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1 SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

2 PUBLIC HEARING

3 FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 123, 2007 -

4 AN ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER

5 APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON TO

6 TAKE ALL NECESSARY ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE

7 CONSOLIDATED SUBMISSION FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING

8 AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO BE FUNDED UNDER THE

9 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM,

10 HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (HOME) PROGRAM AND

11 EMERGENCY SHELTER GRANT (ESG) PROGRAM.

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14 HELD:

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16 Tuesday, September 25, 2007

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18 LOCATION:

19 Council Chambers

20 Scranton City Hall

21 340 North Washington Avenue

22 Scranton, Pennsylvania

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25 CATHENE S. NARDOZZI- COURT REPORTER

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2 CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

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MS. JUDY GATELLI, PRESIDENT

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5 MS. JANET E. EVANS

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MS. SHERRY FANUCCI

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8 MR. ROBERT MCGOFF

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MR. WILLIAM COURTRIGHT

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11 MS. KAY GARVEY, CITY CLERK

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MS. SUE MAGNOTTA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

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14 MR. AMIL MINORA, SOLICITOR

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1 MS. GATELLI: I'd like to call the

2 public hearing to order. Roll call.

3 MS. MAGNOTTA: Mrs. Evans.

4 MRS. EVANS: Here.

5 MS. MAGNOTTA: Mrs. Fanucci.

6 MS. FANUCCI: Here.

7 MS. MAGNOTTA: Mr. McGoff.

8 MR. MCGOFF: Here.

9 MS. MAGNOTTA: Mr. Courtright.

10 MR. COURTRIGHT: Here.

11 MS. MAGNOTTA: Mrs. Gatelli.

12 MS. GATELLI: Here. The purpose of

13 the said public hearing is to hear testimony

14 and discuss the following, File of Council

15 No. 123, 2007 -- AN ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING

16 THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF

17 THE CITY OF SCRANTON TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY
18 ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE CONSOLIDATED
19 SUBMISSION FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND
20 DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO BE FUNDED UNDER THE
21 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)
22 PROGRAM, HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (HOME)
23 PROGRAM AND EMERGENCY SHELTER GRANT (ESG)
24 PROGRAM. And the first speaker is Peg
25 Ruddy.

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1 MS. RUDDY: Good evening, city
2 council members, and thank you for this
3 opportunity. My name is Peg Ruddy and I'm
4 the executive director of the Women's
5 Resource Center. The Women's Resource
6 Center is a Scranton based private nonprofit
7 organization serving adults, teens and
8 children who are victims of domestic
9 violence and sexual abuse. This evening I'm
10 here to provide council with information
11 about two grant applications we have
12 submitted to OECD for our work.
13 First, the Women's Resource Center

14 is requesting \$32,570 in 2008 emergency
15 shelter grant dollars to operate our shelter
16 for battered woman. The Women's Resource
17 Center and Domestic Violence Safe House
18 provides refuge for adult and child victims,
19 particularly woman and children, who are
20 being battered in their home. Our program
21 is a life-saving service for many victims of
22 domestic violation who are forced to flee
23 their own homes because of physical and
24 sexual abuse. The program enables women to
25 take the necessary time in a safe and
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1 supportive environment to make choices about
2 their future and to take the necessary steps
3 to carry them out. The safe house functions
4 both as an around the clock emergency
5 shelter, we take in women and children
6 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We
7 provide for arranging for medical care,
8 transportation, legal advocacy, civil
9 representation, economic advocacy and
10 justice. We transport women from Scranton

11 police stations and Scranton hospitals to
12 our facility and we provide regular
13 counseling, case management, food, and
14 clothing to anyone who is in need of our
15 services. Women's Resource Center is the
16 only emergency shelter of it's kind in the
17 greater Scranton area.
18 Second, the Women's Resource Center
19 has submitted an application for 2008
20 Community Block Grant Funds. As you know,
21 domestic violence is a crime of epidemic
22 proportions and, unfortunately, Scranton and
23 of Lackawanna County are not exempt nor are
24 their residents from the social problem. In
25 fact, during the past 25 years the Women's
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1 Resource Center has provided housing to over
2 3,000 of our residents in our emergency safe
3 house programming. Our program reduces the
4 risk of future violation and we help women
5 and children seek out the justice and safety
6 that they deserve. Unfortunately, over the
7 last couple of years we have witnessed two

8 disturbing trends, one is just a continuing
9 growth in the number of women and children
10 seeking emergency shelter services. Over
11 the past three years we have watched those
12 numbers go up 15 percent each year and as a
13 really disturbing trend, and I have been
14 with the organization for those 25 years, we
15 have had to turn away women and children
16 because we had no beds.

