

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

99-461

SYNOPSIS -

AGENDA:

OCTOBER 4, 1999

On the October 4, 1999 Council agenda is a roll call to approve the purchase of 2534 Dean Avenue by the Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless for inclusion in their transitional housing program.

SUBJECT:

APPROVAL OF
PURCHASE OF
2534 DEAN BY
DES MOINES
COALITION FOR
THE HOMELESS
FOR INCLUSION IN
THEIR
TRANSITIONAL
HOUSING
PROGRAM

FISCAL IMPACT -

On November 17, 1997, by Roll Call No. 97-3732, the City Council conditionally committed \$120,000 of HOME Rental Rehabilitation funds to the Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless for the expansion of their transitional housing program.

RECOMMENDATION -

Approval.

TYPE:

BACKGROUND -

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

On November 17, 1997, by Roll Call No. 97-3732, the City Council conditionally committed \$120,000 of HOME rental rehabilitation funds to the Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless Expansion Project. The Coalition intends to expand their stock of transitional housing units from 13 to 21. On March 1, 1999, by Roll Call No. 99-618, the City Council approved the Transitional Housing Neighborhood Review Policy. The purpose of this policy is to guide the review of the expansion of transitional housing units in the City of Des Moines. (See Attachment 1 to the roll call.)

SUBMITTED BY:

JAMES GRANT
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR

The Des Moines Coalition submitted a letter to the City outlining their intent to purchase the property at 2534 Dean on July 22, 1999. City staff sent out the required letters to the

neighborhood association and nearby neighbors on July 30. Thirty-three letters were mailed to property owners within 250 feet of the subject property. One letter was received that opposed the purchase of the property by the Coalition.

On August 26, 1999, staff received a letter from the Fairground Neighbors for Community Improvement (Attachment 2 to the roll call). This letter stated that the Fairground Neighbors could not support the Coalition's purchase of 2534 Dean based on the Coalition's slow reaction to drug activity in one of their properties and their lack of cooperation with the Des Moines Police to address drug activity at one of their properties.

Please find attached to the roll call the Des Moines Coalition's response to the Fairground Neighbors' concerns (Attachment 3 to the roll call). While these concerns are legitimate, the Des Moines Coalition has demonstrated that they are taking action to remedy these problems. Police trips were made to seven of the 11 occupied homes owned by the Des Moines Coalition during the six-month period from February 1999 to August 30, 1999. The Des Moines Coalition researched these calls and has submitted a report to the City (Attachment 4 to the roll call). Community Development staff reviewed this report and found that the majority of these calls were "good neighbor" calls. The Des Moines Coalition is working directly with each family concerning the more serious calls.

On September 22, 1999, the Neighborhood Revitalization Board (NRB) reviewed the Coalition's expansion request. The NRB offered the Des Moines Coalition and the Fairground Neighbors a compromise. The NRB would approve the project if the Coalition agreed to project review once every three months for 16 months. The neighborhood rejected this compromise. Their objection was based on the police issues and the fact that the neighborhood plan stressed owner-occupied housing. The NRB voted to not support the purchase of the home by the Des Moines Coalition (Attachment 5 to the roll call).

Community Development staff has closely reviewed these issues. In regard to conflict with the Police Department, the Des Moines Coalition has made great progress in addressing policy and procedure issues (See Attachment 6 to the roll call). They have met frequently with representatives of the Police Department to discuss police concerns. This agency deals with high-risk families, however, and it is unrealistic to expect that

problems will not occur.

The second issue raised by the Fairground Neighbors is that the neighborhood plan stresses owner-occupied housing. Community Development staff has also reviewed this objection. The first housing issue identified by the Fairground Neighborhood Action Plan is to "encourage maintenance of owner-occupied and rental single family structures." The neighborhood's goal is to "encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of all residential properties." The property at 2534 Dean Avenue has been vacant and boarded for eight months. The Des Moines Coalition's proposal will eliminate this blight.

The neighborhood plan also indicates that the housing stock in the neighborhood is primarily owner-occupied. Only 11 percent of the structures are rental units compared to the City average of 36 percent. In addition, there are no group homes or City-owned public housing units in the neighborhood. The neighborhood will provide a stable environment for this transitional housing unit.

An important consideration in the staff review of this project is the fact that the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Plan calls for additional transitional housing. This unit will help fill this unmet need. The Des Moines Coalition scatters their transitional housing units, which is positive for the neighborhoods and for the client families.