

CDBG 2023 Bi-annual Report for The Huntingdon County Planning Commission

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Like most things, the jobs we do have ebbs and flows and that is what we've learned in the second half of 2023. While we were busy and finding new and creative ways to get our communities engaged, being involved in more local events and committees, the bulk of our CDBG work has been "hurry up and wait" in regards to projects, applications and approvals.

We completed a DCED workshop in August which took place in Hershey with a lot of similarly experienced colleagues from across the state. It was three learning intensive days where we had the opportunity to network with others in our positions, learn of new potential project ideas and qualification guidelines, collaborate and have a better understanding of the policy and procedures we deal with daily.

We have begun our thought process on our Fair Housing activity, which we intend to coordinate with the actual Fair Housing Month which is in April and again, as we did last year, incorporate our youth as the focus of our attention. We have learned of several great children's books that address the topic in an age appropriate format; to which we are working with the school districts in Huntingdon County to gain their cooperation in our efforts.

After the departure of Jim from our office, we began discussing some reorganization of roles and duties within our current staff. Jayme will be attending a series of PMPEI trainings in March along with several other members of the Huntingdon County Planning Commission to gain knowledge of land development and sub-division review. This will allow our office to have multiple persons with the ability to accept and review plans as they are submitted and present them to the Planning Commission in a timelier manner. We have also breached discussion on other general office duties being reassigned throughout for a better balanced work load for all.

We completed our second public hearing for the 2023 CDBG Entitlement application which was held on September 5, 2023 to which we unsurprisingly did not have community participation, or concern of the projects we intended to submit in the application. Due to some changes in one of our county CDBG projects (further details provided below), which will occur in Mount Union Borough, we were faced with revising the budget and having additional monies that would need assigned to

a new project. We completed a modification and were able to grant one of the applicants of the 2023 application into the newly available funds in 2022. Likewise, in Huntingdon Borough, a project that had not received any bids was dialed back and a majority of the construction was absorbed by the Huntingdon Borough staff to complete, making a portion of the 2022 funds available and another small project was able to be granted funding.

As we had mentioned previously we intend to physically visit each of our municipalities to learn of their needs and desires for their community; we have continued to do so and have now completed on-site meets with 5 either in their regular scheduled meetings or with non-profits groups on behalf of the borough/township they represent. Our meetings have produced the start of a demographic survey in Carbon Township, a competitive SAPDC mini-grant application submitted in Wood Township, an engineering scope completed in Petersburg Borough, and general interest from others including Oneida and Cromwell townships to which we may see applications from in the near future for either CDBG or other grant opportunity we provided them information about. We have the next three destinations in the queue and are waiting for the winter season to be through before we visit. We were welcomed by each and every location we visited, and they were all very glad to now have a face to go with the connection in our office. Everyone was eager to learn more of what CDBG was and how our grants could benefit them as well as the information we provided them for other grant opportunities within the state that may be better suited for their projects.

In September, Jayme was added alongside Jen who was previously involved, to the JRBC committee that serves the Mount Union Area encompassing Mount Union, Mapleton and Shirley Township. Since then, JRBC has completed several projects with the aid of the both of us, including being the liaison between JRBC and the artist whom created the cartoon map of the Mount Union area. This map will be used for marketing purposed by JRBC, and as an ongoing fundraising opportunity for projects to be completed in the area. We also showed our support by ringing the Salvation Army bell on December 15 in Mount Union as volunteers of the committee.

We plan to use 2024 to advance our knowledge in grant opportunities, serving our communities to the best of our ability, continued involvement in JRBC and potentially investigating how we can be involved in additional organizations to further benefit our office and our county.

Please see below the progress of existing projects and preliminary ideas of upcoming projects, as well as several we have been successful in completing.

Completed CDBG Activities:

Since July 2023, three CBDG projects have been completed making the total for the year five with the closure of one contract, that being FY 2020 CDBG CV.

Huntingdon County

FY 2020

Pump Station #2 Upgrades – Shade Gap

In late June exploratory excavation began on the buried lines at the site of the Pump Station #2 in Shade Gap. The following week Hickes Associates Inc. began work with estimation only being 2-3 weeks for completion. The manual construction portion of the work was completed by the end of July, however internet connection took another month to install and train the operators on the alarm system. The final payment was sent on September 28, 2023 and the project closed as completed.