17 Second trend that we are witnessing
18 is the women and children that come and stay
19 with us have to stay longer. It used to be
20 that it took about 13 days in our shelter
21 before they could have a place what they
22 needed to move on, now we are up to 45 days.
23 So, you can see with those number of program
24 participants as well as the really high
25 demand for services it really puts a lot of

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1 wear and tear on our building and it also
2 forces us to look at having to expand our
3 project.

4 So, the Women's Resource Center has

5 submitted application to the Community
6 Development Block Grant Funds to achieve the
7 following goals:
8 Number one, we will preserve our
9 120-year old building. We will increase our
10 capacity to house low income to moderate
11 income victims of domestic violence. We are
12 going to modernize our current living
13 facility by renovating the living room, the
14 dining room, the kitchen. We have to
15 replace a very old roof. We are going to
16 enhance our security system. We are going
17 to permanently acquire an adjacent property
18 to our building so that we can expand our
19 project, and we will continue to provide
20 safe housing for homeless, low income and
21 moderate income adults and children from our
22 area who are victims of violence in their
23 home. I appreciate council's support of our
24 project as well as Mayor Doherty's and I
25 look forward to the successful

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1 implementation of this work. Thank you.

2 MS. GATELLI: Thank you. Jean

3 Decker.

4 MS. DECKER: Hi. My name is Jean and

5 I'm a survivor of domestic violence. I

6 wanted to be here today to support the

7 funding for the Women's Resource Center Safe

8 House Preservation and Carriage House

9 Project. As a survivor, my children and I

10 have participated in and benefited from the

11 various programs and services at the Women's

12 Resource Center. Through the work that

13 continues there I have been empowered to

14 rise above circumstances which were both

15 devastating and life altering. With the

16 support of the Women's Resource Center, it's

17 advocates and attorneys I was able to change

18 my life and the lives of my children to be

19 free of violence. The support and care I

20 have received at the Women's Resource Center

21 has inspired me to want to be part of the

22 work at the center. I returned to college

23 and am now completing an internship at the

24 Women's Resource Center and will receive my

25 bachelor's of social work degree from

1 Marywood University May of 2008. I want you
 2 to know, though, I'm only one story of many,
 3 of victims transitioning into survivorship
 4 because of the work that goes on at the
 5 Women's Resource Center. Being at the
 6 center as an intern I have a different
 7 perspective of the work that's being done
 8 and I'm grateful for the opportunity to show
 9 support for funding that will ensure upkeep
 10 and expansion of the physical structures
 11 that house much more than program and
 12 services, the buildings I'm talking to you
 13 about tonight house hope and vision for
 14 women and children in the future. Thank you
 15 for your time.

16 MS. GATELLI: Thank you. Ozzie
 17 Quinn.

18 MR. QUINN: Do you have a time limit
 19 on this?

20 MS. GATELLI: Why, are you going to
 21 go to 6:30?

22 MR. QUINN: No, I just wanted to

23 know.

24 MS. GATELLI: As long as you really

25 -- I think everybody keeps it under five

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1 minutes or so.

2 MR. QUINN: Ozzie Quinn, President

3 of The Scranton Lackawanna County Taxpayers'

4 and Citizens' Association. I see where the

5 CDBG program, the total is going to be

6 \$4,587,000. Now, the housing in the City of

7 Scranton built before and prior to 1939 is

8 65.3 percent, that's an old housing stat.

9 It was previously higher than that, okay?

10 That goes to show you that we are knocking

11 down a lot of housing and we are not

12 rehabilitating enough of it.

