

Press



Release

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For Immediate Release

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Wolfe Now Asks HUD To Investigate ‘Possible Corruption’

County’s Community Development Block Grant Program Focus Of Request

New Request Comes After County Executive Implies Missing HUD Money

New City, NY (Nov. 10, 2016) – Rockland County Legislature Chairman Alden H. Wolfe is now formally requesting that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development investigate possible missing HUD funds awarded through the county Office of Community Development.

The request comes after a column by the County Executive in today’s online and print editions of the Rockland County Times in which he vows “to get to the bottom of where this HUD money has gone.”

It also follows Wolfe’s earlier request that the county’s Acting Human Rights Commissioner 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. He is also notifying the District Attorney’s Office about the County Executive’s statement in the Rockland County Times’ column.

“This continues to grow more troubling,” Wolfe said. “It appears that at least some in county government allegedly believe there is missing or otherwise unaccounted for money received by the county from HUD.

“This requires an immediate and thorough probe by all of the appropriate investigatory authorities,” Wolfe said. “I am asking HUD itself to investigate because we need an outside reviewer whose conclusions will hopefully put our taxpayers at ease when it comes to a full financial accounting and to maintaining the integrity of the CDBG program in Rockland.”

Wolfe’s latest action follows 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.

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.

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 soon.

Wolfe has today sent a request for an investigation to the Office of Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, D.C. and to the Office of General Counsel’s Region II Regional Counsel in Manhattan.

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.

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