

Economic Development Minutes

Honorable Council
City of Newark, Ohio
May 15, 2013

The Economic Development Committee met in Council Chambers on Monday May 13, 2013 following the Finance Committee meeting. These members were present:

Rhonda Loomis, Chair
Jeff Rath
Bill Cost Jr

Doug Marmie
Marc Guthrie

We wish to report:

1. Don Eager with Fair Housing provided an update on the services provided to the residents of Newark.

Don Eager- presented the Committee members with a packet which contained information that they distribute to the residents of Newark. He said they try to come once a year to provide an update. The Fair Housing Program that is provided for the City is a requirement of the Community Development Block Grant for both HUD and the State of Ohio.

He said that HUD and the State of Ohio doesn't recognize tenant landlord issues as a fair housing issue. He said even though they don't testify on behalf of the tenants in Landlord Court they will go with them to lend support. They also will meet with landlords and tenants to help facilitate an agreement/solution.

Mrs. Loomis- stated her concern regarding the phone number on a hand out being a 349 # that doesn't work. The City's numbers changed to a 670 exchange so she thought that may be why however on another form there was a 670 # but it would just ring a busy signal. The hotline number she called there was a message which stated they would return your call within 24-48 hours. She then pointed out their contract states in order to deal with the issues that could come up effectively calls are to be returned quickly. She said she assumed 48 hours was considered responding quickly.

Mr. Eager- responded that they usually get back to people within less than 48 hours but 48 hours was stated as a response time to take in consideration weekends. He said they usually check their messages about 11:00 A.M. return those calls then check the messages again at 5:00 P.M. People are then usually getting a return phone call within the same day except Fridays if they call after 5:00 P.M. If there is an emergency situation they will address it before Monday otherwise the call is returned Monday. He said the same would be true regarding holidays.

Mrs. Loomis- questioned the reporting system that is stated in the contract versus what is reported to the City. She said there is information stated in the contract that will be provided in the monthly report that isn't in the monthly reports that have been

received. She also stated the contract says you will provide a quarterly report, however the Fiscal Officer, Jeff Russell advised her they have not received quarterly reports, if asked for one is provided.

Mr. Eager- responded that the information which she stated would be provided monthly is reported in the annual report. He stated he would then start including it in the monthly reports also.

Mrs. Loomis- inquired about meeting which he reported; one at a church and another at the Newark Public Library. One of her concerns regarding that meeting Thursday from 6:30-7:30 P.M. was that there wasn't any signage in the Library regarding the meeting advising anyone of the meeting or where to go. She also asked about the requirement on his materials to R.S.V.P or register.

Mr. Eager- stated it was just so they could have an idea of how many to expect in order to have enough information available. He also stated if individuals come that weren't registered are not turned away.

Mrs. Loomis- stated she thought the R.S.V.P request may be a deterrent to tenants who may be in trouble but don't come because they didn't R.S.V.P

Mr. Eager- offered that they could remove that but it is asked for the Continuing Education classes offered to realtors because they have to present certificates at the conclusion of the class.

Mrs. Loomis- asked how many entities he served and verified that he spent 10 hours month here at City Hall. She also asked if he does any pro-active work if no one comes during those hours.

Mr. Eager- 8, yes I am here two Tuesdays a month for 5 hours each. He answered that he went to LEADS and Job & Family Services to drop off their information and flyers about the tenant landlord clinics. He also stated they do mailings twice a year to various organizations.

Mrs. Loomis- also asked about advertising on the radio like it states in the contract

Mr. Eager- stated they do when they can get them for free that it is costly to advertise on the radio but that they do ask for the public service spots and are sometimes successful. They advertise in the newspaper in the Community spot.

Mrs. Loomis- verified that he is passing out free materials such as pens, rulers, magnets, etc. Like the contract states.

Mr. Eager- confirmed they did and that they are thinking of sticking with just the pens and doing a house shaped fly swatter.

Mr. Cost- asked how often they had the tenant landlord seminars

Mr. Eager- stated they have some sort of meeting every quarter but in terms of the tenant landlord clinics they are held two Tuesdays a month in the office of Department of Development 10-3.

Mr. Cost- asked what kind of response he gets and if the clinics are publicized.

Mr. Eager- said sometimes he doesn't get anybody other times 1 or 2. He answered that they hand out brochures and twice a year advertise in the Community spot in the paper.

Mr. Cost- inquired how he meets with the individuals during the clinics

Mr. Eager- one on one, we use a small conference room, shut the door for privacy and confidentiality don't ask for names if individuals want to remain anonymous.

