MEETING SUMMARY
Neighborhood Revitalization Board

October 2, 2019, 5:00 p.m.

Call to Order/Roll Call
Meeting called to order at 5:04 p.m. by Kelly Kennedy

Roll Call by Alex Piedras:

Present: Kelly Kennedy, Alex Piedras, Marge Ramsey, Tom LaPointe, Jan Goode, Leslie Berckes, Frank Owens

Absent: Molly Hanson, Seth Johnson, Greg Lewis, Kari Warren

Staff: Chris Johansen, Director

Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve: Tom LaPointe; seconded by Marge Ramsey

Motion carried (7-0)

Approval of Minutes

Motion to Approve: Tom LaPointe; seconded by Leslie Berckes

Amended the spelling of Jennifer Sales to Jennifer Sayers on page 2.

Motion carried (7-0)

Chairman’s Report/City Council Actions

Chris Johansen: Just two updates. The Carpenter Neighborhood Association action did go to the City Council. They were removed from the Recognized Neighborhood list and all the remaining neighborhood associations were certified. In addition, at the last City Council meeting, we set the date of the public hearing for November 4 for the City’s Consolidated Plan. Ben Sturm presented at our last meeting. I’m going to email you a copy of the 200+ page draft of that plan, which is currently, available at the City’s public libraries and the City Clerk’s Office for public comment. It will get approved by City Council on November 4.

2020 CDBG Funding Allocation

Chris Johansen: Let me first start by saying with our Consolidated Plan, this is where we set aside our annual CDBG and HOME Inc. funding for the calendar year. At this time, with appropriations, we don’t know how much funding we’re going to get for CDBG, HOME, or ESG. This spreadsheet is an estimate of what I think we’ll do, for budget purposes. This will come back to you, probably in the Spring, for what the final allocation is and how we should split up this funding. This year my recommendations to you are a little bit different. As you look at the chart, the list of activities is on the left. The first column is what we funded for calendar year 2019. The 2020 NRB Funding recommendations are my recommendations to you. When you compare the two columns, there’s a couple of notable changes for the Neighborhood Revitalization plan implementation. With the changes with Invest DSM, that funding is going to be handled through them. That did free up about $350,000. As you move further down, there’s a new category for Engineering and, currently, it’s a recommendation that $274,000 goes towards construction of gaps in the City’s sidewalk system. This can only be used in low-mod (low to moderate income) neighborhoods. To be eligible for CDBG funding, the money can only be used in census-tracts, where there’s low to moderate income. The idea is that we’ll work with the Engineering Department to identify neighborhoods in low-mod census tracts, where we can use this funding to fill in those gaps in the City’s sidewalk system. This item came out
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from the consultant’s surveys and discussions with stakeholders. It’s a need that they heard and that we can address with our CDBG funding.

Chris Johansen: The next item is homebuyer education. That came out of the consultant’s discussion with me on needs and other uses for CDBG. This is an item that we used to fund about 15 years ago. Currently, HOME Inc. is the only entity that provides homebuyer education in the community. With any use of Federal funding for any affordable home ownership program, one of the requirements is that they have training from a certified HUD homebuyer education program. HOME Inc. is the only one who provides that in the community right now. [http://www.homeincdsm.org](http://www.homeincdsm.org) I haven’t yet discussed with them on how to do this, but this is funding that I would like to earmark for that purpose - is my recommendation. The remaining two programs do remain consistent. The biggest changes you can see is the sidewalks and the homebuyer education. I used to know the appropriations by December of the year, lately it’s been March, April or May. If you want to have more discussion on this, I can have HOME Inc. come talk about their program, or even have the City Engineer come and talk about sidewalks. We can look at where the need is and look at the gap analysis they did citywide.

Kelly Kennedy: On the sidewalks, you said they must be low-mod areas. Is there going to be any cost to the homeowners?

Chris Johansen: No.

Kelly Kennedy: Would this be used only for homeowners or rental units in the front also?

Chris Johansen: They’re looking specifically at where there are gaps. There are many parts of Des Moines, but where the city is prioritizing is school routes where there are no sidewalks on either side of the street. We have some areas of town where, for example you have sidewalks for a couple of homes then there is no sidewalk for two blocks, then there’s a sidewalk. Right now, the city is filling in those gaps. The City Engineering Department goes through their own prioritization. I’m just trying to make sure that this funding gets used in those low-mod neighborhoods.

Tom LaPointe: Will the City undertake the construction of these sidewalks, or will it be sourced to an outside contractor?

Chris Johansen: Outside contractor.

Tom LaPointe: The City doesn’t do any of this work itself?

Chris Johansen: No.

Tom LaPointe: Is there any particular reason why? Is there a history to that?

Chris Johansen: They used to years ago. I wasn’t involved in the rationale on why they stopped. The City will use their own crews to fix panels on the street if they are broken. They fix curbs. But sidewalk work is currently being contracted out.

Tom LaPointe: Has the city reviewed that practice lately? Or is there any need to?
Chris Johansen: Personally, I believe there’s always a need to review that when you look at the costs we’re paying for contracts. I don’t know if the City has though. That would be a good question for our City Engineer.

Tom LaPointe: The reason I ask is that the City of Portland, Maine, where I’m from, had a construction crew through the public works department that phased in all this work and spread it out over a 12-month period to keep those folks busy. The way it was implemented, they ended up saving money. It might be worthwhile for the City to look at that again.

Chris Johansen: Until recently, the City wasn’t doing a lot of sidewalk work. I think with this change it kind of creates an opportunity where they should relook at that.

Tom LaPointe: How does that concept get moved forward?

Chris Johansen: It’s usually between the City Engineer and the Public Works Director. My staff puts together the gap analysis on where we’d recommend. How the actual work gets done, is up to them.

Tom LaPointe: The decisions on how this money is allocated throughout the designated low-mod areas would be determined by recommendations by City staff to the Council?

Chris Johansen: More likely it will be the City Engineer. The City Engineer is the one implementing the program right now. I would discuss it with him. Tell him that it must be used in these areas and ask where he recommends it get used.

Tom LaPointe: Does the Council have any action on that?

Chris Johansen: Yes. He would recommend it to the Council.

Leslie Berckes: Do you have an off the cuff idea of how many feet…?

Chris Johansen: At this point, I don’t. As part of our reporting on how we use the money, lineal feet is the measurement we use. We’ll know how many lineal feet we’ll be able to get with this. As we work towards this, before we get to the final recommendation, I’ll have that number. I’m hopeful to have where the City Engineers are going to recommend we spend the money too, and have him here to talk about it.

Alex Piedras: The $274,140 and the $75,000, are the $349,140 from last year. You said that the reason this money is available now is because Invest DSM received money. And they received their money from LOST (Local Option Sales Tax). You’re reassigning the money to different line items.

Chris Johansen: That’s correct. They get $2.5 million from LOST. The Polk County Board of Supervisors has committed $2.5 million, as well.

Marge Ramsey: A few years back, some neighborhoods had to replace their sidewalks and some homeowners had to replace their own. I don’t know what the difference was.

Chris Johansen: I know what you’re referring to. The program stopped maybe 3-5 years
ago. It was a City program called NIRP - Neighborhood Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program. When the City did neighborhood planning, we’d go out to the neighborhood. We’d get about $1 million per year. We’d work with the neighborhood and they’d decide where they’d want to have that infrastructure repair work done in their neighborhood. It was usually sidewalks, street improvements, or curb and gutter. We’d leave it up to the neighborhoods to decide. That was a Capital Improvement funded program – we issued bonds. When the program ended, there was a little bit of a gap, then the City started focusing on a sidewalks program to pick up where that left off. The curb replacement is normally only done through street repairs. I don’t think they do much of that specific work anymore. The ending of this program was a budget issue not, technically, our funding. Although, our programs benefited from it, it was an engineering program. For Invest DSM, the direction to other City staff for Engineering and Public Works is for those four neighborhoods to focus a lot on infrastructure improvements in those areas where there is needed improvements. Those four areas are not all low-mod income areas. This money cannot be used there. That was one of the problems we always had too, was some of our programs with federal money.

