

Poor neighborhoods targets of cities' CD funds

By PHILIP D. BRUNELLE
Union Staff

Despite new federal regulations giving them more flexibility, Springfield and Holyoke officials said Thursday projects to boost their poorer neighborhoods will remain the main thrust of federal community development funds.

New regulations published Thursday in the Federal Register allow cities receiving Community Development Block Grant funds to shift their use away from projects principally helping low-income and moderate-income people.

Springfield Community Development Com-

missioner John Benoit and Mayor Theodore E. Dimauro said the new regulations would not change the way Springfield spends its annual \$4.2 million in CDBG money.

Benoit said the new regulations will give city government "more latitude to clear slums and blight" and to prevent borderline neighborhoods from deteriorating.

He said in fact local officials are working with private city groups on an ordinance that would legally require the city to spend its CDBG funds the way it does at present — with an emphasis on sprucing up and reviving poor neighborhoods.

"We will continue to spend most of our money the way we do now — on rehabilita-

tion grants," Benoit said, adding that the new regulations bring under the grants deteriorating neighborhood commercial districts that don't qualify now for CDBG grants. He said he will use some of Springfield's allocation to boost commercial neighborhoods.

Barbara Craig, director of the Springfield Project for United Neighborhoods, said CDBG money is awarded to cities with low-income populations.

"Now there would be no guarantee the money would benefit those people who are the means for getting the funds."

Mrs. Craig, who has worked on the proposed city ordinance with Benoit, said the

proposed local law would "institutionalize" present city policy toward CDBG funds. "It will make sure it continues when a new administration comes in."

She said Springfield has a better record than many cities for spending community development money on projects helping low-income people.

Holyoke Community Development Administrator Thomas J. McColgan said that city may continue to be entitled to CDBG funds with an annual allocation of \$1.7 million even though its population has dropped below 50,000.

He said Holyoke will receive that amount for the coming fiscal year and "things look

good in Congress that the funding will continue" in subsequent years.

McColgan, immediate past president of the National Community Development Association, said the new federal regulations will not change the city's CDBG spending policies and the grants will continue to be aimed at low-income neighborhoods.

In Washington, D.C., a congressional committee has promised to review the proposed changes in November. They could not take effect until February at the earliest.

Congress could nullify them sooner by passing a resolution of disapproval or by changing the CDBG law to specify where cities must spend grant money.

Revaluation team taking to airwaves

By CAROLYN ROBBINS
Union Staff

Springfield residents will have the opportunity to put their questions to representatives of the firm revaluating property here during a radio and television talk show blitz beginning next week.

City Councilor Mary E. Hurley Thursday announced the schedule for a series of five public service broadcasts on revaluation to be aired on local radio and television stations beginning Oct. 7.

Cole Lyster Trumble, the firm carrying out court-ordered revaluation, has nearly completed a round of individual hearings on the proposed new values.

During those hearings, about a third of the city's commercial and industrial property owners have contested their proposed property values and 15 percent of residential property owners have challenged the firm's assessments.

City officials arranged for the air time after a public hearing on revaluation was scratched at the request of Cole Lyster Trumble.

Firm representatives refused to appear before large groups of taxpayers, saying experience had shown that such hearings were emotionally charged and nonproductive.

In the wake of that refusal, city officials arranged for the television and radio spots.

"The City Council believes that it is essential that the public receive straight answers to the very legitimate questions which have been raised," Miss Hurley said.

"The council believes that Cole Lyster Trumble should be held accountable before the public, and wants the firm to reach the broadest audience possible," she said.

Sherwood Vermilya, vice president of the firm, will appear on the broadcasts with Miss Hurley, City Councilor Robert T. Markel and members of the Springfield Board of Assessors.

WSPR radio will air the first broadcast Oct. 7 from 10 to 11 p.m.

WMAS radio and WHYN radio will broadcast programs on revaluation Oct. 13 from 7 to 8 p.m. and 9 to 10 p.m., respectively.

WGGB-TV, Channel 40, will host a broadcast Oct. 16 from 7:30 to 8 p.m.

WWLP-TV, Channel 22, will broadcast a program Oct. 17 from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

The format for the programming will be brief, explanatory comments on revaluation by Cole Lyster Trumble and the assessors. A phone-in question-and-answer period will follow opening remarks.

