LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SUMMARY NOTES
September 11, 2008

Committee Members Present:	Chair Ruth Grendahl, Jim Barton, Gary Fields, Glen Hardin, Donald Jensen, Janet Jeremiah, Peggy Lucas, Dan Marckel, Lance Neckar, Doug Snyder, Blair Tremere, Charleen Zimmer
Absent:	Gina Bonsignore
Others Present:	Staff: Guy Peterson, Paul Burns, Joanne Barron, Linda Milashius

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ruth Grendahl at 9:10 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

Chair Grendahl asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, she declared that the agenda would stand as printed.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Grendahl welcomed two new members to the Advisory Committee: Janet Jeremiah and Charleen Zimmer. Grendahl noted that three committee members were reappointed this year. They are Glen Hardin, Dan Marckel and Doug Snyder. Members introduced themselves, noting the background and experience they bring to the committee's work. Staff introduced themselves.

Advisory Committee Role and Process

Chair Grendahl said the advisory committee reviews and evaluates applications for funding from the Council's Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA). She stressed that the committee serves the Council in an advisory capacity and that the Council has the option to change the committee's recommendations when it awards grant funds. The Council has generally awarded funds as the advisory committee has recommended.

Grendahl stated that all communication from applicants should go through staff. She requested that if members receive materials from applicants, they should send the materials to staff.

Grendahl discussed conflict of interest procedures. Joanne Barron said that the LCAC committee bylaws call for conflicts of interest to be declared orally and in writing. Members received a conflict of

interest of form, handed out today, on which they will need to check which projects, if any, for which they have conflict(s), sign and date and return to staff. Several members completed the forms during the meeting and gave them to staff. Barron stated that members will be asked to orally declare any conflicts at the next committee meeting.

Barron asked members to update their contact information on the roster that was sent around the table. She added that staff follows a practice of not sharing members' contact information outside of the committee.

The Committee revisited the draft calendar that had been sent to them in August. The committee made no changes, so the calendar will stand as is.

At Chair Grendahl's suggestion, the Committee unanimously approved Dan Marckel to continue as the Committee's vice-chair. Grendahl complimented Dan on the good job he has done in the past as vice-chair.

LCDA Program Overview and 2008 Changes

Barron used a slide presentation to give an overview of the program, including the program purpose described in the Livable Communities Act that created the program, the program focus, funding goals, eligible uses of funding, and evaluation criteria. Doug Snyder asked for clarification about why items such as sidewalks and benches are eligible for streets but not for parks and other public areas. Barron responded that streets and benches are eligible when requested for an eligible street because those items would be added at the same time streets are constructed and are permanent public pedestrian improvements. The Council determined that these types of improvements for parks should be a local responsibility. Snyder asked if the committee was responsible for determining eligibility of funding items requested. Barron responded that staff determines eligibility of items. Many ineligible items were flagged by staff in the pre-applications, and applicants were notified of this. During the application review, staff will monitor eligibility of items as it becomes known how requested items contribute to the project. She also said that staff will need the committee's input on how funded items contribute to the project to help determine eligibility in some cases.

Paul Burns reviewed the LCDA program changes approved by the Council for 2008. They include 1) coordination with policies and initiatives implemented by several state agencies, including MnDOT, Minnesota Housing, MN Department of Commerce, MN Pollution Control Agency, MN Department of Administration, and MN Department of Human Services; 2) more emphasis, by assigning points in the Step One evaluation, for projects located within one-half mile of a transitway in the 2030 Transitway System or local route, and within one-half mile of a park and ride; and 3) use Minnesota Sustainability Guidelines to evaluate environmentally responsible and innovative site development practices. Gary Fields asked whether the Council had considered coordinating with DEED. Staff responded that they considered areas that related to the LCDA criteria, such as transportation and housing, but would take another look at opportunities for coordination with DEED.

Burns also mentioned that the Council had designated $4 million of LCDA funding this year for a one-time Land Acquisition for Affordable New Housing (LAAND) program that is being administered

with Minnesota Housing. The $4 million is in addition to the $7 million available for LCDA demonstration grants this year.

Barron continued her presentation by reviewing the evaluation and scoring process in the criteria adopted by the Council. She commented that the Committee may want to consider a new category of demonstration criteria. This would give more structure to the Committee's discussion of the innovation and demonstration aspects of projects, which some members had expressed a desire for last year, and would enable better documentation and feedback to applicants of the committee's decisions.

Committee discussion on the use of demonstration criteria included the suggestion that projects would need to meet the basic criteria and could get extra credit for innovation, that some projects go beyond the basic criteria and are bigger than the sum of their parts, that demonstration criteria are already factored into the scoring or could be factored into the existing scoring, and a desire not to lose the fundamentals of the scoring system. The committee also discussed whether to implement the idea this year, or identify what it would include this year during the evaluation process and implement it next year. Chair Grendahl asked staff to look into whether we can implement it this year or work on identifying how to do it to for implementation next year.

Summary of 2008 LCDA Proposals

Barron briefly reviewed the list of 14 proposals the committee will review. Several were applicants, funded and not funded, in 2007, so most members will be familiar with these projects. She reported that of 20 original proposals submitted this year, six scored less than the 20 minimum points (of 50 possible) in the Step One evaluation process, resulting in 14 proposals in the Committee's Step 2 evaluation.

Members discussed the implications of the policy that no more than 40 percent of available funding be awarded to projects located in St. Paul and Minneapolis, given this year's fewer applications and lower dollar request from suburban cities. Marckel commented that 60 percent of the funding covers pretty much all of the suburban applications. In response to a question, Barron stated how this policy was developed several years ago by the Council. At the time the policy was established, 40 percent was the average of the total dollars by year that had been awarded to Minneapolis and St. Paul projects over the life of the program.

Minneapolis and St. Paul have given us a priority order list of their projects. Grendahl said it is her preference to share Minneapolis and St Paul's priorities with the Committee at a later time.

Evaluating Use of Minnesota Sustainable Building Guidelines in 2008 LCDA Proposals

Lance Neckar presented information on the Sustainable Building Guidelines, and demonstrated the website for the guidelines (Google MN B3 to access them). He said the guidelines are measurable and performance-based, as opposed to a checklist such as that used by LEED. They can be used to evaluate building and site systems.

Marckel suggested having the website open while reviewing projects, and to read through the list of items and see how it helps understand the applications. He suggested members think about how the

committee could make this evaluation more explicit for next year. In future years the criteria can move toward a more performance-based system, as more information becomes available on performance-based outcomes. Fields asked which ones are the biggest guidelines, of the many in the list. Marckel suggested going through the index of items for each project and pick he ones that might apply for a project. Neckar said that perhaps a smaller group of members, such as himself, Marckel, Doug Snyder and Gina Bonsignore could work on this part of the LCDA evaluation, for example on the funding proposals involve stormwater management. Blair Tremere stated the committee should make sure the Sustainable Building Guidelines do not shift the LCDA from the basic focus.

Committee Evaluation Process

Grendahl suggested that all 14 applicants be invited for a question-and-answer session with the Committee, and that the committee not do an initial scoring of the projects. The Committee can use the time at the next meeting to focus on questions about the projects. Marckel will map the projects using Google Earth, and provide a virtual tour of projects for the Sept. 25 meeting.

Other Business

Tremere requested a list of completed LCDA-funded projects and their locations.

Adjourn

The next LCAC meeting is Thursday, September 25, 2008, 9:00 am – noon, Metropolitan Council, Room LLA. The meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.