Tom LaPointe: Is it safe to say most of these dollars of this activity other than what is being recommended would come out of the CIP?

Chris Johansen: Yes.

Alex Piedras: Can you clarify what CIP stands for?

Chris Johansen: Capital Improvement Program. Specifically, the City has a 5-year infrastructure and improvement document where we issue bonds to fund those improvements.

Kelly Kennedy: Marge mentioned that she had to pay for her sidewalk and you were talking about a program where the City took care of it. Was there a portion in some areas where the homeowner had to pay half? Were there two different programs?

Chris Johansen: For example, in the front of my house, if a section of the sidewalk is failing, I can get assessed to fix the sidewalk. If my sidewalk is being looked at as part of a sidewalk repair program, more than likely the City can pay for it. I’m not sure how many assessments they do on sidewalks anymore, or if they’re still doing assessments. But, historically, that could have happened. The program I was talking about was only for Recognized Neighborhoods, that were recognized by this Board. We were doing neighborhood planning in a 3-4 year process and working with 4-5 neighborhoods.

Kelly Kennedy: The other question I had was about the homebuyer education program. Were you thinking of a scholarship with that? Or give them the money and let them figure out where they need the funding?

Chris Johansen: Right now, what’s happening is that if you want to take the homebuyer class through HOME Inc., there’s a cost to it. I’m going to 1) see what it takes to offer it for free. And 2) see if they have the capacity to meet the demand of the community. If it’s more of a staffing need, they can use the money for staffing costs. But I haven’t had those discussions with HOME Inc. yet. That will happen. It’s just where we’re at in the process; making sure conceptually that it makes sense to look at that program. Frank, you might
remember that we used to fund homebuyer education as part of CDBG. I have that back on here as a recommendation. It’s something that we funded about 15 years ago, then we stopped. One of the feedback items that we got from our consultant was that we should look at funding again. For our HOME program, when we give HOME dollars to someone to build affordable single-family home, we require that whoever buys that house must go through HUD-certified homeownership counseling. This is just to help support that endeavor.

Alex Piedras: The money goes to the purchaser? You’re not contracting with an agency to do the education?

Chris Johansen: I am contracting with an agency. I’m contracting with HOME, Inc. But, in my discussions with them, I want to make sure that if we give them money, they are going to offer the classes for free. The individual is not going to pay. It’s better to do it that way than to field 100 applications from individuals that want to take the class.

Tom LaPointe: That would be a contract that you would prepare as part of the executive side of city government? That contract would be ratified and approved by the City Council? And all the details you’ve outlined here will be memorialized and approved by the Council?

Chris Johansen: Yes. One last thing, is that we have a contract with IMPACT that has what they will provide. We have a contract also with Central Iowa Shelter and Services. Typically, if it’s an outside agency, we do have a contract with everyone we give money to. The other thing that is on this table, is that the $862,859 for the HOME program is the entire allocation that we get for the HOME program. I will have Lisa Crabbs come talk about how we’re going to spend that money. That money goes through another, separate allocation process that we bring back to the NRB. I want to make sure that you have an understanding that. What this action does is basically gives the HOME funding to the neighborhood conservation services division in the city of Des Moines. Before we allocate it, we come back here with how we allocate it. Then any final contracts go back to the City Council, on how that funding’s spent.

Tom LaPointe: Just to recap, what would come back to us, would be this HOME contract?

Chris Johansen: Yes. For the $862,859, we’re going to come back with a budget on how that money is going to be spent. And what you’ll see will be for our homeownership programs, we’ll have $250,000 or $500,000. For rental rehab programs, we’ll have $250,000. What we do then, for example if you set aside $250,000 for rental rehab, we’ll do an RFP for developers to come to us with projects that they can use their funding. Then we’ll award a contract to them through that process.

