

December 8, 2011

The Honorable Paul Soglin  
Mayor  
210 MLK Jr Blvd, Room 403  
City-County Building  
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Mayor Soglin,

As chair of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) committee in the city of Madison, I write with a request regarding the status of our city's affordable housing trust fund. The Madison Affordable Housing Trust Fund ordinance [MGO 4.22] - specifically Section (4) - charges our committee with the powers and duties of disbursement of funds via a prescribed process outlined.

Currently, there have been no funds disbursed in 2011, but the ordinance allows for up to \$1,025,653 spending on affordable housing this year. We have just received an application from a non-profit housing organization (Movin' Out, Inc) requesting use of a portion of these funds. This applicant is also seeking state tax credits for financing their proposed project, and therefore, need a decision from the city by early January, 2012 at the latest.

City staff informed our committee that presently your office requests no disbursements be made from the affordable housing trust fund. I would ask you or an authorized staff to come to the January 5, 2012 meeting of the CDBG committee to share the reason for your request to hold these funds, and to answer questions our committee members may have.

I will appreciate your follow up to this invitation. I further request you include our committee in future communications from your office concerning your vision and goals for affordable housing in our city, as we are a policy body serving these purposes.

Thanks for your time and attention.

Respectfully,  
~Justin Markofski  
CDBG committee chair  
608.444.3926  
justinmarkofski@yahoo.com

Cc: Anne Monks

At its December meeting the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) committee directed staff to draft a memo that would discuss the merging of the CDBG and Community Services Committee (CSC) into one committee and bring it to the January meeting. The CSC followed with asking that I bring the same memo to its January meeting.

Historically there was a CDBG Office that had a close working relationship with the CDBG committee and an Office of Community Services that had the same with the CSC. For decades, great work was produced by dedicated staff that funneled directly into these committees. Veteran staff report that this worked as long as the issue was clearly confined to the domain of one of the offices and corresponding committee. What was problematic was when there was a debate over where an issue belonged, which approach to solving it was most appropriate and who would decide funding related to solving that issue. This was more of an issue when it was time for the two-year funding cycle. In addition to there not being an obvious way to resolve this ongoing friction, there were unintended consequences that developed which included: difficulty in coming together over city issues that related to both offices, a tendency to develop offices/staff that worked in isolation from each other and a lack of staff cohesiveness.

In 2008 the two offices (Community Services and Community Development Block Grant) were combined with the Senior Center to form the Community Development Division. In effect, the city bureaucratic organization changed and the committee structure remained the same. The Division continues to staff 6 committees and there is an effort to keep all committees informed of what the other committees are working on. Over the years there have been internal staff discussions as well as conversations among some policy makers as to whether there should be a merger of the CSC and CDBG committees to form a Community Development Committee. In the 2010 two year funding cycle, an ad hoc Conference Committee was formed (made up of members of both committees) as a work around to decide funding around program topics that resided in both committees (neighborhoods and workforce).

Advantages of merging the CSC and CDBG committees:

- Alignment of committee structure to match the Division organization.
- Better coordination of decision-making as it relates to the Community Development Division. One committee with Division oversight.
- Coordinated funding decisions.
- Enhanced ability to act in a coordinated manner on city issues.
- Strong message of working together.
- Less staff time spent on committees and duplicating work.

Issues:

- Unintended message of lack of appreciation of citizen committee members.
- Potential loss of expertise that currently exists on the committees.
- Identifying a viable process to make the change.

Recommendation: