is a lot to do in Janesville with regard to housing. He showed an Isthmus article that "doomed" Janesville. He noted that the housing program seeks to work in many locations and hopes to unite the roughly 26 municipalities to pursue regional planning, cooperation, and work. The County has land use authority in 20 towns or unincorporated towns. Relations with the six cities and three villages are different and call for careful activities to work toward cooperation. He hopes that the area can act like a region to address issues that can generate the greatest good for as many people as we can. He plans on real progress with the County Board and this Committee in the future. Discussion turned to the CDBG Small Cities Grant Preliminary Application where he hoped the opportunity could be shared with the seven local townships: Turtle, Beloit, Orfordville, Center, Rock, Janesville, and Fulton. This CDBG funding is back after resources were applied to flooding for the past two years. CDBG funds rehab, home purchase assistance, and even acquisition in some circumstances. Decisions will be made in approximately mid-June when the local government awardees complete a final application. When asked about "blighted buildings", Paul said he had personal experience in looking for housing here. It seems that real estate prices are roughly half of Madison and beneath that some houses are half of that half if they are foreclosed or neglected. He visited a nearby building that was very cheap but hardly habitable. Com'r O'Connell noted that Rock County has many fine homes at reasonable prices. Paul noted that he had seen the lower end of the foreclosed homes and then had to leave for other commitments.

2. **Adoption of Agenda**: Motion to approve agenda for meeting of May 3, 2010, by Com'r. Wood, 2nd by Com'r. O'Connell. Motion carried.

3. **Minutes of Meeting from March 29, 2010**. Motion to approve the minutes of the meeting from March 29, 2010, by Com'r. Wood, 2nd by Com'r. O'Connell. Motion approved.

4. **Secretary's Report**: Mr. Somppi reported about the CDBG Small Cities Preliminary Application discussed above. Seven areas applied along with Rock County's application that would cover the rest of the county. Secondly, the 2006-2009 Lead Hazard Control Grant performed with the Cities of Janesville

and Beloit was successfully completed. Of the 85 units completed, 30 were homeowners, 35 were rental units, and 20 were vacant rental units. Financially, the \$1.261 million program was made up \$923,000 in grants and \$338,000 in matching deferred loans. Thirdly, the staff is working with the Rock County Staff Committee to detail options for the disposition of flooded property bought by the Hazard Mitigation Program. Staff hopes to complete the next two purchases in the coming month. In a fourth subject, staff will meet today with the Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) in Beloit to work toward referring county loan customer in danger of losing their homes to that HUD accredited program able to counsel and work with lending institutions to work toward some solutions. Dina Gonzales of NHS has the training and experience to help in the area of foreclosure prevention.

5. **Presentation of HOME Activities:** Nothing to report at this time.

6. **Review of Loan Request - #06076 D-1:** After discussion of this Home Rehab loan in the Town of Lima, the board supported this \$11,845 0% interest deferred home loan. Com'r. Wood made the motion that was seconded by Com'r. Johnson. The motion passed.

Potential Conflict of Interest - **None**

7. **Action Item Concerning Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Lands:** The motion of last month will be a part of the report about land disposition decisions to be presented to the Rock County Board Staff Committee. The committee affirmed that the motion reported in the minutes of last month was accurate enough to be passed along. Such a motion made by Com'r. O'Connell, 2nd by Com'r. Wood. Motion passed. Mr. Somppi explained that conservation easements/restrictions will be in force for any option for the land disposition. FEMA has to approve of any plans for disposition.

11. **Citizen Participation, Communications and Announcements:** Com'r. Wood distributed a flyer about the Janesville Down Town "Clean Up Day" scheduled for Friday, May 7, 2010. Besides the cleaning volunteers, anyone can also buy lunch at Firehouse Park.

12. **Set Date for Next Meeting:** Next meeting date was set for Monday, June 7, 2010 at the County Planning Department.

13. **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Com'r. O'Connell, 2nd by Com'r. Johnson. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Neale Thompson, Assistant Secretary

(Planning\Housing Specialist\HA Meetings\Minutes\Minutes-05-03-10)

NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE ROCK COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY