

CUMBERLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CDBG PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION – 2010

Community(s) Town of Sebago, Maine

Contact Information: Name: Allen Crabtree; Tel. (207) 787-2730

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Project Title: Planning for the future transfer of the Sebago Elementary School to the Town of Sebago

Amount of CDBG funds requested \$ 10,000

Total estimated project cost \$ 12,000

Name of Authorized Official: Allen Crabtree, Chair, Board of Selectmen

Signature of Authorized Official: 

COMMUNITY PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION – 2010

1. Describe the community problem or needs you wish to address with Community Planning Program funds. *35 points*

a. Describe the scope, magnitude and severity of the problem

In an attempt to deal with increasing costs, declining state revenues, and projections of stable or declining student enrollment over the coming years, the Facilities Committee to the School Board for the Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) #61 has identified areas to reduce costs over the next several years. This involves, among other things, consolidating services and closing school buildings to increase efficiency. MSAD61 includes the towns of Bridgton, Naples, Casco and Sebago.

Buildings that belonged to the towns before MSAD 61 was formed are offered back to the towns when the school district no longer has a need for them as school buildings. The Casco Memorial School has been closed and MSAD 61 has returned it to the town for community purposes. There has been considerable debate among the voters in Casco about their options and the considerable costs of converting the school to town use. A similar return of the Bridgton Memorial School to the Town of Bridgton has been proposed, and the town is considering the potentially significant costs that could be involved in the transfer and the range of potential uses for the building.

The Sebago Elementary School (SES) has been identified by the School Board to be returned to the Town of Sebago during the 2014-2015 school year. We are requesting this CDBG planning grant to evaluate our options and potential costs so that we can get out in front of the process and be better prepared when MSAD 61 closes the school.

This planning grant would allow the town to make an informed decision as to the range of uses open to the town as a town building. An important element of the planning process would be extensive public outreach efforts to evaluate potential future uses and develop cost estimates for doing so. Integral to the planning would be an engineering evaluation of the SES building and preparation of estimates for repairs/renovations that would be required.

b. Describe past efforts, if any, to address the problem.

The Town of Sebago has worked closely with MSAD 61 in an attempt to plan for the problems of declining income and declining enrollment. We served on the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee (2006), the Regionalization Committee (2007), and the Facilities Review Committee (2008), in an attempt to represent the wishes and needs of the parents and students at SES in a balanced manner with the rest of MSAD 61. We do not look forward to the eventual closing of the SES – it

has a highly dedicated staff of teachers and strong support of parents, and provides our children with good instruction and preparation for advancement to middle and high school. But we want to be as prepared as we can when that day comes.

MSAD 61 recently commissioned a Requirement Study of SES to identify areas where maintenance should be done to meet safety and code concerns for school buildings. It identified \$1,322,729 in repairs that should be done, ranging from electrical wiring code compliance to exit door hardware and sprinklers.

c. Does the problem have specific impacts on low/moderate income households or low/moderate income neighborhoods?

Yes, in three ways. Closing SES will almost certainly result in a decline in the sense of community and cohesiveness that we now have centered on the school. Secondly, closing the school will require students to be bused to other schools in Bridgton and Naples, a significant bus trip each way. Parents who must go to the school for special events, parent teacher conferences, and or to pick up their children will have longer to drive (and requiring more money.) Finally, increasing costs of operating MSAD 61 with declining state revenues and enrollment will result in higher property taxes for Sebago taxpayers, including LMI households.

d. Why are CDBG funds critical to the planning activity's success?

As critical as this planning effort is to the future of the town, the critical budget situation that we find ourselves doesn't allow us the luxury of allocating town funds. Without the CDBG funding, this level of planning effort would not be possible.

2) What's the strategy to complete the planning project? 30 points

a. Describe the planning tasks to be undertaken

Determine a range of feasible options for the future use of the school building.

We will hold a series of public outreach workshops to ask for ideas and suggestions from Sebago citizens. These may include: not accepting the building at all; tearing it down and building something new; renovating it and moving the town offices into it; leasing it out for commercial use or an assisted living facility; etc. We propose employing a consultant to schedule and conduct these meetings, and hosting additional focus groups to narrow choices and define the costs involved in the most viable options. Extensive efforts to publicize these workshops and focus groups will be made through the town newsletter, town website, newspaper ads and stories, local postings and direct mailings.

