

Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
Meeting Minutes June 8, 2021
(DRAFT)

6/8/2021 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Members Present: Robin Gibson - Chair, Daniel Williams, Eugene Fultz - Mayor, Terrye Howell,

Members Absent: Kris Fitzgerald

Staff Present: James Slaton, Executive Director; Albert Galloway, Jr., City Attorney; Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk

Chair Robin Gibson called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 p.m.

2. Minutes - May 11, 2021

Mayor Fultz made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Howell seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

ALL "YES"

Motion passed 4-0.

3. COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

4. Presentation - FDC Affordable Housing Project

Darrell Starling, CRA Coordinator, shared a video from the Florida Development Corporation (FDC) on affordable housing efforts in Lake Wales.

James Slaton, Executive Director, said that this is posted on the FDC website as part of their marketing.

5. Main Street Update

Karen Thompson, Mainstreet Director, said this would be a brief overview of Mainstreet. She reviewed the 4 committees which are economic, design, promotion and organization. The Organization committee deals with fundraising and runs the organization. They have helped with the recent reorganization. Members and contributors are encouraged to invest in the downtown. MainStreet is an accredited organization and are the best of the best.

Ms. Thompson reported on the promotions committee which includes branding and website. The new logo includes elements of the arcade. She showed some promotional items with the new logo. They are continuing with the "shop local" campaign. There is a competition among merchants with the most receipts turned in. The Farmers Market continues on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays. There is now a third Thursday market that is successful. They hired a company to run the event for us. We needed more activity in the evenings. The next one is on the 17th. There will be a Wine Walk that night. A business is also having an opening that night. October fest, Shop small, Hops Shops and Stroll and Make it Magical will happen in the fall. Ms. Thompson announced that they have formed a partnership with the Art Center for a series of concerts downtown. There will be five. This is similar to what is done with Bok Tower.

Ms. Thompson then explained about the design committee. They arranged for a new mural called "Slice of Happiness" on Stuart Avenue. The CRA helped with the flowers near the mural. Many merchants have bumped up their landscape game. The CRA and City are working together on America in Bloom project. Main Street is working with Warner University to develop a "secret garden" in an alley downtown. It will start in the fall. The items will be sold at the Farmer's Market.

Ms. Thompson reported on a grant from the Division of Historic Resources to update the Historic Survey from 1990. Many more buildings may be able to be included.

Ms. Thompson said there are some great people on the design committee including David Price from Bok Tower. They are working on some newly designed benches for downtown. They will also feature design elements of the arcade. She showed the preferred design with a tree canopy and described the elements. They will fundraiser to pay for the benches.

The economic vitality committee tries to recruit and retain existing businesses. They have regular merchant meetings to discuss concerns. She invited them to attend the next meeting. They are planning a "Show of Hands" Shark Tank like event to fund a winning business idea.

Ms. Thompson said the goals are improving quality of life and increasing the tax base. We have gotten \$5 million invested in downtown. We are doing everything right.

6. Restaurant Incentive Update

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS

In 2016, an economic analysis of the Community Redevelopment Area was conducted which revealed that there is an unmet consumer demand for specialty foods within the NW Redevelopment Area and Downtown Main Street District. The Restaurant Incentive Program is intended to attract food-related service providers, restaurateurs and specialty food providers to locate, relocate or establish another location in the Downtown Main Street District and NW Redevelopment area. This program is designed to incentivize private investment. Staff to give a status update on the program.

RECOMMENDATION

To consider establishing a deadline for the completion date of projects under the Restaurant/ Food-Related Incentive Program

BACKGROUND

The Food-Related Incentive Program offers dollar-for-dollar matching funds to assist in establishing food-related businesses in the NW Redevelopment Area and Downtown Main Street District. Matching funds are a grant that can be used to offset the cost of eligible leasehold improvements necessary to establish and operate a food service or restaurant business. The Food-Related Services Incentive Program is for leasehold improvements to an existing property in order to make it functional for a food-service business. Funds may not be used for normal maintenance or repair.

