

Community Redevelopment Agency
Regular Meeting Minutes
Communications Media Technology - Zoom
May 27, 2020
5:00 P.M.

Chair R. Henderson called the Community Redevelopment Agency meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

Chair R. Henderson announced that Board member Amber Davis Williams has moved out of the area, so he will reach out to Councilmember R. McKnight to ask for a replacement.

Community Redevelopment Agency Board members attending remotely: Reynolds Henderson, Darius Paul, Cathy Mosley, and Planning Director Kelly Schultz. Board member Joe Johnson was excused.

Present in Council Chambers: City Manager Mell Smigielski, IT Director Jesse Deckard, Code Enforcement Officer Chris Strawn and City Clerk Maryanne Schrader.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson and Deputy City Manager C. LeJeune were also present remotely.

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

Motion by Board Member C. Mosely and seconded by Board Member D. Paul to approve the minutes of February 26, 2020. All ayes. Motion carried.

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

Citizen Robert Raymond stated Main Street is in jeopardy of losing their accreditation and has volunteered his services. He also asked about the Veterans Lodge and whether the Board should meet with them regarding their project.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson said we cannot address Main Street, as the CRA Board is not connected to Main Street.

Chair R. Henderson mentioned if someone has concerns regarding Veterans Lodge to send them to the City Clerk.

4. Downtown Beautification – Chair R. Henderson stated he met with the city and Tony Valle to look at ways the CRA can start working on the sidewalks and getting water to the planters to spruce up the area downtown.

City Manager M. Smigielski said the facilities maintenance person will return next week and the project will be added to the forefront of his list.

Chair R. Henderson mentioned the Farmers Market and someone looking at a USDA grant to move it forward. He added the Board will need to decide which projects will be impactful when funds are received.

5. CARES Act Application – City Manager M. Smigielski noted that we have new staff to assist the CRA, Deputy City Manager Carisse LeJeune and Kara Chilcutt, Grant Coordinator, who will introduce grant opportunities to offer loan interest loans to individuals.

Deputy City Manager C. LeJeune said she met with Kara who will contact the regional office in Atlanta, that has both regional comprehensive plans and economic development plans under the CARES grant. The objective is to match up the city plans with what they offer. She plans to bring back information at the next meeting. They saw grants for business start-ups, laying fiber for high speed Internet, large economic development strategic study, and infrastructure opportunities.

Deputy City Manager C. LeJeune said they will research what the city is eligible for and look at what is in the regional comprehensive development plan. She suggested the Board bring forward a wish list. She added she would like to meet with the regional office to look over what they offer before making any decisions.

Chair R. Henderson said he would like to reach out to her to present his ideas and suggested the Board members to direct ideas directly to C. LeJeune as the point of contact.

Deputy City Manager C. LeJeune said the Notice of Opportunity came out May 7th with over 180 million allocated to this area. She has not seen a deadline date to apply, but it is on a first come first serve basis.

6. Code Enforcement Update – Chris Strawn verified there are over 125 houses on the blight list. He is working on quadrant one and adding to the blight list and verifying each one. He asked that the CRA come up with a plan on how we want to tackle the blight houses suggesting the least to the greatest.

Chair R. Henderson voiced his concern about the Board's role. C. Strawn would like guidance on how to proceed with a priority scale.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson said code violations are not part of what the CRA is tasked with, but they can identify blight areas that could be submitted. It is staff's decision to enforce policies, so a priority scale is not in CRA purview.

Chair R. Henderson said he would like to offer Code Enforcement help, as the problem was ignored for many years. He asked what support staff is needed, as he would like to put it into the CRA plan as a top issue for funding.

City Manager M. Smigielski said it would be appropriate for the CRA to fund an additional employee. However, City Attorney Clay Adkinson said the role would need to be determined to make it justifiable, and the cost share would have to be dedicated to the CRA function.

Chair R. Henderson would like a recommendation for something the CRA could vote on to move it along, so when funds are received, we will have the information.

In response to C. Strawn, Chair R. Henderson said the first step would be for code enforcement to enforce the code in its entirety, as we cannot pick and choose. Our mission is to fight blight to get business to move here. He asked for a salary range for another employee to incorporate money to that position.

City Manager M. Smigielski said he mentioned at the last meeting that he contacted the County appraiser and July 1 is when the new values come out. He expects a 13-million-dollar valuation increase, so the CRA could get \$80,000 to \$110,000 and added a recommendation is needed at the next meeting when we have the figures.

City Manager M. Smigielski said we had a 1st reading to allow for the Special Magistrate, so that should be in place for 2nd reading in a month or so.

7. Sale of City Properties Update - City Manager M. Smigielski said in November, we determined the city had seven pieces of surplus property, and we went out for bids. The total appraised value of \$32,000 was combined for all parcels. We did not accept the one bid we received. At that time, we chose to go with a sealed bid process. However, as Home Rule, we can use discretion. He asked for options on how the Board wanted to proceed.

Discussion ensued on using sealed bid, auction or soliciting realtors for a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA), as D. Paul stated the CMA is based on comparable properties.

In response to Chair R. Henderson, City Attorney Clay Adkinson replied if the preference of the city is to attempt to list with an open listing, a policy could be composed to justify offering a commission. We could also ask that the buyer pay the commission to the realtor. The incentive for the realtor is to bring a buyer at a good price. He added it would be appropriate to go out for an RFP to realtors.

Discussion ensued on advertising using signs, offering a buyers' premium commission, and social media to get more exposure.

Board member C. Mosely said advertising is the best method, as people did not know the properties were for sale. She added interest rates are low currently.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson suggested one method is the valuation of the market and suggested the Board recommend to the City Council that they obtain a CMA from at least three local realtors, and based on the CMA, offer a minimum price and advertise for sale to include a reserve on sealed bids.

Motion by Board member C. Mosely and seconded by Board member D. Paul to recommend to the City Council that they obtain a Comparative Market Analysis from local realtors, to include a base sale price based on the CMA and for the Council to include an open listing and offer a minimum price and advertise for sale. All ayes. Motion carried.

Planning Director K. Schultz announced Jackie Kite, Planning Coordinator, is looking forward to working with the CRA. She added that Jackie is from Lake City and has a lot of experience with the CRA.

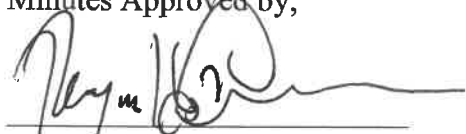
8. Adjournment

Chair R. Henderson asked if there was any other business.


Motion by Board Member C. Mosely to adjourn. All ayes. Motion carried.

Chair R. Henderson adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

Minutes Approved by,


Reynolds Henderson




Minutes taken by Maryanne Schrader, City Clerk
Proper notice having been duly given