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HIGH SPRINGS  
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY MEETING  
MINUTES  
October 14, 2014

Meeting called to order by Chair Weller 6:01 p.m.

Invocation by Chair Weller.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call:

- Chair Weller – Present
- Vice Chair Barnas – Absent
- Member Bass - Present
- Member Gestrin – Present
- Member Jamison – Absent
- Member Sylvia Newcomb – Present
- Member Williams - Absent

Staff Present:

- Ed Booth, Executive Director/City Manager
- Jenny L. Parham, City Clerk
- Courtney Johnson, City Attorney

Chair Weller states she would like to amend the agenda to add clarification of the type of position available.

**Motion Member Gestrin to amend the agenda to include discussion on the memorandum from attorney's office on classification of position.**

**Second Member Bass.**

**Motion carried 4 – 0.**

Chair Weller outlined the memo sent from Attorney Johnson regarding classification of position.

Attorney Johnson gave an overview of the concerns with this position being an individual contractor.

Discussion on whether it should be an employee or contract position.

Attorney Johnson explained the position could still be an employee but have a contract that spells out the duties.

Chair Weller states she is in favor of having the position be an independent contractor as the board had already voted for.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 11 AND SEPTEMBER 6, 2014.**

**Motion Member Bass to approve the minutes of August 11 and September 6, 2014.  
Second Member Newcomb.**

**Motion carried 3 – 1 with Member Gestrin opposing.**

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**DETERMINE ORDER OF INTERVIEWS FOR THE FOLLOWING APPLICANTS  
FOR THE POSITION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECT:**

- A) BASTI GONZALEZ
- B) AMANDA RODRIGUEZ
- C) EMMA TIRELLA
- D) SHAO-MING ZHANG

Chair Weller states it was determined at the last meeting to draw names to determine the order of the interviews. Advised applicants that they will be asked two questions by each board member.

Mrs. Parham, City Clerk, advised that only two applicants were in attendance, Ms. Gonzalez and Ms. Rodriguez; but one applicant had advised that he, Mr. Zhang, could not attend tonight and is requesting that he be interviewed on a different day, which is up to the board.

**Motion Member Bass to interview the two applicants present and not rescheduling for applicants that could not be present.**

**Chair Weller passed the gavel to Member Gestrin, to second motion.**

**Motion fails with Member Gestrin and Member Newcomb voting against.**

Chair Weller suggested that when the additional two applicants are interviewed that the two applicants present be notified of that meeting as well.

Chair Weller resumed gavel and drew names in order of: Mr. Zhang, Ms. Tirella, Ms. Gonzales, and Ms. Rodriguez.

**2. INTERVIEW APPLICANTS IN ORDER CHOSEN.**

**Basti Gonzales**

Member Newcomb asked, as director how would you promote, increase knowledge of what the CRA can offer to the business community as well as the homeowners which are in the CRA District.

Ms. Gonzales spoke of the need to start by sending letters and going door to door to let them know grants are available.

Member Bass spoke of qualification requirements; states the application does not show anything that met the specific requirements. Member Bass asked why do you think you are qualified for the position. Ms. Gonzales states she is State Licensed in banking and financing; she has been a merchant since she was 11 years old; she knows this city and its merchants through working with them; she knows facades; has worked with private and public sector; with this she feels she is qualified.

Member Gestrin asked, what assurances can you give to keep the CRA and Commission informed. Ms. Gonzales responded that she feels that it is the job of the Executive Director to let the board know everything; it has to be a cohesive relationship.

Chair Weller asked, what do you see as the most important issues to tackle as the CRA Executive Director. Ms. Gonzales responded, to get three year plan done, we need parking, need to start working with our merchants with their facades, and need to make the city safer and more pedestrian friendly. Spoke of the importance of the three year plan.

Member Newcomb asked about grant writing experience. Ms. Gonzales responded she helped with the Farmer's Market Pavilion grant.

Member Bass asked, how do you feel about a billboard on the interstate, a walking map, and helping businesses that are already here. Ms. Gonzales responded, been here nine years, always wanted to hold A Merchants of the Roundtable. She states that the CRA needs to hear our merchants and act. Wants merchants to know we are taking care of them. Spoke of Save America.