Before



After



Huntingdon Borough

FY 2020 & 2021 & 2022

Obo Huntingdon Borough 6th Street Parking Lot Rehabilitation

On July 17, 2023, construction began at the municipal parking lot along Penn Street between 6th and 7th streets commonly referred to as the 6th Street Parking Lot. The project, to include underground electricity for lighting with possibility of additional charging station for electric vehicle and/or parking payment toll booth, new light poles and lumens, landscaping, planting of trees, and adjust the number of handicapped parking spaces to meet requirements was separated into two bids, one electrical and one general, however, due to the lack of bidders for the electrical portion, Huntingdon Borough offered their staff to complete the electrical portion of the project and Glenn O. Hawbaker were the general construction contract holders. The borough employees worked hand in hand with those of Hawbaker to reach the final completion of the project on September 15, 2023, and we are awaiting the final shipment of light poles to be installed by the borough in March 2024 to which we can issue payment for and close the project.

Before



After



Smithfield Township
FY 2018 & 2019

Obo Smithfield Township Flood Levee Improvements

This project was 70% completed when stopped by DEP in December 2022. In April 2023, DEP sent forth new requirements to which the contractor, State Pipe Services, Inc., requested a termination of contract. A new set of bid specs were prepared and a contractor was selected via COSTARS. Snyder Environmental Services Inc. went into contract with Huntingdon County in July, however the permit from DEP did not come through until October 31, 2023. Work began on November 13, 2023 and completed the following day. Considering the type of work the before and after pictures were not possible. The project will be closed upon final payment submitted from both our office as well as the overages paid by Smithfield Township.

Ongoing CDBG Contracts and Activities:

FY 2018, FY 2019 & FY 2020

Obo Huntingdon Borough Town Clock Revitalization

This activity involves the repair and restoration (historical preservation) of the town clock located at 508 Mifflin Street, Huntingdon, PA. This project is very involved and includes the repair of the Seth Thomas Time and Strike tower clock movement; restoration of the dials; repair of the bell floor, bell cribbing, tolling wheel, and hammer assembly; installation of appropriate dial lighting; and physical structure repairs to eliminate existing water infiltration.

Balzer Family Clockworks have been busy restoring the timepiece since December 2022 in their Freeport, Maine workshop. They re-visited the site in June of this year to remove the dials and clock faces to start refabricating the exterior aspect of the clock, as well as provide specs to the architect for relocation of the timepiece to the ground level lobby entrance for viewing by the public and easier maintenance by the Borough staff.

The Balzer's returned the week of October 9, 2023 which resulted in the removal of the plywood from the clock openings and the new faces and hands were installed. The project had gone out to bid in early August with the opening date being September 6, 2024 to which we had none. After discussing further with the architect, borough, Balzer's and internally we determined the scope of the construction work could be met with an offer from Huntingdon Borough to have their staff complete. The encasement for the timepiece itself will be procured through multiple vendor quotes based upon the dimensions provided in the bid specifications and installed by

the borough as well. Construction work will commence in early 2024 by the Borough and completion of the timepiece will take place in spring of 2024 with one final trip by the Balzer's to install and complete prior to May 31.



FY 2020 & 2021
Obo Smithfield Township Housing Rehabilitation

After teaming up with SEDA-COG to administer this project, a contractor was selected; Hilltop Construction but we have had little to do with the daily upkeepings. We have been in communication regarding timelines and progress and payment applications and are confident the project is on track for completion but the deadline of March 29, 2024. Of the applicants that submitted interest in the program a home in Smithfield Township was selected as being in dire need of repairs, they met the intake qualifications and construction began with completion of outdoor repairs in September.

Upcoming CDBG Contracts and Activities:

FY 2021 & 2022

Huntingdon County – Pennsylvania Ave Restoration – Mount Union

The original project was submitted as the restoration of a section of the one-way west bound lane of Pennsylvania Avenue between Franklin Street and Division Street. This section experiences a relatively large traffic volume, including school bus traffic and delivery trucks that enter the Borough from Kistler Borough and proceed to Division Street or Jefferson Street. The pavement condition of this roadway section is poor with many areas of base and edge failures. In addition, the sidewalks do not meet ADA requirements for an accessible route and the crossings at Franklin Street and Division Street are substandard. Much of the vehicle parking in this area is informal, with vehicles regularly parking on the sidewalks, decreasing ADA pedestrian access. After learning about an upcoming sewer project that will be taking place along this same section of roadway the project location has been relocated. The new corridor will be from Division to Jefferson Streets along Pennsylvania Avenue (just east of the original location) and will not be disrupted by the sewer project. The bid specifications are in the process of being created with the project to go out to bid in the spring of 2024 with completion by fall of 2024. The environmental review has been completed on the original sector as well as a recertification completed for the new section.

