

**Community Development Advisory Committee
CDBG Public Hearing Minutes**

Hybrid meeting with both in-person and via Zoom.

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 – 5:30 PM

Lower-Level Conference Room 23 Union Street Norwich, CT
06360

Present: Director of Planning and Neighborhood Services, Deanna Rhodes, public hearing presiding officer; Director of Community Development, Patricia Mullins; Program Assistant, Sandra Gaitan-Brown; Community Development Staffer, Nallely Chavez.

Members of the public present included: Michael J. Vaz, Executive Director, Thames River Community Services, Inc.; Lance Bauer, Ph.D., Grant Writer, Madonna Place, Norwich; Nathaniel Colome, Program Manager, Madonna Place, Norwich. Attending via Zoom were Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) members and Norwich residents, Gemma Fabris and Mark Marcy.

1. The Public Hearing was called to order at 5:31 pm by presiding officer Norwich Director of Planning and Neighborhood Services, Deanna Rhodes, who welcomed all, read the rules of order.
2. Introductions.
3. Ms. Rhodes introduced the Director of the Office of Community Development, Patricia Mullins. Ms. Mullins began by outlining that the purpose of the public hearing was to hear public comment on Norwich community development needs and on the 2025-2029 Five -year Consolidated Plan and PY51 Annual Action Plan. She summarized the goals and priorities of the Plan, which include:
 - Providing decent, affordable and safe housing;
 - Creating a suitable living environment;
 - Expanding Opportunities for Low-to-Moderate Income Persons

Ms. Mullins stated that the City's expected allotment for 2025 is \$839,095.00, and she further explained the City's process for its expenditure:

- There are 13 projects, including Community Development Administration, to be undertaken in 2025
 - The Office of Community Development solicited proposals from agencies and organizations seeking to access CDBG funding for specific projects. The Community Development Advisory Committee held a series of public meetings in early 2025 to review proposals and recommend projects for PY51 to the Norwich City Council;
 - The Norwich City Council voted on and passed a resolution to accept the recommendations of the CDAC after providing a 30-day public comment period;
 - The Resolution including the list of the 13 projects was provided in a handout to those present, and is attached to these minutes;
4. At the conclusion of Ms. Mullins address, Ms. Rhodes opened the hearing to public comments. Comment: Mr. Mark Marcy commented that some years ago the City of Norwich and Habitat for Humanity had worked together in developing several units of affordable housing, but more recently the city had assessed taxes on the properties discouraging further partnership. Mr. Marcy asked what action the Norwich Office of Community Development might be planning to take in this regard. Mr. Marcy said he also wanted to explore drafting a policy memo from the CDAC to the City of Norwich.

Response: Ms. Mullins responded that while she believed that Habitat for Humanity is a great organization, having been in the position of Director for only a short while she is not informed about the program Mr. Marcy was referring to. She agreed to look into the matter and explore ways to work with Habitat in the future. Ms. Mullins also suggested bringing the matter of a policy memo up at the next CDAC meeting.

Comment: Mr. Michael Vaz requested to read into the record a prepared statement, outlining the services provided by Thames River Community Services, Inc. to Norwich families headed by young adults and some of the challenges those families face, including lack of safe housing, child-care, mental health care and economic stability. Mr. Vaz stated that what these families need most is stable housing, personalized support and economic opportunities. These are the services that Thames River Community Services attempts to provide, and that CDBG funding is crucial to this effort. Mr. Vaz stated that CDBG assistance is essential to advancing the Thames River mission of bringing stability, dignity and hope to Norwich 's most vulnerable population. The full text of Mr. Vaz's statement is attached here.

Response: Ms. Mullins thanked Mr. Vaz for his comments and assured him that this information would be included in the CDBG planning process.

Comment: Ms. Gemma Fabris thanked the Norwich Office of Community Development for their work on developing the Norwich Five-year Plan and for holding the public hearing, allowing Norwich residents the opportunity to comment.

Response: Ms. Mullins thanked those present both in-person and via Zoom for taking the time to attend the public hearing and for their input and also thanked Ms. Rhodes for officiating and the Community Development staff for assisting.

5. Ms. Mullins provided information on how the public may make oral or written comments regarding community developments needs and the Norwich 5-year Plan and PY51 Annual Action Plan, by contacting her at:

Patricia Mullins
Director
Office of Community Development
23 Union Street
Norwich, CT 06360
860-885-2911
pmullins@cityofnorwich.org

Ms. Mullins stated that the Office of Community Development is always interested in hearing from Norwich residents and comments from the public are welcome at any time.

6. Adjournment
After confirming that there were not any more comments or questions, presiding officer Deanna Rhodes adjourned the public hearing at 6:04 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Gaitan-Brown
Community Development Program Assistant