



BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN

MAYOR
Robert Frost

BOROUGH COUNCIL
James Griffin, President
Karen Tutino, Vice-President
Robert Stokley, Senior Member
Anita Barton, Member
Colleen Leonard, Member
Tina Sokolowski, Member
Jane Flanagan, Member

Stephanie Cecco
Interim Borough Manager

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN 2017 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Public Hearing # 1

Wednesday, October 4, 2017 ~ 7:00 p.m.
Conshohocken Borough Hall ~ 400 Fayette Street
Conshohocken, PA 19428

Meeting Summary

CDBG Program Overview

Conshohocken receives federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. The Borough is considered an entitlement community under State Legislation, and as such a formula is used to determine the amount of funds allocated to Pennsylvania, which are available to Conshohocken.

For 2017, Conshohocken is eligible for \$112,875.00. This represents a decrease of \$1,566.00 from the 2016 entitlement of \$114,441.00.

CDBG funds may be used for a variety of activities benefitting low and moderate income Borough residents. Eligible activities include: affordable housing development, housing rehabilitation, water and sewer projects, infrastructure, community services, public facility improvement, historic preservation, removal of architectural barriers, and acquisition and relocation. To date, the primary use of CDBG funds has been for housing rehabilitation. During the past year funds also were used to install curb ramps in the 7th Ward. Six (6) code conforming curb ramps were installed.

Individuals attending the hearing were asked to comment on the past uses of CDBG funds and to suggest how 2017 CDBG funds could be used.

The following questions and comments were raised.

1. What will be the effect of the reduction in 2017 funding? The reduction in funding would reduce activities (i.e. if funds are used for housing rehabilitation, the number of applicants processed would be fewer and possible fewer properties would be completed.)
2. Must funds be spent within the year they are allocated? No, due to the way CDBG contracts are structured. Until 2016, CDBG contracts were for five (5) years, with the requirement that all funds be expended within three (3) years. The final two (2) years of the contract were to be used to complete the audit. Starting in 2017, contracts will run for four (4) years, again with all funds to be spent within three (3) years.
3. Is/are the programs funded with CDBG funds “rolling” (ongoing) programs? Housing rehabilitation is an ongoing program.
4. Comment: Keep doing curb ramps.
5. How much of the funding goes to actual rehabilitation of properties? A combination of CDBG and HOME funds are used for housing rehabilitation. Ninety-three percent (93%) of HOME funds are used for construction. CDBG funds usually complete one (1) to two (2) properties. Funds are also used for the activities to process the eligibility of applicants. It is important to have the CDBG funds for some construction, because there are properties for which HOME funds cannot be used.
6. How much money is left for infrastructure? An infrastructure project would have to be designated as a CDBG activity. To do an infrastructure project the area of the project would have to be surveyed to determine if the area meets eligibility and fundability requirements. Curb ramp projects remove architectural barriers for people with disabilities, who are presumed to be of low and moderate incomes. For this reason, funds can be used for this type of infrastructure.
7. How many households are on the waiting list for housing rehabilitation services? Thirty-one (31).
8. The number of properties rehabilitated was questioned. Fifteen (15) properties have been completed over the last three (3) years. It was noted that the number of properties completed was dependent on the amount of funding available and the number of contractor’s available in a given year.
9. Question was raised regarding whether cost reductions could be made to increase the amounts available for rehabilitation. The Borough is using consultants who were the lowest bidders on the solicitation completed in 2016. Construction costs

are higher in this area than in other areas of the region, and Conshohocken's housing stock is older. The older properties often require more activity to rehabilitate, and the Borough is required by HUD to reduce the hazards of lead based paint. Also, the Borough is required to use State prevailing wage to complete projects where the cost estimate is over \$25,000.00. Use of prevailing wage can add forty percent (40%) to sixty percent (60%) to the cost of rehabilitation.

10. Priorities were questioned and discussed. Until this year, HOME applications were required to prioritize the selection of service recipients. The Borough established priorities of households below fifty percent (50%) of area median income or within proximity to the Borough redevelopment district. The Borough endeavors to follow the waiting list with regard to these priorities.
11. It was noted that there is a one (1) year warranty on general work done through the rehabilitation program and a ten (10) year warranty if a roof is completely replaced. A resident questioned the length of the roof warranty and that ten (10) years is generally not what is in practice today; stating that twenty-five (25) year warranties were more common. The Borough Solicitor stated that the ten (10) year warranty was on workmanship, and the longer warranties relate to materials used.

Those in attendance were told that a second public hearing would be scheduled for Wednesday, November 1, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. Written comment on past and proposed uses of CDBG funds will be accepted until November 10, 2017. Applications must be submitted to the Department of Community and Economic Development by December 8, 2017.