



MINUTES CRA Review Committee

5:30 PM – Tuesday, October 25, 2022 – City Hall

CALL TO ORDER: 5:35 P.M.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF QUORUM AND PROPER NOTICE

Present: Nan Cobb, Christine Cruz, Willie Hawkins, Horace Jones, Karen LeHeup-Smith, Nicie Allen Parks, Lori Pittsley, Tom Popieski, Vice Chair Emily Lee and Chairman Michael Holland

Absent: Marie Aliberti

1. CRA ITEM WITH BOARD DISCUSSION, PUBLIC INPUT AND DIRECTION

1.1 Update on CRA Projects

Tom Carrino, City Manager, asked Craig Dolan, Parks and Recreation Director, to provide a report on the Curtright Center.

Mr. Dolan indicated he had been speaking with the principal regarding using it for open basketball play and leagues. He indicated he said they may require the City to have a plant operator on site at all times. He said the police department indicated that as long as the plant operator and City personnel were there, they would not need to have the school resource officers. He stated their goal is to offer a league with games two nights per week. He noted that their gym does not have air conditioning. He indicated he is just waiting to hear back from the principal and a final determination about getting a key.

Karen LeHeup-Smith asked about using the National Guard Armory which has a gym. She noted they have air conditioning.

Mr. Dolan stated he has also reached out to the middle school and would contact the National Guard regarding the armory.

Mr. Carrino noted there is money budgeted for a shade structure at Carver Park. He commented on the possibility of building a big enough program at other locations so they do not need the shade structure.

Willie Hawkins questioned how many people would attend if the games are moved out of the area with Mr. Carrino agreeing that the armory would be farther away.

Mr. Hawkins indicated he would not want people to say the City again didn't do what they said they would do.

Horace Jones asked the ages for the league with Mr. Dolan responding it would be a youth league. He indicated they could use the gym for other types of activities such as volleyball.

Vice Chair Emily Lee asked what the CRA could pay for with Mr. Carrino stating that it has to be in the plan and it has to be within the district.

Chairman Michael Holland commented on the possibility the funding for the shade structure could be moved to additional staffing if necessary.

Mr. Dolan explained that they have permission to use the gym; however, they have to see what times it will be available and whether or not they would have to pay overtime for the weekends.

Vice Chair Lee commented about possibly offering midnight basketball to get the older students off the streets.

Christine Cruz asked if the gym is hurricane hardened and commented on the need for a storm shelter for the disabled and animals and cited the need for air conditioning.

Chairman Holland noted that the schools do not have generators. He commented on the possibility of getting FEMA funding for generators and then for air conditioning.

Nan Cobb further commented on the issue about generators for the schools.

Mr. Jones provided an update on the Eustis Housing Authority community conference center. He stated he reached out to Lake County CDBG regarding the project; however, the funding cycle for CDBG ended in June and the next cycle begins in April. He stated they encouraged the EHA to submit an application for the next cycle. He then commented on the vacant lots he wanted for parking may not be available so there may be an issue with parking.

Mr. Jones stated he also reached out to HUD and they said funding is not available for that type of project. He asked if the City knew about the Choice Neighborhood program which is a federal program. HUD encouraged him to pursue that for funding as well.

Chairman Holland suggested that he reach out to B. E. Thompson as he writes grants for Lifestream and might be able to help.

Further discussion was held regarding possible funding sources with Mr. Jones confirming the estimated total cost is \$1.2 million.

Ms. Cobb commented on whether or not it might help if the City is an urban partner on the CDBG application with Mr. Carrino indicating that the \$750,000 is the small cities grant; however, if they go through Lake County they may only obtain \$300,000 to \$400,000. He explained the CDBG process through Lake County versus the Small Cities grant process.

Chairman Holland asked about the nearby church and whether or not their vacant property might be available for parking.

Mr. Carrino reported on the Palmetto Plaza project and stated the design is on hold due to staff working with Everlasting Life Church regarding obtaining the triangular piece of property northeast of the plaza. He indicated they have stated they may be interested in selling the entire parcel so the City is obtaining an appraisal and the church is working on getting their own appraisal. Once both are received, then they can look at the purchase and, once the City knows what land is available to use, then they can proceed with the redesign.

