

**MEETING MINUTES**  
Town of Heath  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
Sawyer Hall PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING  
Community Development Strategy Update  
October 15, 2013

**Called to order** at 7:24 p.m.

**FY14 Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)/Community Development Strategy:**

Sheila opened the meeting by presenting MJ Adams, Director of Community Development at the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). MJ proceeded to describe the CDBG Grant program, how it works and the purpose of tonight's meeting. She shared that \$1.1 million is available and spread out among the communities in MA. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss and solicit public input to the Town of Heath's FY14 Massachusetts CDBG application. MJ outlined the application process including a list of eligible activities that must benefit low/moderate income people or eliminate blight/slum. Applications are due February, 2014. To begin this discussion, the purpose of meeting tonight is to gather general information from the public about the needs for the Town of Heath. This input is required by Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Important goals for the Town of Heath will be identified and reviewed as to whether they are eligible for CDBG monies. An important strategy is to select activities to make the grant application as competitive as possible. Later, sometime in January, a public hearing will be held to share the final version of the funding request. CDBG's are HUD (Housing and Urban Development) funds distributed through the MA Dept. of Housing and Community Development on a competitive basis to non-entitlement communities in MA. Entitlement communities receive funds directly from HUD.

Art Schwenger, Kara Leistyna, and Megan Rhodes helped to revise Heath's Community Development Strategy (CDS). Copies have been available for review and copies are here tonight. MJ briefly discussed the Community Wide Needs Score and Income Level and how it is determined. There was mention that Heath's use of five zip codes may skew the numbers. MJ strongly encouraged the inclusion of HRA programs and how it's a good idea to keep a balance for emergencies. Currently, the balance is \$21,407 and one emergency could deplete it.

**The following projects/goals were suggested by the public in addition to those proposed on CDS:**

- Heath Agricultural Society – renovations to make it handicapped accessible. (MJ will look into it and determine if the Heath Agricultural Society is eligible for funding).
- Transportation issues for the Elderly for medical appointments, etc.
- High Speed Internet/cell phone – a barrier to families regardless of income. This is a huge hurdle and affects the sale of homes.
- Bridge repairs on 8A over Mill Brook (MJ mentioned the availability of Disaster Recovery money for damages as a result of Irene)
- School property accessibility issues

MJ distributed a Community Input Survey and asked people to complete them. This survey is part of the process for applying for grant funds through CDBG to collect information from residents so that ideas for projects can be added to the CDS. If several people identify similar needs, they will be reviewed and may be added to the funding request. Surveys can be returned tonight or to Town Coordinator and answers will be tallied.

No one had further questions.

***On a motion by Brian DeVriese and seconded by Bill Lattrell, the Board voted unanimously to close the hearing at 7:48 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

Kara Leistyna, Town Coordinator