Member Gestrin asked, what are things you want to address on a daily basis? Ms. Gonzales spoke of following procedure on what the board is wanting accomplished. She states it is the dais that makes the decision, she would be here to research what she thinks would be best for the city.

Member Gestrin asked, how do you motivate yourself? Ms. Gonzales states motivation comes from one's self.

Chair Weller asked what experience do you have dealing with a board and how would you assure you have an effective relationship with the board. Ms. Gonzales responded that she has been dealing with the commission, planning board, and housing board for years. She states she thinks it is about having a trust, trust relationship.

### **Amanda Rodriguez**

Member Gestrin asked, why did you apply and how are you going to make a difference. Ms. Rodriguez spoke of her love of government, working for the people and taking that responsibility very seriously. She states she has lived in this area for over 20 years. She states in a small town you can make a big difference because the people are invested in it.

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Member Bass asked in regards to qualifications, see you are obtaining a Master's Degree online, will you have time to dedicate yourself to this position. Ms. Rodriguez spoke of having to work all through college; and that neither her grades nor her job performance has ever suffered.

Member Newcomb asked, as the Executive Director how would you promote, increase knowledge about the CRA and what it has to offer to both the businesses and homeowners in the CRA District. Ms. Rodriguez spoke of having over seven years of marketing experience and community engagement. Member Newcomb asked how she would do this, door to door or mailing. Ms. Rodriguez stated that since it is such a small area she thinks that door to door would be great; which would provide for her to connect and get to know the citizens.

Chair Weller, asked, what do you see as the most important issue(s) to be tackled as a CRA Director. Ms. Rodriguez stated that she has not seen our plan, She spoke of keeping the small town feel, while facing the challenges of a decreased budget. She spoke of the importance of having the citizens that live in High Springs and work in Gainesville to come back and shop and eat in High Springs. She spoke of the importance of having a livable city; a place where you want to spend weekends and have your family come to visit.

Member Gestrin asked, how do you assure accountability to the board and how do you stay motivated Ms. Rodriguez spoke of the importance of communication and being big on communication. She states with government it needs to be open and very clear. She states that she is motivated by doing a good job.

Member Bass asked her feelings on the full page ad, the walking map and the billboard. Ms. Rodriguez spoke of the importance of marketing and her experience in marketing. She adds that her husband works at Camp Kulaqua, if we could work with them on putting our brochure in all the rooms there it could make a huge difference.

Member Newcomb, asked about her grant writing experience and what are some of the grants she has experience with. Ms. Rodriguez stated she wrote three and worked on several others. She gave an outline of those grants. She spoke of grants being scarce, but being comfortable writing grants.

Chair Weller asked about her experience with working with boards and how would you ensure you have an effective relationship with the board this. Ms. Rodriguez spoke of having experience dealing directly with boards with previous employment. She spoke of dealing with the Alachua County Board of Commissioners and the City of Gainesville Commission with getting resolutions passed and with grants. She adds that she understands the dynamics of a board.

Ms. Rodriguez questioned what the long and short term goals were for this board. Chair Weller stated that we can have the goals given to you as well as the other applicants.

Ms. Rodriguez questioned why the board was switching from the city manager serving as executive director to an independent person. Mayor Weller advised, nothing against our manager, that the city manager has a lot of other duties and the board would like someone that is more accountable and focused on their goals.

Ms. Rodriguez asked how are grants evaluated to make sure it is meeting what the requirements are. Chair Weller stated we have our own grants and agreements; we rely on our attorney and the State CRA association.

**3. RANK APPLICANTS.**

Will wait until other applicants are interviewed.

Discussion on scheduling meeting for second set of interviews.

**4. CONSIDER AUTHORIZING ATTORNEY TO DRAFT CONTRACT WITH THE NUMBER ONE RANKED APPLICANT.**

Stephanie Beak asked if the two applicants interviewed tonight will reinterview in front of the board members that were not here. Chair Weller stated that the absent board members can go online and listen to the interviews.

**Chair Weller adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.**