Specific improvements for which grant funds may be used include, but are not limited to:

- Electrical/ Plumbing upgrades
- Installation of attached fixtures
- Grease traps

- Utility connections
- Venting systems
- Sprinkler systems
- Solid Waste and recycling management
- Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing engineering services (not to exceed 20% of the grant total)
- Monitoring man-hole system installation

Improvements must be consistent with the City of Lake Wales Land Development Regulations and Engineering Standards. Any improvements visible to the exterior in CRA may be subject to Section 23-227 Certificate of Appropriateness and issued by the Historic Regulatory Board. As a condition of approval, Applicants agree that improvements made using these funds will stay in place a minimum of five (5) years. If improvements are replaced within five (5) years of construction completion, the grant recipient must pay a pro rata portion of the grant proceeds invested in the project for the number of months remaining. Applicant is responsible for obtaining or having obtained all required local and state approvals and permitting for work undertaken. Once a maximum grant for any property has been awarded, businesses occupying that property, or the building owner cannot reapply for another grant for the same location for a five (5) year period. Grant Recipients agree to allow the LW CRA to photograph the project for use in future publications.

OTHER OPTIONS

Not to consider a deadline date.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

[End Agenda Memo]

Karen Thompson, Assistant CRA Director, reported on the status of the different grant recipients. The Ranch Taproom is open and is everything we hoped it would be.

Wales Pointe is awaiting health inspections. Once passed an opening date will be announced. The grant was awarded in July of 2020. This is close to completion. They had delays related to not getting parts in.

Ms. Thompson explained that we may need to consider a timeline for these grants as they have been a long time awaiting completion. Chair Robin Gibson said this is about money that is budgeted that can't be spent elsewhere. Mr. Slaton said there are competing interests for these dollars. If they aren't being used they can go to other things. He would prefer the restaurants open but if not we can do something else. He is asking the board to think about a deadline.

Chair Gibson said this is a good use of public dollars. He said Melanies and the Taproom and good examples of how well this works.

Ms. Thompson said a time frame wasn't put in the agreement and we didn't ask for a time for completion.

The Rosebud Inn and Cafe was awarded in January 2020. The owner is planning to improve the property but may not be moving forward with restaurant plans. Dorothy Wilson spoke for the Rosebud Inn and gave an update. There's been a lot of red tape. They are working on the courtyard currently and planning to move forward.

Ms. Thompson gave an update on the The Corner Cafe Mr. Ellis, the owner, and team are here to answer

questions. They are dealing with rising construction costs and they are working on a larger scale. Mr. Ellis shared updates on the work done thus far. They have spent \$30,000 so far on the building. Many citizens were not happy with the loss of the turpentine mural. They coordinated with Ms. Thompson on the new mural. The costs of construction and equipment at higher costs than originally planned so they are looking to reduce costs. They hope to open the coffee shop part first. They won't give up.

Mayor Fultz said he is looking forward to their opening. Mr. Ellis said they are moving as fast as they can. They installed a walk up window for take home orders and delivery.

Chair Robin Gibson asked if the grant is a lump sum or dispersed in pieces. Mr. Ellis said it would be better in pieces or phases. Chair Gibson said he's fine with that so long as standards are met. He recommended meeting with staff to come up with a schedule for approval. Mr. Ellis agreed.

Chair Gibson recommended meetings with each to develop a timeline for completion and bring forward to the Board for approval.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

James Slaton, Executive Director, said there will be a CRA 101 class at next month's CRA meeting.

Mr. Slaton reported that Keystone is building the houses for Phase I and has begun working on Phase 2.

The Legacy Housing Program has received applications and approved them. The work will begin over the next few weeks.

There was discussion about Commissioner Fitzgerald's status. Albert Galloway, Jr., City Attorney, explained the process regarding a possible suspension and he can contact the general counsel to see how they plan to address this. This was discussed. The Commission authorized the City Attorney to contact the General Counsel's office about this.

8. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Chair/Vice-Chair

ATTEST:

City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk