

Community Redevelopment Agency
Regular Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers
February 26, 2020
5:00 P.M.

Community Redevelopment Agency Board members: Reynolds Henderson, Darius Paul, Joe Johnson, Cathy Mosley, City Manager Mell Smigielski, and Planning Director Kelly Schultz. Also present were: Mayor Bob Campbell and City Clerk Maryanne Schrader. Board member Amber Davis Williams was excused.

Chair R. Henderson called the Community Redevelopment Agency meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes - Chair R. Henderson asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

Motion by Board Member J. Johnson and seconded by Board Member D. Paul to approve the minutes of January 22, 2020. All ayes. Motion carried.

3. Citizen Comments - Chair R. Henderson asked if there were any public comments.

Citizen Robert Raymond thanked the Planning Department for their assistance with his issue.

5. Update on Funding- City Manager Mell Smigielski met with Patrick Pilcher and went over the tax increment. He said the base year valuation of the CRA is 191 million dollars, and the preliminary figures of 2020 (first year we can get the increment) is 205 million dollars, which comes to 13.3 million of increased valuation. He was advised the increment included the city and the county valuation. He said the city is at a 4.5 mill rate, which is \$59,000 for the city. If the County, Sheriff and Road and Bridge rate is included, we would receive another \$40,000. In response to Chair R. Henderson, City Attorney Clay Adkinson said the County did not opt out, so the total is combined. He added we receive a pro-rata share. City Manager Mell Smigielski added we expect to receive a total of \$100,000.

City Manager Mell Smigielski said he was not able to get a process yet for the sale of the properties, but it is on his radar. Regarding the CRA annual reporting, there is now a statewide spreadsheet to assist us with our reporting.

City Manager Mell Smigielski said free Ethics training is available for the Board. There is one on April 3rd in Ft. Walton Beach, June 5th in Marianna and August 21st in Crestview, and they are all 8 a.m. – noon. In response to Board member J. Johnson, City Attorney Clay Adkinson replied that the County Attorney can provide the training, as any government lawyer can offer the training. He added he hosts them for the Tourist Development Committee.

4. Code Enforcement Update - Planning Director Kelly Schultz passed out a report from Code Enforcement Officer, Chris Strawn. C. Strawn came forward and briefed the CRA on the Code Enforcement he has been working on. Planning Director Kelly Schultz complimented C. Strawn on his knowledge of the Ordinances, and added he was a former police officer. She added he is going for his Code Enforcement Officer training certifications along with Emergency Management certifications.

C. Strawn went over the city quadrants in his handout. He used the list from the previous Code Enforcement Officer on blight which contained 1500 properties. He explained the breakdown of the levels of blight which included cleaning, etc. He explained how using a scale for blight issues would be beneficial. He mentioned an example as level one would be for house cleaning, level two would be a more moderate problem such as repair for railings or moldings, and level three would require immediate attention, as the roof is falling in or the walls are caving in. The Board members liked the idea of the scale system. C. Strawn mentioned volunteers could assist people who cannot fix their issues. He also displayed pictures of the problems with different levels and added no violations have been issued yet.

C. Strawn said he has not sent out any violation letters, as he has been working on cases that were open. He inspected over 61 properties last week and some properties have already been removed. Discussion ensued on whether he should send out letters who may be in violation, and the Board preferred that he start at the Level 3 houses and work backwards.

Chair R. Henderson asked whether he needed volunteers. City Manager M. Smigielski said the city desires help, but we have not received the money yet.

Discussion ensued on placing money received in a fund to pay for repairs. The Board stressed they do not want to take property, only assist those who are not able to correct the violation. The Board discussed a screening process for cleaning up properties. Board member J. Johnson said the Board can make recommendation of properties to clean up. City Attorney Clay Adkinson explained the Council can approve the funds to demolish a property, if needed.

Discussion ensued on the diplomatic way to educate property owners about what blight looks like and how to correct it. The Board discussed a checklist and application for assistance.

Planning Director K. Shultz mentioned an option could be to apply for a CDBG grant for revitalization. City Manager, M. Smigielski said the consultant helps, but the Live Oak project must be done before we can obtain another grant.

Planning Director K. Shultz mentioned obtaining a county dumpster program at no cost. C. Strawn said it costs \$4,000 to purchase the dumpster. He added Robert Nelson told him about the program.

Motion from Board member J. Johnson and seconded by Board member C. Mosley to recommend that the Council ask the County to use the sales tax money from the garbage collection to provide six dumpsters that can be used by the disadvantaged, so they can clean up the city. All ayes. Motion carried.


Discussion ensued on the organizations that are willing to help with the clean-up projects. Planning Director K. Schultz said the missing link is to reach out and coordinate with these groups. In response to Chair R. Henderson, Planning Director K. Schultz said she will send out the list of organizations that have helped via the City Clerk.


Board member J. Johnson said he would like to see a work-program created, as it would be beneficial for the youth to learn work lessons.

Motion by Board Member C. Mosley and seconded by Board Member D. Paul to adjourn. All ayes. Motion carried.

Chair R. Henderson adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m.

Minutes Approved by:


Reynolds Henderson


Maryanne Schrader, City Clerk

