

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

NEW BUSINESS ITEM

TO: Mayor and Members of City Council

DATE: March 9, 2009

SCHEDULE FOR CITY COUNCIL ON:

March 12, 2009

SUBJECT:

Stimulus Funds - Request for Urgent Action

Rationale: The stimulus package passed the Congress on February 17th with a promise of swift action. Many departments of the US government are announcing competitive grants with 30 day application periods. If we are going to get the help that is available, we are going to have to make this our top priority for the next few months. In addition, many departments have formula grants that are available BUT require us to make application within the broad categories available. Application periods are short on these as well. This is a time for all of us to come together to do everything we can to help the citizens of our community.

Here are a few examples of funds that are available:

- 1) COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) – New Police Officers – competitive grants – pays 100% for 3 years. The only requirements are that they are entry level and we must agree to fund the 4th year. Total funding is \$1 Billion.
- 2) Byrne Justice Grants – a broad range of activities to prevent and control crime. Formula Grants. St. Petersburg is eligible for \$1,623,348 and can be part of a Pinellas County joint allocation of \$3,129,032. We must apply before May 18th. The crime prevention description is very broad in this grant.
- 3) Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Projects – This is a competitive grant with an April 6th deadline. Grants are expected to be between \$1.5 Million and \$10 Million each. Clam Bayou and the Gateway come to mind.

4) Arts Funding from the National Endowment for the Arts – This is a competitive grant with a May 2nd deadline. Applicants can be governments, 501C 3 non-profits and schools. Grants are expected to be between \$25,000 and \$250,000. We have sharply cut funds for arts organizations in St. Petersburg.

Collectively, the full range of projects could well come to \$40 million dollars (not counting transportation) for our community if we act quickly. Finally, the City Council should speak up at the front end of the grant process to ensure that the grant requests reflect our values, our community needs and mesh together for the greatest possible economic impact.

Action Requested:

- 1) City Council requests the establishment of a stimulus strike team composed of community experts, city council members and city staff. Strike teams may be divided by area to avoid government in the sunshine issues for council members.
- 2) Council will direct its staff to have one member identify and track possible grant opportunities. Those will be forwarded to Mayor's office, City Council committees and departments (if obvious) for quick action and co-ordination.
- 3) Administration is requested to provide updates and allow Council input at each Council meeting during the next 60 days as the various federal departments roll out their grant opportunities. Collectively, this is like a mini-budget for our community so it is important that the process be as open as practical within the time constraints allowed.

**Karl Nurse,
City Council Member - District 6**