FY 2022

Huntingdon County – Mount Union Municipal Authority – W. Davis/W. Garber Street Waterline Repair

The service will receive new valves in the lines along Washington Street and the intersections of W. Davis and W. Garber Streets, a new 8” water main along W. Davis Street, a new 4” water main through the woods between W. Davis and W. Garber Streets, a new 4” valve connecting the new 4” line to the existing line along Garber Street. There will also be a new fire hydrant installed along W. Davis Street. This project was submitted and approved in the 2022 CDBG application submitted in October to DCED. We’re awaiting disbursement of funds before we can complete any further steps. We have completed the income survey for all affected beneficiaries and the project is qualified. The environmental review is underway and bid specifications are being completed with anticipating going out to bid in late spring of 2024 and construction to begin summer of 2024.

FY 2022 & 2023

Obo Huntingdon Borough – 7th Street Parking Lot Rehabilitation

A modification to FY 2022 application resulted in the change from the Huntingdon Borough project from the Huntingdon Community Center ADA Accommodations to the 7th Street Parking lot Rehabilitation. While this parking lot had recent electrical accommodations made, the paving and draining in the lot is in poor deterioration and in need of repairs made. There are also currently no ADA parking spaces. Being the primary overnight parking lot for residents of Crawford and DeForrest Apartments the block groups containing said complexes was used to qualify the location. We are anticipating needing to combine the 2022 and 2023 funds with the allocation for 2024 as well to complete the entire paving project with bid specifications, bidding and start dates to occur in late 2025.

FY 2022 & 2023

Obo Smithfield Township – Storm Sewer Improvements Phase East (replaces Housing Rehabilitation)

Pending a current demographic survey in progress and a formal modification to DCED, we anticipate beginning a large multi-year, multi-phased storm sewer improvement project within the “village” of Smithfield Township beginning with the first portion named Phase East. There will be two additional Phases and the entire project will likely require the use of 6 years of CDBG funding.

FY 2022

Huntingdon County – Bricktown Senior Center Upgrades

The change in the scope of work associated with Pennsylvania Ave Restoration decreased the budget for that project allowing a modification to be presented to complete an additional project that was submitted in anticipation of the 2023 application; Bricktown Senior Center Upgrades. The Bricktown Senior Center is located in Mount Union Borough with a member size of 229 seniors ranging in ages 62 and older. Due to recent changes for senior centers, they are now required to provide funding for their own utilities. The seniors have devised a way to approach this new requirement without charging members, and have since done a successful hoagie fundraising event monthly from September through May. They pride themselves on being able to make 600 hoagies in an hour, however delivery takes more time and while awaiting pickup there is not a refrigerator on site they can keep the hoagies stored at a safe food handling temperature and have requested our assistance in the purchase of a freezer-less refrigerator.

In addition, they are facing safety concerns with their current dining room/event room seating. The chairs they currently have are of worn, thin metal frames resulting in bent frames, sudden stops when being slid and general wear and tear (they are from the 1970's), and have even collapsed beneath a member resulting in a fall. They are requesting replacement of all 150 chairs with a new sturdy, durable stackable chair that will provide peace of mind and can be easily moved upon needs.

FY 2022

Obo Huntingdon Borough – Westminster Place Outdoor Upgrades

Due to the changes in the Town Clock Revitalization project with regards to the fact it received no bidders and the work was absorbed by the borough itself, there were funds unspoken for that were able to be put towards another small project that was desired by the residents of Westminster Place. The fairly new senior living apartments hosts lower income seniors ranging in ages 62 and over who are independent individuals. Many times throughout the day there are groups of residents sitting outside in their one and only seating area. There are no trees offering shade to the location of the seating area resulting in direct sunlight for a majority of the day. While there are health benefits to being outside in the fresh air, the vitamin D from the sun and the camaraderie with their peers too much sun is not favorable despite the temperature, therefore the complex is seeking our assistance in the purchase of an awning for a shade option. The section of patio will be partially covered with a 24' retractable awning that will be installed in the spring of 2024 by the employees of Huntingdon Borough. The awning will have

an electronic retractor to prevent any of the residents from harm that could result from a manual option. The awning will be made of durable canvas and offer years of shade despite the sun and weather conditions presented. The color and trim of the piece will be aesthetically pleasing to the design of the building as it is.