Chairman Holland confirmed the property includes the house.

Mr. Carrino explained the City directed the appraiser to not include the value of the house as it was going to be removed. He indicated it appraised at approximately \$180,000.

Vice Chair Lee asked which property the City owns with Mr. Carrino responding that the City owns a lot or two west of the resource center. He confirmed that property will also be included in the redesign of the plaza.

Ms. Cruz asked what the process would be with Mr. Carrino indicating he would not have a redesign done until the other property is acquired. He stated it will not take as long as it took to originally build Palmetto Plaza.

Mr. Hawkins reported on the negotiations with the church leaders.

Mr. Carrino reported on the Coolidge area improvements. He noted that area is not actually in the CRA but it abuts the CRA. He indicated that the City needs to build some utilities along Coolidge to take pressure off other areas of the City. He stated they are working with the County to get improvements done in the area. The plan is to be on the County Commission agenda at their first meeting in December. If approved in December, then they will work on implementing cost-share agreements. He confirmed the design and engineering for the utilities is definitely happening. He stated that County staff is supportive of the project.

Mr. Carrino stated that part of the project is that the City will take over maintenance of the roads in that area. The assumption is that the City will eventually annex property in that area to close some of the enclaves. He stated staff feels it makes sense for the City to own and maintain those roads and it makes sense for that area to be in the City.

Ms. Cruz asked for an update on the seawall and noted the cracks have gotten worse with Mr. Carrino indicating he hasn't received a recent report; however, there is \$400,000 in the budget for the project. He indicated he would have Public Works check into it.

Mr. Hawkins asked about the possibility of obtaining FEMA money since it appears the storm may have made it worse.

Discussion was held regarding other possible funding sources and what may be causing the additional damage to the seawall.

1.2 Disposal of Surplus Property

Mr. Carrino reviewed the surplus property/mow to own program. He stated that, based on previous discussions, they have discussed selling some of the properties and using some for the mow to own. He stated there is potentially a third category for those properties that are not buildable and could be disposed of differently. He reviewed other ideas discussed for the program including the following: 1) Initially open the program only to Eustis residents; 2) Limiting participation to only one property; 3) Providing a performance clause requiring development or it reverts back to the City; and 4) Requiring educational components and offering incentives.

Mr. Carrino then reviewed proposed new Mow-to-Own Guidelines as follows: 1) Initially open to Eustis residents only; 2) Priority List - First-time homebuyers, adjacent property owners of owner-occupied property, adjacent property owners (must be a Eustis resident); and all other Eustis residents. 3) Applicant will maintain the property for two years. Upon transfer of ownership, the applicant will have one year to apply for a permit to construct a new home. Extensions may be granted with documentation for cause. If there is no application for a permit within one year, the property reverts back to the City.

Mr. Carrino continued stating that during the two-year maintenance period, the first-time homebuyers will be required to participate in home development, construction and maintenance education. Applicants may apply for one property only and prior participants would not be eligible.

Mr. Carrino commented on the amount of staff time the program would require. He cited the possibility of utilizing professional real estate representation for sale of those properties to be

sold. He then noted the lots that are not buildable. He stated his desire to go through the list with Development Services to identify those lots that are not buildable and should be disposed of in another way. He provided an example of one lot that is 66 feet by 66 feet which meets code for width but not depth.

Mr. Carrino stated that it is up to the group to determine if they want to see the list after that review. He added that it will definitely have to go back to the Commission for consideration. He then noted a two-acre lot that is a wetlands and Public Works has stated it is not developable. They indicated it is not a retention pond; however, a lot of water naturally flows into the wetlands; therefore, the City needs to retain that property.

Discussion was held regarding the number of properties that are actually buildable.

Tom Popieski suggested letting staff identify the nonbuildable lots, sell those that can be sold, then offer the few remaining buildable lots for mow to own.

Ms. Cobb reported on her attendance at the FRA conference and asked if United Southern Bank participates in the Community Redevelopment Act with Mr. Popieski explaining that program was intended to make sure they distribute their funding equitably.

Mr. Jones asked if HUD would be allowed to apply for any of the properties.

Mr. Carrino responded that it depends on if the program is adopted as presented.

