

Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
Meeting Minutes December 8, 2020
(APPROVED)

12/8/2020 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

CRA Members Present: Chair Robin Gibson, Commissioner Curtis Gibson, Mayor Gene Fultz, Commissioner Howell, Commissioner Goldstein

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

Chair Robin Gibson called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. Chair Robin Gibson read a statement:

The Governor's Executive Order 20-246 allowing for meetings of a Municipality's governing boards without having a quorum of its members present physically or at any specific location has expired as of Nov. 1.

However due to the ongoing State of Emergency, while a majority of CRA Board Members must be present in the Chambers, members of the staff and public may still participate in our meetings virtually.

Members of the public are welcome to come into the Commission Chambers to participate in our CRA Board Meetings. We will check your temperature before entering the building, we ask that everyone be mindful of social distancing, wearing a mask is required, and please sit in designated seating.

Citizens may submit comments and Questions at www.lakewalesfl.gov/comments for either a specific Agenda Item or for Communications and Petitions.

Albert Galloway, Jr., City Attorney, read a statement on Procedures for this partial virtual Public Meeting.

Mr. Galloway asked the Board Members, "are you comfortable with all the notice provisions set forth and these uniform rules of procedures we have established for this Virtual meeting? The Board answered affirmatively.

2. Minutes - October 13, 2020

Commissioner Curtis Gibson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 13, 2020. Commissioner Goldstein seconded the motion.

By Voice Vote:

ALL "YES"

Motion passed 5-0.

3. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

4. B Street Properties Request For Proposal (RFP) 20-478

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS

The City of Lake Wales CRA recently placed two parcels on B Street out for bid through the RFP process. The CRA received one bid, and the selection committee recommends awarding both properties to the proposer.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the CRA Board accepts the recommendation of the selection committee, and
2. That the CRA Board authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and enter into an agreement with the winning bidder (eSnell's Learning Corner LLC), subject to the following provisions:
 - a. An amount not to exceed \$6,500, and
 - b. Said agreement contains a clause stating that the CRA reserves the right to have the property revert to CRA ownership if permitting/construction does not commence within a set time (18-24 months).

BACKGROUND

On September 10, The CRA issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for two parcels owned by the CRA. The properties are located on the east side of B Street, south of Lincoln Avenue, and are identified by Parcel Numbers 27-29-35-879000-001221 and 27-29-35-879000-001210 (see attached map). The intent of this action is to catalyze redevelopment and beautification, as well as provide for retail, office, and housing within the Northwest Neighborhood. As outlined in the RFP, the proposed project should be attractive, stimulate additional development activity, provides opportunities to live and work, and substantially add to the improvement of the Northwest Neighborhood.

The RFP also included the following statement: "It is expected that site development will commence within one year of obtaining the property or entering into an agreement from the CRA, and that building permitting will start within 18-24 months of property acquisition. If these timelines are not met, then the CRA reserves the right to have the property revert back to CRA ownership."

PROPOSERS PLAN FOR REDEVELOPMENT

eSnell's Learning Corner LLC, the one bidder, proposes to construct a tutoring business on the site. The company works to improve the educational status of children in the Lake Wales area through tutoring. More specifically, the organization will work with parents, students, and schools to identify and mobilize resources that facilitate learning and promote success.

The company provides small group tutoring, consisting of 2-4 students. A qualified tutor will lead each tutoring group. Groups will meet at consistent day and time at least twice week for roughly one to one-half hour during the academic year, and three times per week during the summer.

The project will commence 18-24 months following the date of property closing.

Relevant property information, along with the proposed purchase price, is as follows:

Parcel Number: 27-29-35-879000-001221

Market Value: \$2,859.00

Proposed Purchase Price: \$3,000.00

Parcel Number: 27-29-35-879000-001210

Market Value: \$3,354.00

Proposed Purchase Value: \$3,500.00

FISCAL IMPACT

If approved, the CRA will receive \$6,500 from the sale of these parcels.

[End Agenda Memo]

Mark Bennett, Development Services Director, reviewed this item.

Chair Robin Gibson asked if the CRA owned the property and had a clear title. Mr. Bennett said yes the CRA owns it and he believes it has a clear title. Chair Robin Gibson asked if the proceeds from the sale will come to the CRA. Mr. Bennett said yes.

Commissioner Goldstein asked about the reversion clause. Is that normal? James Slaton, Interim Executive Director, said we don't always avail ourselves of this. Mayor Fultz said a reverter clause should be in there every time. Albert Galloway, Jr., City Attorney, said a reverter clause will make it hard for the new owners to borrow money for the project. Commissioner Goldstein said its great protection for the City. We don't want the project to drag on for years. Getting a loan should not be a problem. Commissioner Howell said the owners need to fully understand that they can lose the property and money if they don't get this done. Mr. Slaton said yes and this will be in the development agreement. Mr. Bennet said this was also in the RFP.

Chair Robin Gibson said that this is a compatible use with the area.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson asked for confirmation that the reverter clause will hinder lenders. Mr. Galloway confirmed this. Many lenders won't lend to properties with this restriction. The owners will probably not get a mortgage but will pay cash.

Commissioner Howell made a motion to approve this proposal. Commissioner Goldstein seconded the motion.

By Voice Vote:

Commissioner Howell "YES"

Commissioner Goldstein "YES"

Commissioner Curtis Gibson "YES"

Mayor Fultz "YES"

Chair Robin Gibson "YES"

Motion passed 5-0.

5. Presentation - CRA Website

Karen Thompson, Assistant CRA Director, presented a slide show the CRA website. This is to distinguish the CRA from the City. The site is pleasing to the eye and simple to navigate. it has a lot of photos of downtown and the northwest area. There is an explanation of what a CRA is and how its funded. She encouraged everyone to use it as a tool and drive traffic to see it. The annual report is on there and information on our incentives. Ms. Thompson said she was open to input as to what else should be on there.

Chair Robin Gibson said it looked good and said Ms. Thompson and her staff did a good job.

6. CRA Activity Report

James Slaton, Interim Executive Director, said this is a report of all the activities going on in the CRA. This is a snapshot of the various projects going on. He introduced Michael Manning, Management Analyst, as key project coordinator of Lake Wales Connected Projects.

Mr. Manning reported on the First Street Streetscape. Chastain Skillman is the firm selected for this and an agreement will be brought before the board in January. This project will begin in February and will go from Central Avenue to Dr. JD Wiltshire Avenue. Mr. Slaton said this design funding is in the budget. Chair Robin Gibson said we need to be ready to go when Mark is finished and keep everything moving.

Mr. Manning reported on the Park Avenue project. The goal is to start the Construction bid process in June. They are trying to address concerns brought up during the open houses.

Mr. Manning reported on the marketplace plaza redesign. There was an open house on November 18 with 28 participants. They have two designs and the public liked both. They have developed a third design alternative with more green open space. The trail will be integrated into market plaza. There will be areas for events like the Farmer's Market.

Mr. Manning reviewed the status of the Connector Trail and explained how it will use unused space along Park Avenue. Some parallel parking spots will be included for residents. This will go from Lake Shore to Wetmore. There will be a phase of the trail that goes around Crystal Lake.

The Northwest Pedestrian improvements will be reviewed during an online open house in January. Mr. Manning said that Chastain Skillman and S&ME are also working on this. This will be done in phases. He shared a map showing the phases over 5 years. Mr. Slaton said these phases will be put into the CRA plan.

Commissioner Goldstein asked the status of the Grove Manor project. Mr. Bennett said the Housing Authority should know by February. They have competition from Lakeland.

Mr. Slaton said the Horticulture position that was added will be filled early next year. They will work with S&ME on plant selection and design for some of our large capital improvement projects. There are some beautification efforts that can be started now while these other projects are being designed.

Mr. Slaton reported on the new Community Liaison Police Officer Palmer. He has restarted a bicycle program to engage the community.

Mr. Bennett introduced Darrell Starling, new CRA Coordinator for the Northwest area, and reviewed his background.

Mark Bennett, Development Services Director, reviewed the Downtown design standard projects. Hopefully a draft will be available for public comment in February.

Mr. Bennett then gave an update on developing the parking lot at Stuart and Wetmore as discussed at the last meeting. A RFP was released a few weeks ago about this spot. Hopefully something can be brought to the board in a few months. Chair Robin Gibson confirmed that the property belongs to the CRA. Mr. Bennett confirmed it was. The RFP included some of our expectations.

Darrell Starling introduced himself and reviewed his background. Mr. Starling explained what he is working on including helping property owners clear up their titles. Those properties could then be sold for affordable housing. Chair Robin Gibson asked about absent owners that can be anywhere. Does he have sponsors? Mr. Starling said he is aware of this problem. Chair Robin Gibson said if money is owed then they are more

motivated to sell. Mr. Slaton said there are different situations but those owners who wish to get rid of the property the CRA can work with them. This was discussed.

Mr. Starling reported on plans to partner with the Green and Gold Foundation to work with Keystone to help with housing in Lake Wales. Mr. Starling reviewed the Keystone program in Polk County. Commissioner Curtis Gibson said that Keystone is a great program and this is a good idea for Lake Wales to get more affordable housing. Mr. Starling said they are also talking with Habitat for Humanity to enlist their help. Commissioner Goldstein said its a good idea to work with them. Volunteers are hard to come by right now.

Mr. Starling said he applied for and received REDI status for Lake Wales which is a Rural community designation. This is helpful in applying for certain grants. Chair Robin Gibson asked about working on the financing part. This will help us to keep going. Mr. Slaton said they are looking into various opportunities for revenue streams. Commissioner Goldstein said we don't want to raise taxes. Chair Robin Gibson said we can borrow but we need to be able to cover the debt. Mr. Slaton said we have funding for these first few projects. In the next few years funding will be a concern. Chair Robin Gibson said momentum is important. Improving the tax increment is critical.

Commissioner Goldstein said we could use the lake more as a destination point. Mayor Fultz said there were racial disparities that discouraged use of the lake. Commissioner Goldstein said we can move forward. He recommended charging fees to use our facilities. Mayor Fultz said we need activities for everyone.

7. Lake Wales Connected Dashboard

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

James Slaton, Executive Director, reported that we are on the funding list for \$750,000 for a CDBG grant for Housing rehabilitation.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23 p.m.

Chair/Vice-Chair

ATTEST:

City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk