

Housing agency requests \$2.2 million from city

By JANE MARCHAM
Journal Writer

Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, the agency that is rehabilitating old downtown housing, asked the city Monday for \$2.2 million in federal funds over the next three years.

The amount would enable the agency to fulfill its goals and complete work in the Southside and Northside neighborhoods, said Executive Director Elisabeth Prentice.

"By the end of 1984, we should have done most of the major rehabilitation that needs doing," Prentice said, "although we might continue to offer loan assistance and other services in those neighborhoods."

Neighborhood Housing, a non-profit corporation founded by the city four years ago, has helped scores of low-income homeowners overhaul their houses and has bought 14 others for "recycling" and resale. The agency also offers advice on home improvements and grants for minor repairs.

Prentice submitted the request to the city's Community Advisory Committee, now drafting an application for federal funds from the Small Cities Program.

The city could receive a maximum of \$3 million in Small Cities aid in 1981-84, but competition for the federal funds this year is keen.

The Neighborhood Housing request included \$1.5 million for administrative costs and revolving loan funds, including some earmarked for rental housing; \$225,000 for house recycling; \$171,000 for free labor for small repairs; \$75,000 for new construction, in cooperation with BOCES; and \$63,000 to pay persons who would advise householders on winterization and neighborhood organization.

The Community Advisory Committee heard 19

programs outlined, along with funding requests, in a public hearing at the Salvation Army Center that was attended by 40 persons. The committee will review the requests and submit its recommendations later this month.

The Tompkins County Arts Council asked \$81,000 for a three-year arts program in the neighborhood, to be designed by the participants under guidance from trained artists. Workshops, projects and productions were among the possibilities, said council spokesman Sorrel Fisher.

Purchase of a shelter for abused women and their children was sought by the Task Force for Battered Women, which hopes to buy a downtown house for an estimated \$20,000 and rehabilitate for it for \$30,000.

The Economic Opportunity Corp. requested a \$40,000 grant to buy two acres on the Northside, behind the P&C supermarket, for permanent use as a community garden. Neighbors have tilled small vegetable plots there for several years, but the land is now on the market.

And the county's Office for the Aging asked \$34,000 annually for advising elderly householders on the prevention of crime, vandalism and fires, and another \$10,000 for small repairs to the homes of elderly people living in the south end of the Fall Creek neighborhood. The Fall Creek area, however, is outside current boundaries for the city programs.

There were also several requests from Community Development staff in the city planning department, including \$110,000 annually for staff costs, \$100,000 for matching grants for improving commercial property, and \$33,000 for a youth training program in grounds maintenance.