

**CITY OF BEVERLY
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

BOARD OR COMMISSION: City of Beverly Economic and Community Development Council
DATE: January 22, 2026
LOCATION: Beverly City Hall, 191 Cabot Street, 3rd Floor, Conference Room A
MEMBERS PRESENT: Diantha Phothisan (Chair), Darlene Wynne (Ex-Officio), Councilor Crowley, Jason Consalvo, Dan Allon, James Muse, Donna Musumeci, Christopher Wrenn, Zach Servideo, Kevin Grant, Erin Schaeffer (Ex-Officio)
MEMBERS ABSENT: Nathan Seavey, Thomas Holland, Michael Collins (Ex-Officio)
RECORDER: Kristan Patenaude

1. Call to Order

Phothisan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Introductions were made by Council members.

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes

a. December 4, 2025

Muse: Motion to approve the December 4, 2025; meeting minutes. Allon seconds. (11-0), the Council was unanimously in favor.

2. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Wynne explained that the City was awarded a Community Development Block Grant of \$850,000 for the FY25 round. This was awarded in late October, and the City is working to get it off the ground. There are three markets for the grant: Entitlement Communities automatically receive CDBG money and have their own reporting and project implementation plans; Mini Entitlement Communities have to qualify on a needs basis; finally, the CDBG Community Development Fund, which is what Beverly applied under. Beverly qualified due to population size, poverty limit, and the percentage of its population that is low and moderate income. This award reflects a greater economic divide in the community in terms of a wealth gap. The City worked with a consultant to prepare the application. The next step is for a housing rehabilitation program. The City's intention is to contract with Habitat for Humanity on this project. In September, the City also learned that it is being reclassified as a Mini Entitlement Community for the first time in two decades. Thus, for the following three fiscal years this grant is more of a guarantee. The City will still have to apply each year but does not have to demonstrate the same need. There was a public hearing last week for the community development strategy, a 3-5 year plan that list the project goals. She also posted a job on Friday for a part-time fully grant-funded Grant Manager to help make sure that the program is running appropriately. The goal is to

continue the housing rehabilitation program and potentially add a public social service program, or small business loan program.

3. Economic Development Action Plan

This was discussed as part of the previous agenda item.

4. Housing Part I – Don Preston, Housing Advocate

Preston explained that there has been discussion regarding affordable and workforce housing being an issue for businesses in the area. It is important to understand the HUD guidelines in terms of area median income to set affordability. Beverly's local median household income is approximately \$110,000. The regional HUD figure is \$31,000 for 30% of area median income (AMI), \$52,000 for 50% AMI, and \$83,000 at 80% AMI. The inclusionary zoning is set at 60%/. Based on Beverly's average income, \$83,000 is considered low income. However, even the most affordable housing programs do not use Beverly's figure, they use the HUD figure which is set at approximately \$161,000. Even though the City can state that it is creating affordable housing, it is not truly based on the actual numbers. HUD's thresholds are much higher than those derived from Beverly's local information. For example, under the HUD system, a four person household earning \$82,000 is considered very low income or 50%. A household earning up to \$132,000 is considered low income by HUD at 80%. Notably, the HUD 50% level is roughly equivalent to 80% of Beverly's local income. Wynne explained that it is the geography encompassed in the HUD figure which sets it to be higher overall.

Preston explained that a household can earn close to, or even above, Beverly's median income and still qualify as low income on the HUD standards. This is useful for understanding affordability within Beverly and for local planning and policy discussions. HUD AMI figures are the controlling standard for eligibility in most state and federal housing programs, including Section 8 affordable housing lotteries. Beverly is facing, like most communities, a significant housing crisis that affects a wide range of residents and local stakeholders. Businesses and colleges are constantly confronted with the challenge of housing teachers and students. Businesses also struggle with hiring and retaining workers in this region due to housing costs. Part of the economic picture is that the City's workers can't afford to live here. As a result, it is a struggle to recruit new workers who can afford to live in the area. Meanwhile, elders face obstacles of downsizing and young families are unable to access affordable housing programs and options. There is a notable \$37,000 difference between HUD and Beverly's AMI. To more accurately reflect local income realities, the City could reassess its method for calculating affordability and update its guidelines accordingly. The City could consider waiving certain fees for units that are designated as affordable and deed restricted in some way. Real estate taxes could be modified based on the affordability level of housing units.

Preston stated that Beverly is served by three main affordable housing developers: Harborlight, with 192 units; North Shore Community, with 101 units; and the Beverly Housing Authority, with 646 units. Together, these organizations offer 939 affordable units. The YMCA also manages some affordable units and there are other organizations that have affordable units in the

City. Wynne suggested looking into ways to invest in these units to help keep them affordable and the housing rehabilitation program is one way to do so.

Preston explained that, if Harborlight cannot take on more people in the 30% AMI range, no one can. The Beverly Housing Authority has not developed any new housing since 1950/60. Many units are single story and require ongoing maintenance and upgrades. A public conversation should be initiated to explore opportunities for expanding, rebuilding, and upgrading existing units using state, federal, and private funding sources. Similar initiatives have been done in nearby communities, such as Gloucester. As the Housing Authority has control over the land, most of these locations could be doubled in size by adding another floor. The majority of their units, approximately 558, are for elders. Thus, there is very little affordable housing at this level for working families and the waitlists are beyond belief.

Preston stated that the Beverly Housing Authority sits apart as an independent organization, but it is part of the community and there is a lot of potential in their properties which does not exist anywhere else in the City. These are underused properties which could help the economic development of the City. This will require major conversations. The Housing Authority is faced with limited resources. They are underfunded by the State and underfunded by the federal government. Even the city of Beverly does not truly support it. These are the blockages. There may be entities willing to partner with the Housing Authority and develop units. The Housing Authority also has to be amenable to working with Harborlight.

The Council agreed that these should be topics of discussion for future meetings.

5. Future meeting agenda topics

As discussed during the meeting.

6. Other items not known in advance of the posting of this agenda

None at this time.

7. Adjourn

Consalvo: Motion to approve the October 23, 2025; meeting minutes. Allon seconds. (11-0), the Council was unanimously in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.