Tom LaPointe: Any likelihood that any of this allocation will be increased by Congress once they get to an enactment process?

Chris Johansen: From what I’ve been reading, it is a modest increase. I do feel that we’re going to have some extra dollars to talk about. The other thing I’m working through that doesn’t show up here, now, is we have some other funding that has been allocated previously that we might come back and ask to reallocate. That will happen in the Spring also. That gets an opportunity for discussion on how we should spend the extra funding.
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Tom LaPointe: More money could be put in sidewalks and housing opportunities, for instance.

Chris Johansen: Yes. My knee jerk response would be that I would recommend sidewalks, but I think we would need to discuss it. There could be some other purpose.

Tom LaPointe: If anyone has any ideas, they should suggest them to you?

Chris Johansen: Yes. The thing you really need to think about, especially with CDBG is its federal funds. There must be a low-income benefit to it, so it's just not for everything. It's very rigid on what you can and can't fund. But the thing to take away is that this is a recommendation to you now. I'm asking for a vote.

Motion to Approve: Tom LaPointe; seconded by Alex Piedras

Motion carried (7-0)

Blitz on Blight Pipeline

Chris Johansen: One thing I want to mention first, staff is working on a dashboard we're going to have on our website. It's going to have a map of properties that we're currently seeking court authority to demolish, and where we're at in the process with them. I do have a spreadsheet I will gladly send around to you, if any of you are interested. It's kind of cumbersome to look at; but where we're trying to get to is this dashboard where we tell you how many we've demolished, how many we're working towards, how much money we've spent. It's a transparency piece that goes with the local option sales tax.

Tom LaPointe: Are you getting blow back on this Blitz on Blight program from anybody?

Chris Johansen: We have. It's more about what's going to happen with the property afterwards. We tear the home down, and the City doesn't own the property, but that's the first thing we get calls about. We have a lien on the property for the demo cost. So, essentially the City has a lot of leverage on what to do with that property. Staff will have completed in the next week or two, our policy on how we're going to handle requests to release those liens. That's the first piece, but what happens is, just because we tear down the house, the lawns over grow and the City doesn't go out and mow it. The Polk County Weed Commissioner will after several calls. We've had discussions about can the City mow the property, which is a pretty big expense for the City to take on. So, we've had some concerns about that. We want these properties redeveloped. If someone comes forward with a good plan on how they want to use the property, I can see the City coming forward and supporting that and waiving the lien. The other thing we've talked about is when you have two neighbors, with the lot in the middle, and they want to be able to use it as a side yard. We've discussed whether the City is willing to lease that, if they maintain that. We'd look at ways to help them acquire it. We're a little reluctant to go out and enforce our lien and buy every vacant lot in the City. We want the private market to handle that to some degree. In some instances, it's not going to. It hasn't been all roses.

Tom LaPointe: Is the blow back coming from abutters, adjacent property owners or the neighborhood?
Chris Johansen: It’s not a lot but the complaints that we have had, some are from neighborhood leaders. They’re thankful that we’ve torn down the blighted home but now the unkept yard is still not attractive. To us, if someone wants to build a house on it, we’ll gladly work with them to get them to that point.

Tom LaPointe: So, if the abutter wants to buy the property themselves and maintain it, is that part of...?

Chris Johansen: It’s a discussion item because if it’s a buildable lot, we’d really like to see a single-family home built on it. If that’s not a concern of City Council, just selling it to someone as a side yard, we’d be willing to do that. But as far as growing the City’s tax base, it’s not always in the best interest to the City. Those are all things that we’ve talked about doing. We’ve discussed buying these lots. You know, enforcing our lien.

Tom LaPointe: Essentially, we’re dealing with this one parcel at a time?

Chris Johansen: Yes. Our overall policy that we’re looking at is working with someone who wants to buy the property and we forgive the lien. But we need to get a consistent policy, whether it’s a non-profit or for-profit developer. Council always has some concerns on do they need us to release the lien. That’s something we look at too. For example, if the market value of the lot is $10,000, we have a $35,000 lien on it. I don’t know too many people who are going to spend $45,000 for a $10,000 lot.

