

## NCEC Committee of the Whole

### Staff Report

**TO:** Members of NCEC Committee of the Whole  
**From:** Howard Blin, Community Engagement Manager  
**Date:** August 7, 2013  
**Subject:** Community Participation Program Discussion

#### Action Requested

This item is before the Committee of the Whole for purposes of discussion. No action is requested.

#### Meeting Objectives

At the July 23<sup>rd</sup> NCEC meeting, a brief discussion was held on the Community Participation Program (CPP) Guidelines. The Commission agreed to discuss the guidelines further at the August Committee of the Whole meeting. The specific topics for that discussion identified at the Commission meeting include:

- Background on the CPP
- Exploring how to bring the NCEC closer to the CPP process and neighborhood organizations.
- Develop an evaluative process for the CPP.
- Define what kind of process be developed for making recommendations for changes to the CPP Guidelines.

This report provides the basic background on the CPP. The current program guidelines and neighborhood funding allocations for 2014 – 2016 are provided separately. Discussion on the remaining topics for the meeting will follow a presentation on the background of the program.

#### History of the CPP

The CPP was called for thin the 2008 *Framework for the Future* report which was developed by the NRP Workgroup. It was intended to be the primary means for the City to fund the 71 Minneapolis neighborhood organizations. A chronology of key steps in development of the program is as follows:

2009: Consolidated Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District established. Part of the property taxes generated within this district are earmarked to fund the CPP program

2010: In a process lasting several months, NCEC develops the initial guidelines for the program. Drafting the guidelines involved an extensive engagement process with neighborhood organizations, including meetings with 60 neighborhoods. A summary of the key points raised by the neighborhoods is provided below. The process also included extensive discussions of the appropriate formula to be used in allocating funding among neighborhoods.

December 2010: The City Council approves the initial funding guidelines for the program and allocates \$3 million in funding for 2011. These guidelines were developed by the NCEC in a process lasting several months. The process included extensive engagement with neighborhood organizations which is described below.

October 2011: The City Council authorized extension 2011 Community Participation Program (CPP) contracts through June 30, 2012, and increase contracted amounts from \$3 million to \$4.5 million to cover the additional six month period.

2011 – 2012: The NCEC met over several months as a Committee of the Whole to work on revisions to the guidelines. The process included eight meetings with representatives of neighborhood organizations to receive feedback on the proposed revisions.

March 2012: the City Council approved the revised guidelines and funding allocations totaling \$5.7 million for the next cycle of the program covering July 2012 through December 2013. The Council also approved an additional \$860,000 in funding for those neighborhoods that lost dollars in budget action from December 2010.

### **Neighborhood Input in 2010 Guideline Development**

In 2010, prior to the development of the initial CPP guidelines, the NCEC and NCR together met with more than 60 neighborhood organizations. This included attending board meetings, meetings of organization executive committees, or at other special meetings to gather input. Five community-wide meetings were also held at various locations around the city to provide opportunities to hear from neighborhood organizations that we could not otherwise meet with.

The input from these meetings confirmed and expanded on the community feedback on the Framework for the Future. The NCEC met and reviewed input from neighborhood organizations, and identified the following themes:

- 1. Frustration with the current community engagement process.** Specifically, neighborhood leaders expressed frustration with their experience with the City's community engagement and communication practices. Neighborhood organizations were concerned about the potential loss of resources, and that \$3,000,000 in funding would not be sufficient, and that volunteers were overburdened.
- 2. Goals and Expectations for the new program.** Participants during the meetings identified what they felt would be important characteristics of the new program:

- Preserving organizational capacity and autonomy;
- Accountability for use of public funds;
- A strong preference for flexibility and simplification (reflecting their concern about overburdened volunteers);
- Reflecting the Framework for the Future, participants commented on the importance of using Community Participation Program funds to assist with empowerment and engagement, communication, and engaging and working with diverse communities;
- Collaborations and partnerships with other neighborhood organizations and other entities should be supported but not a requirement of the program;
- Networking, training, and information sharing on a regional or city-wide basis was as important as funding;
- Eligibility should be limited to current neighborhood organizations; and
- The program should include additional support including continued and expanded administrative services and group purchasing (such as Directors and Officers liability insurance).

**3. Allocation policy.** Participants offered a variety of possible mechanisms for allocating funds to neighborhood organizations:

- Develop a “needs based” allocation formula, similar to existing NRP or Citizen Participation Program guidelines (*this option was most frequently offered*);
- Divide equally between neighborhood organizations;
- Competitive grants;
- “Baseline Plus” in which each neighborhood received a minimum base allocation, with an additional needs-based formula determining the remainder;

Participants also frequently commented about the timing of funding, noting that a one-year allocation period was too brief, while the ten-year cycle of NRP was too long. They also advocated for keeping Community Participation Program funding independent of NRP funding or status.

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