Evaluate the structural integrity of the building and develop estimates for necessary repairs and maintenance. We will build on the Requirement Detail study done by MSAD 61 and engage the services of an engineering firm to evaluate the structural integrity of the several additions to the building. Over the years several additions have been made to the original 1880 farmhouse that was the first SES at this site. The firm will identify any existing code and structural issues with the building, estimate costs to correct them, and make recommendations on the type of use(s) that would be suitable from an engineering point of view for the building. The engineering study will be closely coordinated with the public outreach effort to "ground" future use suggestions.

b. Outline the project's schedule

We propose holding public outreach workshops this summer and fall with focus groups meeting during the fall and early winter to develop recommendations by early 2011. We then propose bringing the options to the town meeting in June 2011 and asking for voter endorsement of the preferred option. The engineering evaluation would take place in the late summer 2010 so that the results can be factored into the efforts of the focus groups. Municipal budget planning would begin in December 2011 to help fund the option(s) selected.

c. Are community partnerships established and engaged in the project?

Yes. We will work closely with community groups, local churches, the school parent-teacher association, and other interested groups in town.

3) Convey your community's readiness to proceed. 30 points

a. How has the project been conveyed to community residents?

MSAD 61 has had several public meetings, including meetings at the SES to discuss facilities consolidation. Each taxpayer received a flyer from MSAD 61 on renovations and consolidation, and a referendum was held last fall on bonding for renovations at the high school. The topic has been covered in great detail in local media. The closing of the school is of great, topical interest to Sebago residents.

b. Are matching funds available for the project?

Yes. Town funds will be used to defray part of the cost of the public outreach/focus group efforts, and in-kind matches will help provide advertising and public information.

c. Are staff and/or consultants available to complete the project?

Yes. The Town office staff and elected officials are available to assist in this effort, and a consultant will be engaged to lead the public outreach effort.

Planning Grant Application – Program Budget

Cost Category	CDBG Funds	Municipal Funds	Other Funds	Total
Consultant Services	\$3,500			\$3,500
Advertising		\$500	\$500	\$1,000
Public Meetings	\$2,000			\$2,000
Printing		\$500		\$500
Mailings		\$500		\$500
Engineering Survey	\$4,500			\$4,500
TOTAL COSTS	\$10,000	\$1,500	\$500	\$12,000

Grants For The Town of Sebago Application Worksheet

Approval to submit the grant application and to accept the grant if awarded

What is the source of the grant (e.g. – agency, company, foundation, etc...)?

Community Development Block Grant

How much is being requested? \$ 10,000 What is the local match? \$ 2,000

Who would provide the local match (town funds, private funds,...?) town funds, in kind

What town department would benefit from the grant if won? BoS

What is the grant being requested for (describe items, equipment, service, etc...)?

Planning grant to evaluate the options available to the town should SAD61 close the Sebago Elementary School at some point in the future, to allow the town to make an informed decision whether to accept the building or not, and what to use(s) it would best be put as a town building. Grant would include an engineering evaluation of the SES and estimates for repairs/renovations if the town accepted it, public outreach efforts to evaluate potential future uses, and cost estimates for doing so.

When must the application be submitted (filing date)? Jan 22, 2010

If the grant is won, what would be the commitment to maintain, house, or replace the equipment by the town?

Estimated cost per year? \$ 0

Estimated number of years? 0

Explain what the commitment would be (e.g. – service contract, vehicle maintenance costs, housing, etc.) n/a

If a vehicle, where would it be stored? n/a

Submitted by (name) Allen Crabtree Date 11/17/09

Department/Group/Club/Organization BoS

Reviewed by Town Manager Town Manager Date: 11/17/09

Action/Recommendation: Approve X Modify _____ Deny _____

Reviewed by Board of Selectmen. Date 11/17/09

Action: Approve X Modify _____ Deny _____

Form 3/12/07