

Press



Release

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For Immediate Release

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Wolfe Asks District Attorney To Investigate ‘Possible Corruption’

County’s Community Development Block Grant Program Focus Of Request

New City, NY (Nov. 10, 2016) – Rockland County Legislature Chairman Alden H. Wolfe is formally requesting the county’s Acting Human Rights Commissioner to provide the Legislature with information regarding “wrongdoing and possible corruption” in the Community Development Block Grant program.

Wolfe is also formally notifying the Rockland County District Attorney’s Office of this “wrongdoing and possible corruption” and requesting an investigation.

“If this information is accurate, then we must fulfill our role as watchdogs and do everything to ensure that any ‘wrongdoing and possible corruption’ is thoroughly investigated,” Wolfe said.

“The CDBG program annually provides funding needed by numerous municipalities and nonprofit organizations for affordable housing, social service programs, infrastructure updates and other important work,” Wolfe said. “We must ensure that the integrity of the program and its funding is in place – for the programs and for the taxpayers who help fund them.”

Wolfe’s actions follow a Nov. 5 lohud.com report that quotes the County Executive in reaction to a 9-7 Legislative vote against confirming Penny Jennings’ appointment as Human Rights Commissioner. The report also appeared on the front page of the Nov. 6 issue of The Journal News.

According to the article, the County Executive stated: “At the same time we’re looking at wrongdoing and possible corruption, they choose to turn away an acting commissioner.”

No information of any such activity has been provided to Legislators by the County Executive or the Acting Human Rights Commissioner.

In a memo sent to Jennings today, Wolfe formally requests that she provide the Legislature with detailed information as to what has been uncovered regarding what the County Executive has characterized as “wrongdoing and possible corruption.”

Additionally, Wolfe has also sent a memo today to Rockland County District Attorney Thomas Zugibe advising him that, per the County Executive’s statements to lohud, the Human Rights Department has apparently identified “wrongdoing and possible corruption” regarding the CDBG program and asking Zugibe to take appropriate action to investigate and protect county taxpayers.

Wolfe also informed Jennings that the issue of “wrongdoing and possible corruption” in the CDBG program will be placed on a committee agenda for discussion in the near future.

The most recent CDBG awards were announced by the County Executive in July and totaled more than \$2.38 million to more than 30 municipalities, not-for-profit organizations and community groups across Rockland.

The CDBG program is administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and locally by the Rockland County Office of Community Development.

The grants help fund public improvement projects ranging from the Bowline Point Park playground in Haverstraw town and a community park in Kaser, to sidewalk improvements on Midland Avenue in Nyack and Wayne Avenue in Suffern.

Public service CDBG grants benefit services ranging from a children’s scholarship program in Sloatsburg and an aftercare program run by the Center for Safety and Change, to a nutrition program run by Together Our Unity Can Heal (TOUCH) and a small business training program run by the Women’s Enterprise Development Center.

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