Frank Owens: When you were talking about this, people don’t understand that there are holding costs, insurance must be provided, lots must be cleaned up, etc. All the costs that are associated with that are then owned by the city. There was a vacant lot next to my mother’s house at one time. A house had been torn down. There was a neighbor on the other side of the lot who started parking cars and putting their trash on the vacant lot. I started mowing it. I mowed that lot for several years. People started thinking that I owned the lot. I adopted a lot. When the City came in possession of the lot, I ended up buying the lot for a reasonable price. In my neighborhood, River Bend used to buy lots for nominal fees. We see all the signs out there – adopt-a-highway. You have a neighborhood association, even if there’s only 10 people in that neighborhood association, if 10 people mow that lot just once during the summer, what does that do? Is this something that could be suggested? I realize that it’s easier to complain than to spend an hour mowing that lot. That puts the responsibility back into the community.

Chris Johansen: Our legal department hasn’t liked us talking about that. But no one in the City is going to tell you to stop mowing that lot. We’ve had some difficulty with that.

Kelly Kennedy: I have been tempted to contact Josh on the City Council with an idea. I know of three different lots that are now vacant, where after their house was torn down, the owners protested their taxes and had the taxes reduced. If we introduce a law that says if your house must be torn down because you won’t take care of it, you can’t protest your taxes. That might shake up a little because now the holding costs for these people drops down to almost nothing. For the vacant lot in my neighborhood, the taxes went down to about $70/year. There’s no incentive for them to get rid of that property. They’re just waiting for the value to rise.

Chris Johansen: Many of these structures that we’re tearing down, the people aren’t
paying their taxes or they can’t be found. We’ll go through the process, we’ll demo the house, put the lien on the house, then the next year the City will go after the tax sales certificate and we’ll get the property on tax sales.

Marge Ramsey: I wanted to ask about the ones that you’re taking down. Has there been any talk about starting a land bank?

Chris Johansen: Invest DSM is the group that’s going to look at that concept. The City has looked at that concept over the last four or five years. But it gets into the holding costs as Frank mentioned. Whoever takes it on, there’s a cost to maintain the property, the liability insurance, sidewalk cleaning and shoveling.

Tom LaPointe: To follow up on Marge’s question, does the City have a framework for a land bank?

Chris Johansen: For a non-profit doing it. Not for the City doing it.

Tom LaPointe: Is there a non-profit doing it?

Chris Johansen: No one’s doing it.

Tom LaPointe: If we got $50,000-100,000 more dollars in CDBG money, could we earmark that for exploration of land banking in the qualifying areas?

Chris Johansen: You could. The recommendation I’d have for you is the holding cost is the key. That’s where you drain it. You’re going to have to be able to sell some of the lots to make a profit, or how are you going to be able to fund it ongoing? That’s always the discussion. Downtown Des Moines, for example, has had an unofficial land bank kind of funded by the downtown businesses. When a key lot becomes available, that’s kind of the start of the Y site, which is now the courthouse. That concept is being used on a wider range. And the discussions they’ve had is “Is it more successful if you make the land bank bigger than just Des Moines?” It’s not just Des Moines money, its county money that goes into it. You know, you’re going to buy some lots where you’re going to take a loss. And then you’ve got to buy some lots where you make a profit. There’s a lot of thought that’s gone into it. But you’re going to have to fund it at some level.

Tom LaPointe: How do you fund it? Your first step would be some sort of feasibility study to reflect what you just said?

Leslie Berckes: And you said Invest DSM is going to look into it, right? So, it will happen?

Chris Johansen: It’s on Invest DSM’s list to do. We decided about a year ago, working through the CZB recommendations when land bank was discussed. One of the things we talked about was when the City wants to buy your property, of course, the price goes up. The City was turned off on doing this. It made more sense to have another entity do this and then hold it because of the cost to maintain it.