13 Now, I'm looking down and there is

14 \$200,000, not the CDBG Program for say even

15 though it's part of the entire program it's

16 in under the HOME Program. Now, if you look

17 at the administration \$600,000 and below the

18 HOME is \$64,000 that's a lot of money.

19 That's a lot of money. \$200,000 of housing

20 rehabilitation money is going no where and
21 last year I understand they rehabbed seven
22 houses in the City of Scranton. Everyone
23 knows your neighborhoods and if you have
24 been into the lower and moderate income
25 parts of your neighborhoods and it's a
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1 shame, the housing needs rehabilitation, the
2 infrastructure is unbelievable. The roads
3 are gone to pot, and as a matter of fact,
4 there is less than \$100,000 in the CDBG
5 Program for paving. Now, what is the Mayor
6 doing for the neighborhoods? I can't see
7 anything what he is doing for the
8 neighborhood. He is just going through the
9 motions. There has got to be more money put
10 into housing rehabilitation. Scranton
11 Neighborhood Housing Services, a great
12 organization, a great organization, but they
13 have a person of one, okay? The city has a
14 person of one, and there is one person who
15 does the write-ups. You cannot do a volume
16 housing rehabilitation with that amount of

17 money, okay? You have to bring in a few
18 more staff members, get rid of some of that
19 staff, the staff members that are
20 duplication in the CDBG program, there is
21 ten employees over there sharing \$600,000 of
22 operating expenses. I know what their
23 salaries are, but we have to do something
24 about the rehab.

25 Now, one of the problems that is,

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1 because they are one write-up person, one
2 intake interviewer, okay, all right, then
3 they do not have the staff to hire
4 contractors and that's the problem, okay?
5 The more that you can look at contractors
6 and do them and compare them with the
7 writings that Mr. Kane, the former
8 rehabilitation director for OECD puts in
9 place, then they can do more rehabilitation.
10 People that are low to moderate income, they
11 cannot afford \$10,000 homes. There has got
12 to be a program for elderly homeowners which
13 we have 18 percent in the community. We

14 have to have some kind of a grant or
15 deferred loan and we have to a low interest
16 program for those in the upper and the
17 middle income and maybe 1 percent. We've
18 got to do something, okay, and it's a shame
19 when you think that 5 percent of all of the
20 Community Development Block Grant, 5 percent
21 is going for housing rehabilitation. That
22 is tantamount to saying the mayor is
23 sticking his five fingers up to the nose to
24 the people in the neighborhoods. It's a
25 shame and I ask this council to please
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1 reconsider this amount of money and do
2 something for our neighbors. Thank you.

3 MS. GATELLI: Thank you.

4 Mr. Sbaraglia.

5 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia, City
6 of Scranton. Fellow Scrantonians, there is
7 two items on here to repay a Section 108
8 loans to HUD, one for \$170,000 and the other
9 for \$330,000. I thought we couldn't use
10 county funds to pay off debt. We will

11 reduce this amount of money before we got it

12 or have we received the money and then we

13 have to pay them back?

14 MS. GATELLI: Mr. Renda is here --

15 MR. RENDA: There is a reimbursement

16 agreement in place with the people that

17 essentially loaned to us and we owe them a

18 certain percentage.

19 MR. SBARAGLIA: Yeah, I understand

20 why we owe for the hotel, that is my

21 understanding.

22 MS. GATELLI: Is the mall still

23 there?

24 MR. RENDA: Yeah, the mall we pay

25 20 percent on Section 08 loan and they pay

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14

1 eight, that's 20 percent of this year's

2 payment.

3 MS. GATELLI: Do we still have

4 Allied?

5 MR. RENDA: No, that's gone.

6 MR. SBARAGLIA: For how many years?

7 MR. RENDA: I don't know what the

8 agreement says.

9 MR. SBARAGLIA: For the next 100?

10 MR. RENDA: No.

11 MS. GATELLI: It might be 20.

12 MR. SBARAGLIA: I'll have to check

13 into that. This HUD --

14 MS. GATELLI: Because that was done

15 under the previous administration.

16 MR. SBARAGLIA: Yeah, I noticed

17 that, some of it was done there, but not the

18 Hilton. The Hilton was definitely there.

19 MS. GATELLI: Well, somebody has to

20 do it at one point or another.