Mr. Cost- stated that he was shocked that there isn't a huge response to the tenant landlord clinics considering the tenant landlord issues that could come up in the City.

Mr. Eager- said that they work in 10 different areas but the City comparable to Newark is Cuyahoga Falls. He said if he does a landlord clinic he will get 10 but if he does a tenant clinic he may get two.

Mr. Guthrie- asked about the earlier statement Mr. Eager made about the reporting; Mr. Eager said if that is the way the City wants it that is the way they will start doing it. Mr. Guthrie said the contract between him and the City states is the required and we shouldn't be talking about today how they will start complying with the contract language.

Mr. Eager- confirmed Mr. Guthrie was correct and that was their failings.

Mr. Guthrie- said that the way they make people aware of the availability of his services is important. He asked how much was spent on advertising in the newspaper and radio because of the advertising language of the contract.

Mr. Eager- nothing was spent.

Mr. Guthrie- said he thinks the wording should be public service announcement not ad in the contract. He also stated in his opinion all the money spent on pens and refrigerator magnets should be dropped and spend any available money on actually advertising the meetings. He also asked if there has ever been an occasion where he didn't get any RSVP's and therefore didn't hold the meeting or stay the duration.

Mr. Eager- said he has never cancelled a meeting unless it was due to illness but he advised the location regarding the need to cancel.

Mr. Guthrie- asked who he sends the public service announcements to

Mr. Eager- newspaper and radio stations via email. He said they have different mailing lists too.

Mr. Guthrie- discussed how he was trying to think of ways to broaden his exposure to the community. He suggested he broaden his email base by sending the announcements to City Council because they may know of someone who would have an interest in participating in one of the meetings. He said he thought they could help network the availability.

Mrs. Loomis- said she does public service announcements for her job as well as 100 plus women who care. She advised him they were not difficult and could be done electronically and suggested he look into that.

Mr. Cost- stated he was happy to see that there was a pamphlet on tenants' rights and duties and he asked if there was also one for landlords.

Mr. Eager- said they give that information to both tenants and landlords but they also have a separate hand out for landlords specific to their role.

Lesa Best- asked what he received from the Department of Development every year

Mr. Eager- \$15,000.00

Lesa Best- you said you cover 8 other areas but it used to be 10 but 2 dropped you

Mr. Eager- said they didn't drop him they changed the way they did their funding and the County does their Fair Housing now.

Ms. Best- pointed out that our County also does Fair Housing

Mr. Eager- confirmed they do and that they work with the County. He said if they get a call from someone in Heath perhaps just requesting information they will give them the information then call the County to advise them of who contacted them.

Ms. Best- asked what credentials if any were required from the State or City to do Fair Housing.

Mr. Eager- said the only requirement is to have knowledge of fair housing, what it is, what it means, how to handle complaints and what the law requires regarding fair housing. He stated he has 37 years of experience.

Ms. Best- asked about the phone numbers not working, how many eviction hearings he had been to this year and which radio stations he had contacted and what paper.

Mr. Eager- said he would look into the local number not working and Mrs. Loomis said we changed our phone system so that may be the glitch. He said he has been to 2 eviction hearings this year and that his wife handles the radio stations and he would have to get back to her on which ones they contact. He said the use the Newark Advocate.

Ms. Best- asked if he said he came to Council to do an update once every year, how long he had been doing Fair Housing for Newark, if he reported to anyone in the City and who specifically.

Mr. Eager- he answered her questions that he comes maybe a little longer than every year that it may be every 18 months, he has been doing Fair Housing for the City since 2005, and that he reports to Director Mauter because it is a program funded by the Department of Community Development.

Ms. Best- asked how many discrimination cases he had over the last 5 years in Newark.

Mr. Eager- said he would have to go back but he thought 5 or 6 which he said he thought was a good thing because he would be very concerned if they were getting 20-30 a year on discrimination because that would point out there are some serious issues with people getting housing. He said they mainly get tenant landlord issues and the discrimination cases are usually family status or disability related, rarely race.

Mr. Eager and Ms. Best discussed different discrimination scenarios to determine what type of issues or inefficiencies would be considered discrimination that he would handle.

In closing Mrs. Loomis encouraged Mr. Eager to work with Mr. Mauter on the public announcements to advertise the availability of his services because she too is surprised that he doesn't get more tenants for his meetings.

Rhonda Loomis, Chair