Tom LaPointe: But if you went through the current process, where you end up ownership of it, at that point, could it be moved...?
Chris Johansen: Yes. Any property where there’s a tax sale certificate for the City can move ahead of anybody and get that property for redevelopment. Now, can the City take the tax sale certificate, get ownership of the property then transfer it to a non-profit? The issue you have with transferring it to a non-profit is the way the City disposes of public property. It all must be sold at fair market value or it must be sold for an affordable housing use. That’s really the only way the City can get that property into that other entity’s hands. It’s kind of what we’ve talked about. But there’s still going to need to be a subsidy for that entity to be able to absorb any financial losses they’d have year after year. And taking on all the operating costs. There’s other models of it happening across the country and that’s what we look to. I know Kansas City has a half cent on their tax levy that goes to fund the land bank. That money funds that whole land banking authority and the way they operate. We’re not looking to do that here.

Tom LaPointe: To pick up on Leslie’s point, Invest DSM is going to examine this issue and come back with some recommendations? This is confirmed?

Chris Johansen: Yes. That’s where it’s going to come out of.

Tom LaPointe: And the time frame would be?

Chris Johansen: I don’t know. I’m not involved with Invest DSM. I can ask them.

Additional Items to CD Administrator’s Report

Chris Johansen: Two quick items which are not on the agenda. I’m going to email you an invite to a fundraiser. Don’t feel you must go. It’s for HOME Inc., who’s a partner of ours through the neighborhood revitalization work we’ve done. We partner with them through our Home fund. Their fundraiser is on October 23. The City is willing to pay for the tickets, if you want to attend as NRB members. If you want to bring a guest, you’ll have to pay for that ticket. Dolores will send the email.

Chris Johansen: If you noticed on the agenda, where I have the next meeting date, I’m not planning on having the November meeting. If that’s alright with everyone. I’m going to be out of the office. I don’t have anything scheduled to be on the agenda for that month. If it’s okay with you, we’ll plan on the next meeting being on December 4. I encourage a motion on this. That being said, that will be our last meeting of the calendar year. That meeting is where we appoint our new board chair and new officers. That’s something to think about for that December meeting. We’ll send out a reminder before then.

Motion to Approve: Tom LaPointe; seconded by Frank Owens.

Motion carried (7-0)

Kelly Kennedy: I’ve had a couple of requests. One was that we have an electronic map sent to us; like the one we had at last month’s meeting. I know with the electronic map, you can see down to the streets. I believe it’s on the website.

Chris Johansen: I’m pretty sure it’s on the website. I can send you the link, so you have access to it. https://maps.dsm.city/docs/maps/NeighborhoodsSmall.pdf https://findneighborhoods.dsm.city/
Kelly Kennedy: Just send a link. On the map, you can see that there are some shaded areas that are shared neighborhoods. There’s been a request that we get some history on why they’re shared and how that came about.

Chris Johansen: Every couple of years we get a request from those areas to become unshared and we usually go back to the neighborhood and ask them to do a vote. And nothing usually happens with it. But, yes, I can easily do that. Leslie, you’re familiar with one of them?

Leslie Berckes: I’m in shared Waveland Park/Beaverdale.

Chris Johansen: We’ll do our best on just the history. Some of this might pre-date my staff. I don’t know if we have any records but we’ll do our best to find out.

Kelly Kennedy: At the last meeting, there was some discussion on what we were going to do to help out neighborhoods. Not what the NRB, but what the City was going to do to help with, like with mail orders. I would like us to have some thought on that and to come up with a policy that we can refer to if someone does want to have a meeting, like Watrous Heights. Then we can offer to assist them.

Chris Johansen: To clarify, if a neighborhood comes to us and they want to expand their boundaries, what are we going to require the neighborhood association do to notify those members of the expansion that’s being requested.

Leslie Berckes: Expansion is just one example. Or maybe like Drake and Carpenter, is another example.