21 MR. SBARAGLIA: Okay, let's get onto

22 this street paving, only \$100,000, that's

23 all we are going to spend on street paving

24 and that includes handicap curbs? That's a

25 very low figure, \$100,000 considering the

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1 way the streets are in the city. Somewhere

2 along the way I think you should find a way

3 to improve that amount so we can get more

4 paving in. I mean, surely it's -- we get

5 federal funds coming in from the gases. We
6 get state reimbursement from the fuel tax.
7 Surely it must be more than \$100,000. Where
8 is the rest going?

9 MS. GATELLI: Those are separate,
10 but, those are separate. The liquid fuels
11 and the K-Streets are separate from CDBG.

12 MR. SBARAGLIA: I understand they are
13 separate from block grants, but, I mean, are
14 we having a lot of money coming in from them
15 people so we got so little from the block
16 grants?

17 MS. GATELLI: I'm not sure about that
18 answer and I know that in the block grant
19 you can only pave in low to moderate income
20 areas.

21 MR. SBARAGLIA: Believe me, in this
22 whole city there is low to moderate area.

23 MS. GATELLI: No, believe it or
24 not --

25 MR. SBARAGLIA: Only the hill. Only
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16

1 the Hill, that's all.

2 MS. GATELLI: You have to qualify for

3 that.

4 MR. SBARAGLIA: I mean, if you went

5 through the city where the average wage in

6 the city is \$26,000, I'm sure that's low to

7 moderate income, that has to be. One out of

8 six people in this city are in poverty and

9 you tell me that most of the city is not?

10 Only one section is of the city is I know of

11 has I think people with income and that's

12 the Hill, the upper Hill, not even the lower

13 Hill what you call Greenridge and lower

14 Greenridge. That definitely is not high

15 income, that is low to moderate, but

16 somewhere along the line maybe we should

17 look into this and see how much money we are

18 getting from liquid fuels and from other

19 reimbursements and then see if maybe we can

20 up this. If we can't up it we can't up it,

21 but it's more important that we take care of

22 the streets because I believe charity begins

23 at home. Most of these things you are

24 saying in these things a lot of was for

25 people coming into the area they will

1 utilize these services that are available,
2 but they are not Scrantonian, and we are
3 using Scrantonian Block Grants to fund them,
4 so I wish when you look at these things, I'm
5 going to say again, I believe charity begins
6 at home. I believe all of this money that's
7 spent should be for the Scrantonians. The
8 Women's Shelter will take in anybody.

9 MS. FANUCCI: No, that's not true.

10 The Women's shelter is mostly filled with
11 people from Scranton, from our own area.

12 MR. SBARAGLIA: Mostly.

13 MS. FANUCCI: No, I am telling you --

14 MR. SBARAGLIA: Not from the area.

15 MS. FANUCCI: -- from Lackawanna
16 County and Scranton.

17 MR. SBARAGLIA: I mean, people that
18 actually are Scrantonians.

19 MS. FANUCCI: Yes. Yes. Very, very
20 full of people from Scranton. All of us are
21 here, and you know what, I don't agree with
22 you. West Side Little League, Connell Park,

23 you know, United Neighborhood Centers, these
24 are not neighborhood people, these are our
25 people.

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1 MR. SBARAGLIA: I'm not complaining
2 about them, I understand them.

3 MS. FANUCCI: You are say these are
4 out of town people, these are not out of
5 town people.

6 MR. SBARAGLIA: No, I'm saying --

7 MS. FANUCCI: Boys and Girls Club.

8 MR. SBARAGLIA: I have been at this
9 shelter, same game shell game, I have been
10 at there. The only reason you can say that
11 people are from Scranton is they lived here
12 so many months hence they become citizens of
13 Scranton, but they are not from Scranton in
14 the shelter, they come from all over and the
15 church would offer them help. I believe in
16 Scrantonians should help Scrantonians, I'm
17 sorry, I'm very, very specific on that
18 point. I believe all of the county money
19 should go to the Scrantonians as much the

20 possible, even if that's nearsighted so be

21 it, but I believe in Scranton first and

22 Scranton always. Thank you.

23 MS. GATELLI: Anyone else care to

24 speak at this public hearing? I know

25 declare the public hearing closed.

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2 C E R T I F I C A T E

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4 I hereby certify that the proceedings and

5 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the

6 notes of testimony taken by me at the hearing of the

7 above-captioned matter and that the foregoing is a true

8 and correct transcript of the same to the best of my

9 ability.

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CATHENE S. NARDOZZI

13 OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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