

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR REBUILDING TOGETHER ALEXANDRIA

ISSUE: Request from Rebuilding Together Alexandria (RTA) for \$35,000 in Housing Trust Fund monies to purchase supplies and skilled labor, as necessary, for National Rebuilding Day in April 2007.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council approve an allocation of \$35,000 in Housing Trust Fund (HTF) monies as a grant to RTA to support the organization's annual National Rebuilding Day program.

BACKGROUND: Rebuilding Together Alexandria is a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit, predominantly volunteer-supported organization that renovates and repairs the homes of elderly, disabled and low-income Alexandria homeowners to help them maintain safety, security and independence in their dwellings. RTA also facilitates the repair of facilities operated by non-profit organizations that serve needy Alexandria residents. RTA's National Rebuilding Day is an annual one-day repair and renovation volunteer event that provides no-cost services to eligible City owner-occupants and non-profit organizations: project applicants must demonstrate need, and typically, projects must be of a nature that they can be completed by volunteers in one day. In addition to the time and labor donated by volunteers and skilled professionals, the program also leverages contributions of building supplies and money from local businesses, churches and other sponsors.

DISCUSSION: In its twenty years of operations, RTA has completed more than 1,000 home renovation projects in the City. As it has done in recent years, RTA is requesting \$35,000 in grant funding from the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) to purchase the supplies and materials needed for National Rebuilding Day 2007 (with up to 25% of the funds available to pay for skilled labor, as necessary). City funds are critical to RTA's efforts to leverage private sector dollars and volunteer labor: in 2006, home repair and renovation assistance was provided to 72 Alexandria households, and RTA raised \$6.69 for every one dollar of HTF funding received. More than 850 volunteers donated a total of over \$310,000 in manual labor, services and materials. The average household income of beneficiaries in 2006 was \$15,404; the average household size was 1.70 persons, and the average age of a head of household was 69 years.

In 2006, the organization realized a considerable increase in total non-city revenue, enabling RTA to establish an endowment fund and reserves account that will help RTA expand its capacity and achieve greater self-sufficiency in the future. This year, RTA expects to provide home repair assistance to 65-80 homeowners (approximately 110-136 persons), as well as non-profit agencies serving hundreds more Alexandrians.

Increased fundraising from other non-city sources of funds is expected to reduce the HTF contribution as a percentage of RTA's overall revenue from 19% in 2006 to 17% in 2007. RTA projects that for every \$1 HTF grants raised, it will leverage \$7.60 in community donations and volunteer labor. At present, the organization has more than a dozen grant applications pending, with more planned. Other fundraising events are also planned.

Staff recommends approval of the requested allocation of \$35,000 in Housing Trust Fund (HTF) monies as a grant to fund RTA's National Rebuilding Day activities for FY 2007. The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee unanimously approved this recommended grant of \$35,000 at its December 7, 2006 meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT: Allocation of \$35,000 in grant monies from the City's Housing Trust Fund.

STAFF:

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