Kelly Kennedy: Yes, and if there’s City assistance that happens with that. Or maybe a new neighborhood which isn’t recognized right now. What are we going to ask them to do? And what is the City willing to assist with? I thought we could think about this for December.

Chris Johansen: We can do that.

Leslie Berckes: I see in the minutes from last time, we talked about the neighborhood liaison position that’s in the budgeting process. What’s the timeline for the budget? And should the board provide a letter of support? Or are you worried about that position?

Chris Johansen: I’m not worried about that position. It’s more of the budget process. The budget isn’t approved until about the first council meeting in March. Around that timeline, I should know where we’re at. I’ll have to circle back with the City Manager to make sure that’s how he’s doing this. It’s not controversial. The Council likes it. The only debatable thing that’s had more conversation is the neighborhood grant program that was proposed.

Kelly Kennedy: I am currently the liaison to Rebuilding Together and I work two jobs. They only meet every other month for an hour. My schedule is not free enough and they deserve to have representation. That’s something that I asked for last time, for us to look at, appointment of a new member to represent the board at Rebuilding Together.
Alex Piedras: Do they meet during the day or in the evening?
Kelly Kennedy: They meet the third Tuesday of every other month at Noon.

Jan Goode: Near the DMACC downtown campus?
Kelly Kennedy: Yes, United Way.

Jan Goode: For someone who doesn’t know where United Way is, it’s on Ninth Street.

Tom LaPointe: How long do the meetings last?
Kelly Kennedy: One hour.

Tom LaPointe: Are they serious players in the scheme of things?
Kelly Kennedy: Rebuilding Together definitely is. They don’t have a Restore. They’re not Habitat for Humanity but they do a lot of things like Habitat. Rebuilding Together does very good work. Wells Fargo is one of their biggest supporters.

Tom LaPointe: What is their annual budget?
Kelly Kennedy: I don’t know.

Tom LaPointe: Any revenue streams other than Wells Fargo?
Kelly Kennedy: Wells Fargo, Meredith, City of Des Moines

Marge Ramsey: They do a lot of volunteer work.

Frank Owens: Who is their Director?
Kelly Kennedy: Kimberly Hansen.

Jan Goode: Their single focus, if they had a single focus, is their year-round program to reach out on a per person basis and do homeowner repairs for low-income seniors over 62. With that criteria, they’ll come and fix a door lock, fix a window, fix a faucet, fix whatever. They try to keep the repairs under $1,000. Licensed contractors come in and do the work at a reduced rate, for the purpose of being able to help people.

Kelly Kennedy: The contractors aren’t doing most of the actual work, but they do help. Numerous times, I’ve scraped gutters and reglazed windows, planting, cleaning up shrubbery in yards. I’ve helped rebuild porches. I’ve worked on flooring, doors, stairs. Right about now, they have a program where they will do furnace repair for low income.

Tom LaPointe: How many clients do they have in the course of a year?
Jan Goode: 250.
Kelly Kennedy: I would say it’s in that area.

Leslie Berckes: Is anyone interested in that position?

Kelly Kennedy: The meeting coming up is October 15 at Noon.

Jan Goode: The reason it’s set at noon is because about 80% of the Board members are executives and business people from downtown. It’s set at lunchtime to attract more board members to attend during their lunch.

Kelly Kennedy: Linda Westergaard is on the board. Angela Connolly has been on the board.

Leslie Berckes: When do you need someone to get back to you? Do you want an answer now?

Kelly Kennedy: It is an action item. If we don’t have anyone step forward tonight, Chris your thoughts?

Chris Johansen: We can get back to this in December.

**Motion to Table Item:** Tom LaPointe; seconded by Frank Owens

Motion carried (7-0)

Kelly Kennedy: Any further discussion.

Marge Ramsey: When you were put on the board, I was interested in it at the time. I would be interested but I’m on two now.

Kelly Kennedy: Are you putting your name in the nomination pile?

Marge Ramsey: I will, if no one else is interested.

