



## ***Housing/Community Development/Social Services Committee - Board of Representatives***

Mavina Moore, Co-Chair

Rob Roqueta, Co-Chair

# **Committee Minutes**

**Date:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m.  
**Place:** *This Meeting was held remotely.*

The Housing/Community Development/Social Service Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Co-Chairs Roqueta and Moore; and Committee Member Reps. Campbell, Ley, Pollack, and Walston. Also present was Emily Gordon, Director of Housing and Community Development; Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief; Janeene Freeman, Mayor's Office; and members of the public.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
1. HCD31.038	PUBLIC HEARING; Second Public Hearing on the Year 49 CDBG Proposals (2023-24). 04/05/2023 – Submitted by Emily Gordon	<b>PUBLIC HEARING HELD</b>
<p>Co-Chair Roqueta opened the public hearing at 6:35pm. One member of the public spoke. There being no other members of the public wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.</p>		
2. <a href="#">HCD31.039</a>	APPROVAL; of Year 49 CDBG Proposal (2023-2024). 04/05/2023 – Submitted by Emily Gordon	<b>COMMITTEE APPROVED 4-0-1</b>
<p>Director Gordon explained that this is to approve the action plan. This is the same grouping as in the last Committee meeting, and nothing has changed. Her office received no additional comments since the last public hearing, other than the one person who spoke tonight. This vote is focused on Year 49 allocation.</p>		
<p>A motion to approve Item #2 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 4-0-1 (Reps. Roqueta, Ley, Pollack, and Walston in favor; Rep. Campbell abstaining).</p>		
3. <a href="#">HCD31.040</a>	RESOLUTION; Authorizing The Mayor to Submit the Year 49 Annual Action Plan for the Community Development Program of the City of Stamford, Connecticut. 04/05/2023 – Submitted by Emily Gordon	<b>COMMITTEE APPROVED 4-0-1</b>

Director Gordon explained this is to authorize the Mayor to submit the action plan that was approved with Item #2.

A motion to approve Item #3 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 4-0-1 (Reps. Roqueta, Ley, Pollack, and Walston in favor; Rep. Campbell abstaining).

4. [HCD31.041](#) APPROVAL; Year 45 CDBG-CV Allocation Amendment (2019-2020)  
04/05/23 – Submitted by Director Gordon **COMMITTEE APPROVED 4-0-1**

Director Gordon explained this is an amendment due to there being some projects that had funding but the projects did not go through, so other projects were able to be funded. This is an addition of the items that were approved by the BOR last month, adding them to the CARES allocation plan.

A motion to approve Item #4 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 4-0-1 (Reps. Roqueta, Ley, Pollack, and Walston in favor; Rep. Campbell abstaining).

5. [HCD31.042](#) APPROVAL; Year 48 CDBG Allocation Amendment (2022-2023)  
04/05/23 – Submitted by Director Gordon **COMMITTEE APPROVED 4-0-1**

Director Gordon explained this is to make sure all funding has been approved if there was funding not allocated due to a project falling through.

A motion to approve Item #5 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 4-0-1 (Reps. Roqueta, Ley, Pollack, and Walston in favor; Rep. Campbell abstaining).

6. HCD31.035 REVIEW; Homeowner/Small Landlord Rehabilitation Program.  
02/13/23 – Submitted by Reps. Baxter and Campbell  
**03/28/23 –Held by Committee** **COMMITTEE HELD 5-0-0**

Rep. Campbell explained that she wanted this item on the Agenda because several constituents have approached her asking what is the status of this program. How can the Representatives guide people to apply for this program?

Director Blessing and Director Gordon explained the program.

There is money currently allocated. The City does not have a Housing Dept. Director Gordon oversees the BMR program and the CDBG program. A new position has been requested in the Land Use Bureau to focus on housing. If approved, that position will set up the homeowner rehabilitation program to develop criteria for qualification, set up applications, etc. It is the expectation that this position will not do the day-to-day administration but will partner with a third party.

HUD has strict requirements for the program. A building must become fully compliant with all HUD requirements. This requires setting up inspections with the Building Dept. so all conditions of HUD funds are met.

The City has had a program like this in the past, but it has not been running in a long time due to lack of staff.

They will need time to assess what is needed before being able to build a timetable for how long it will take to get the program up and running. Also need to find out what the needs are for the homeowners, to best address the program.

Rep. Campbell suggested the Committee check in by mid to end of summer to have a better idea of what is happening with the program.

A motion to hold Item #6 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Roqueta, Campbell, Ley, Pollack, and Walston in favor).

7. HCD31.036    REVIEW; Inventory and Statistical Accounting of                    **REPORT MADE**  
   Current and Upcoming Affordable Housing (BMR &  
   Fee-In-Lieu) Development in Stamford - A Look  
   Back from 2015 through the Present.  
   02/13/23 – Submitted by Reps. Roquetta, Stella,  
   and Walston  
   **03/28/23 –Held by Committee**

Director Blessing and Director Gordon reviewed this item and there was discussion.

BMR is a requirement under Zoning. Every development with 10 or more units has to participate, either through on-site units or fee-in-lieu payment.

Program is quite successful in Connecticut. The majority of units are provided on-site. Stamford counts for 20 percent of units in the State.

State requires every landlord to accept Section 8 vouchers. A person can get a BMR unit and have a Section 8 voucher. There are no restrictions saying that a voucher holder cannot get a BMR unit. This allows for an even deeper subsidy. A voucher is not linked to a unit, it is linked to the person. BMR units are not using project based vouchers.

Rep. Stella stated Stamford should become more aggressive with developers building three bedroom apartments for families, because people are getting evicted because there are too many people in an apartment if their family grows.

Director Gordon stated that even market rate three bedroom apartments are not high in inventory. Most developers want to build studios, one and two bedroom units. Developers tend to not build many three bedrooms at market rate, so it could get even more challenging to entice them to build them at BMR.

Most cities in the State do not have an inclusionary housing program. Stamford is by far the most successful in the State. Part of the reason for this is because Stamford has so much development. While we do need two and three bedrooms units, there is a big need for studios and one bedroom units.

BMR program is only one piece of the larger affording housing picture for Stamford.

Currently a developer has to provide a proportionate amount of BMR units. For

example, 10% of the studios, 10% of the one bedrooms have to be BMR. One change they are working on in the BMR revision is to give the Zoning Board more authority over the unit mix.

BMR program was intended to fill in the gaps between market rate housing and deeply affordable housing. Intended to serve as workforce housing.

Stamford needs more housing at all levels, due to the regional deficient of housing.

BMR program should not be discussed in isolation of other programs to help people with housing.

There has to be a balance of what the City demands of the developers, and justification for increasing the BMR program.

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund can set priorities.

There is currently \$600M the Governor has allocated for affordable and workforce housing. This is going through the budget now, and Stamford developers and non-profit partners would apply for funds. It would be allocated on a project by project basis.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34pm.

Submitted by

Robert Roqueta, Co-Chair

This meeting is on [video](#)