Mr. Popieski confirmed that all of the properties are in residential land use districts.

Ms. LeHeup-Smith asked if they are saying "no" to entities and requiring applicants must be individuals.

Mr. Carrino stated that the first requirement is for first-time home buyers with Ms. Cobb and Mr. Jones noting a new EHA affiliate called "Eustis Affordable Housing, LLC" and suggesting that type of agency should be able to participate in the program.

Mr. Popieski commented on the possibility of working with Habitat for Humanity. He also cited issues the lower income residents have with qualifying for loans.

Discussion was held regarding adding another category or changing the first priority to "first-time homebuyers or nonprofit entities assisting first-time homebuyers".

Further discussion was held regarding working with nonprofit entities to develop the properties and what that would entail.

Mr. Jones explained they have not finalized their process for the EHA LLC.

Ms. LeHeup-Smith expressed support for using one of the agencies since they are assured they qualify for funding to get their home and they walk them through the process.

Mr. Popieski clarified he did not mean for the organizations to take over the properties but to identify a qualified first-time homebuyer and then allow EHA or Habitat to them build the house.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the committee for staff to proceed with finetuning the proposed program to be considered by the Commission once the properties are reviewed for buildability.

Further discussion was held regarding how to identify that an applicant is qualified to build a home once the property is transferred. It was noted that EHA needs to finalize their process so the City can see how it works with the program.

Mr. Popieski indicated he would reach out to Habitat for Humanity to determine what their qualifications are with Mr. Carrino indicating he would do that.

Mr. Carrino noted that for a while Habitat was not currently building in the City; however, they had recently been more active in the City. Discussion was held regarding what the issue was for Habitat.

Ms. Cruz questioned whether any local builders would also want to be involved with Mr. Carrino indicating he could find out.

1.3 Comments on Florida Redevelopment Association Annual Meeting

Mr. Carrino reported on his and Al Latimer's attendance at the Florida Redevelopment Association conference. He commented on whether or not members of the CRA Review Committee should attend the conference in the future. He cited the possibility of offering an annual scholarship to attend to a member of the community.

Vice Chair Lee asked about having FRA provide a class to the City.

Mr. Carrino explained his intent would be to help the community better understand redevelopment. He cited the CRA Board member class held on the first day. He noted there were also some hurricane preparedness sessions, Brownfields and legal issues.

Al Latimer stated he came away with the need to make the CRA audit proof and review the City's ordinances and resolutions to make sure they meet current requirements and making sure all of the required information is on the City website. He indicated that he has already begun that process.

Mr. Carrino confirmed that Mr. Latimer will be assuming oversight of the CRA.

Mr. Hawkins agreed with making sure the CRA is audit proof.

Ms. Cobb agreed with the need to cross t's and dot i's and cited the need to constantly review the plan and keep it up-to-date. She stated she learned the importance of having art in the CRA and noted the number of resources the City has yet to tap into.

Lori Pittsley expressed thanks for being able to attend. She noted there was a lot she didn't know such as the sunset date. She stated her desire to attend the entire conference if she gets to go again.

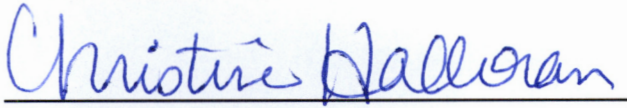
Mr. Carrino explained the City has assumed that since the Commission sits as the CRA Board that the Mayor and Vice Mayor sit as the Chair and Vice Chair; however, they learned that it needs to be codified.

Ms. Lee noted Lisa Midland who spoke regarding working with banks and suggested that person could possibly be invited to give a presentation as well.

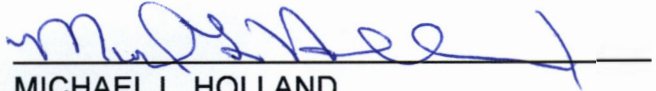
Chairman Holland reminded everyone about the Homecoming parade on Wednesday and the need to arrive at the football game Friday early due to security procedures.

2. ADJOURNMENT: 6:58 P.M.

**These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to www.eustis.org and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*



CHRISTINE HALLORAN
City Clerk



MICHAEL L. HOLLAND
Chairman