Tom LaPointe: I’d give it some consideration. I just want to think about it. Some of the answers to these questions have been very helpful.

Marge Ramsey: I did a lot of volunteer work with them before I sat on this board.

Tom LaPointe: I’ll talk to you about it.

Kelly Kennedy: Dolores, please send a link to everybody so they can access our website? [https://rebuildingdm.org/](https://rebuildingdm.org/)  [https://www.facebook.com/rebuildingdm/](https://www.facebook.com/rebuildingdm/)

**Board Liaison Updates**

**Polk Co Housing Continuum:**

Marge Ramsey: We had a gal from the Iowa Homeless Youth Shelter speak about their different programs. [https://www.yss.org/locations/iowa-homeless-youth-centers/](https://www.yss.org/locations/iowa-homeless-youth-centers/) Their main referral is from Primary Care, which I thought was interesting. They have a drop-in
center, advocate rapid rehousing. They have a restaurant in West Des Moines that hires the people they’re trying to help for $12/hour to teach them how to cook. Youth Homelessness just received a grant. Opening Doors is on November 20. They decorate doors then auction them off. [http://www.openingdoorsdsm.org/](http://www.openingdoorsdsm.org/) Then they talked about the Salvation Army. They said that it’s been out of commission for a while because many people had quit or retired. They just hired someone to start the office back up again. So, they’re back in business.

Rebuilding Together:
Kelly Kennedy: There was no meeting.

Housing Services Board:
Kelly Kennedy: Greg is not here. Anything you could add Chris?
Chris Johansen: The Housing Agencies just started their Agency Plan process. They’ll spend the next three months going through their plans, policies and procedures, which ends up in a public hearing by the board in March. We had three clients graduate from the FSS program. They each received checks for several thousand dollars.

NFC:
Marge Ramsey: We talked about Cedar Rapids and how they’re growing.
Chris Johansen: We talked about the status of the city zoning code update. We talked a little bit about Invest DSM. NFC is thinking about looking for new office space.
Kelly Kennedy: Are they looking for new office space because they’re outgrowing it?
Chris Johansen: Yes, they are outgrowing it. That’s it.

Frank Owens: Before we adjourn, I got a call a couple of weeks ago from a group called Pillars of Promise. It’s a group that’s affiliated with the Church of Hope. What’s going on is that they have these luncheons and they wanted to know more about the NRB. I got a call from Rhonda Cason and she asked if I could go speak at their lunch. I thought this should go before the group to determine how that works. I don’t know if we have a protocol. Anyway, they want someone to talk about what we do. They’re looking at things they want to do in the community. The current project that has been on the table for a couple of years is remodeling the Grubb Y and what goes on there. They would like for it to become a community center because there isn’t one in the area. I just happened to dig back into my archives and I said to Rhonda that we did a survey 10 years ago of about 500 kids from the five neighborhoods in that area. And one of the things that was on their list was a community center. I shared with her some of the things that they wanted in that community center. It was interesting to hear children, mostly junior high and high school kids, say they wanted tutoring and that it wouldn’t be just a social place for them. I got the impression that their dealing with ongoing things going on in the community. And I hadn’t heard a lot about them. They would like someone from NRB to contact them and talk about spending lunch with them while delivering about 10 minutes of conversation about the NRB. [https://pillarsofpromise.org/](https://pillarsofpromise.org/)
Kelly Kennedy: I don’t know if you’re interested, but I can’t think of a better person than Frank Owens.

Frank Owens: Is everyone else okay with that?

Tom LaPointe: I’m fine with that. I think you would be the perfect person. You have the history and have been long involved with the NRB.

Kelly Kennedy: You can tell them what we used to be, what we are and what we hope it to be.

Frank Owens: I’m good if you guys are good.

Tom LaPointe: No objections.

Adjourn the Meeting

Motion to Adjourn: Frank Owens; Seconded by Alex Piedras

Motion carried (7-0)

Meeting was adjourned by consensus by Kelly Kennedy at 6:10 p.m.