The firm's new property values will become city property Nov. 1.

Homeowners' property taxes will be set by the value of their property. The highest possible assessment will be \$25 per \$1,000, according to city assessors.



Union Photo by Frank Uda

Building superintendent Thomas Gaul puts some finishing touches on one of the Morgan Square lofts on Lyman Street.

Strike possible at midnight

Kidder-Stacy negotiations in 11th-hour session

By HELAYNE LIGHTSTONE
Union Staff

AGAWAM — Management and union representatives for the Kidder Stacy Company have scheduled a day-long bargaining session today in an attempt to avert a possible strike after the current one-year pact expires at midnight.

The 30-year-old firm manufactures custom-design flexographic printing presses and is a division of the Motter Printing Press Co., with headquarters in York Pa.

The firm at 270 Main Street employs 115 workers, who are paid an average of \$8.21 per hour under the terms of a one-year contract ratified last October by a narrow margin of workers.

That agreement, approved by a five-vote margin, provided the workers with an 8.5 percent wage increase.

Albert Berrouard, president of Local 221 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical and Machine Workers, said Thursday this year's talks are snagged on money and contract language issues.

He said there has been little progress made since the talks began several months ago. Berrouard said he was not optimistic that the rank and file membership would ratify the company's latest offer during a union meeting scheduled for Sunday.

Kidder Stacy Industrial Relations Manager John Rico refused comment today on the negotiations, but stated that "these are difficult economic times."

The firm has undergone a series of layoffs and rehiring during the past two years as the

result of an uneven backlog of orders, company officials said.

In March, the firm purchased 2.5 acres of land for possible future expansion next to their 15-acre parcel on Main Street.

At the time company President Ronald Hable aid the purchase would not affect a nearly two-year old plan by the firm to move to a 50-acre site on Eggleston Road in Westfield.

Hable said it was unlikely the move would occur in 1982 because of poor economic conditions.

The SRA is currently in the early relocation phase of the plan.

The plan is being funded with a bond and federal community development block grant funds.

The CD coalition was formed to serve as an advocacy group for low-income groups affected by federal programs.

The Spanish and American Union, Memorial Square Citizens Council, NAACP, the Springfield Action Commission, Springfield Projects for United Neighborhoods (SPUN) and the Urban League are members of the CD coalition.

Concern expressed for Hispanics displaced by renewal project

By CAROLYN ROBBINS
Union Staff

The Springfield Redevelopment Authority Thursday agreed to work with a coalition of groups concerned about the displacement of Hispanic families by a South End urban plan.

Richard Mundo, a member of the Community Development Coalition, said that a massive housing rehabilitation plan for the South End could result in the permanent displacement of 1,000 Hispanic residents.

The South End Urban Renewal plan calls for the restoration of deteriorating apart-

ment blocks with the infusion of approximately \$5.5 million into the neighborhood.

Under the plan, the SRA hopes to make available low-interest housing rehabilitation loans for the rehabilitation of market-rate housing for families.

Mundo said that his group wants assurances that the needs of low-income groups continue to be met in the neighborhood.

"We're concerned about the 1,000 Hispanic residents now living in the South End," Mundo said. "Basically they're low-income families and they have no other neighborhood to go to."

"We hope that the SRA will take these needs into account," Mundo said. "We'd like to work along with the SRA staff in making the plan more humanistic," he said.

Although the new housing is to be market-rate, Mundo said his group wants the SRA to seek developers who will agree to include some low-income units in their projects.

The SRA board, led by Joan Belt, agreed to meet with the coalition as plans for the renewal project unfold.

"I can assure you that the board is concerned about this," Mrs. Belt said.

SRA Administrator Dominic Sarno said the authority "has always been supportive of

plans that would minimize the impact on low-income families.

"Hopefully we'll develop a plan where many of these families can remain," he said.

"One of the problems we have now is that we don't have a developer yet, so it's difficult to talk specifics," he said.

The SRA and Springfield City Council have already approved the urban renewal plan for the area bounded by Union Street on the north, Marble Street on the south, Main Street on the west and Ashmun and Dale streets on the east.