

HIGH SPRINGS
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
WORKSHOP MINUTES
March 17, 2016

Meeting called to order by Chair Jason Evans at 6:32 p.m.

Invocation by Member Byran Williams

Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Chair Jason Evans- Present
Vice Chair Scott Jamison-Present
Member Gloria James- Present
Member Byran Williams-Present
Member Sue Weller- Present

STAFF PRESENT:

Amanda Rodriguez, CRA Executive Director
Jenny Parham, City Clerk
Courtney Johnson, City Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion Member Weller to approve the agenda as presented.

Second Member Williams.

Motion carried 5-0.

WORKSHOP ITEMS

REVIEW CURRENT CRA 3-YEAR GOALS AND PROJECTS.

Amanda Rodriguez, CRA Executive Director, outlined the current 3 year goals. States that the number one goal has been Façade Grants for both Residential and Commercial. She states that we have awarded and distributed \$4,685.00 in Residential Façade Grants and \$87,370.13 in Commercial Façade Grants in the last 2 ½ years. She adds that we have currently awarded, but not distributed \$26,538.00 this year.

Linda Hewlett asked if these are matching grants. CRA Director Rodriguez advised that they are.

CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of the goal on Downtown Parking, and advised that we have added to downtown parking.

Member Weller asked about D.O.T. putting in Handicap Parking at NW 1st, she stated that there was a business that received a grant to have this put in, but the business is no longer there.

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CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of the murals, and they have been well received. She stated that we have set aside funding for one more mural this year, and that we are also going to be putting in a smaller quilt mural, which will be part of the Florida Quilt Trail.

Member Weller stated that the Springs Institute spoke of putting a mural on the side of their building, with the mural being something to do with the springs.

A citizen questioned how the painter would be chosen for the mural. CRA Director Rodriguez stated through a competitive bid process.

CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of the creation and adoption of the extension plan. She stated the 30-year initial plan would end in December and the new plan would take effect in October, so that it is the same as our fiscal year. She states that the new plan has been adopted by the City Commission and we are waiting to hear back from the County. She states that if everything goes well, she is hoping to have everything finalized by June.

CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of events the CRA has coordinated and been involved in.

A citizen spoke of wanting to see things done for Memorial Day and Veteran's Day to recognize the veterans in the area.

CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of ways of promoting the CRA area. Spoke of updating the CRA website regularly and getting information out in the newspaper.

CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of the Downtown sidewalk project in conjunction with D.O.T. she stated that it is schedule to begin early next Spring. She added that we are contracting with one of D.O.T.'s engineers to have the sidewalks done; we will be paying for the sidewalks to be redone, but will be F.D.O.T. approved.

Linda Hewlett spoke of the sidewalks being dangerous. Chair Evans stated that we will have to follow D.O.T standards, but hopefully the end result will be a lot safer. Member Weller stated that D.O.T. is not sure how they will fix the step down. Ms. Rodriguez stated that D.O.T. will be here for a site visit in the next few weeks to look at this.

A citizen stated that she would like for it to be pointed out to D.O.T. that these sidewalks are not walker or wheelchair friendly. Ms. Rodriguez pointed out that D.O.T. will be putting in handicap ramps at the crosswalks to make them ADA Compliant.

CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of the "Rails to Trails." Member Weller stated that the legislature in their budget put in \$2 million to be put towards the rail banking, but the Governor has indicated that he is going to delete that. She encouraged everyone to write to the Governor.

A citizen asked where they can find out details on things, such as the Farmer's Market Pavilion. City Clerk Parham stated that they could contact her office.

DISCUSS POSSIBLE CRA GOALS AND PROJECTS FOR 2016-2020.

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CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of setting the goals and projects for 2016-2020. She stated that the goals should be based on the 30 year objectives and added that these projects must occur within the CRA District.

A citizen spoke of giving money towards a City Worker to clean up and keep the sidewalks downtown clean.

Member Weller stated that there should be funding for the planters and plants downtown to dress it up.

A citizen spoke of the permitting process for a business; stated that it is terrible and needs to be looked at.

Chuck Stewart spoke of small business mentoring and SCORE.

Member Weller spoke of having resources available for businesses, coming in, to assist them in with permitting and the process of setting up their business. Mr. Stewart stated that he can put something together with SCORE.

Cindy Bass asked if the sidewalks will be pressure washed throughout the CRA district. Ms. Rodriguez stated that they would. Ms. Bass spoke of looking into insurance for the businesses within the Historic District. She states that the cost for her insurance for her business is running more than the property tax. Ms. Bass spoke of a program by the Kiwanis Club, for a minimal fee, they will put up an American Flag at your business for the different holidays.

Member Weller spoke of having events downtown in the evenings and trying to have the businesses stay open later.

A citizen asked who takes care of the downtown street lights. Ms. Rodriguez stated that Public Works and the CRA.

A citizen asked a question regarding permitting fees. Chair Evans stated that these questions would be more for the City Commission or City Manager.

A citizen asked about putting lights over by the gazebo to light it up that area. Chair Evans spoke of Williston and their band shell, and us thinking about something like that. Member Weller stated that eventually that area will be a linear park.

Cindy Bass spoke of the need to look into more Public Restroom facilities.

A citizen asked if the Chamber Bathrooms were Handicap Accessible. Chair Evans advised that they were.

Member Weller suggested a complete renovation of the Chamber Restrooms.

Cindy Bass asked if there was parking for RV's in the city, other than street parking.

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Member Weller spoke of bringing in Broadband for the businesses.

CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of the parks in the CRA being James Paul Park, the Community Garden and the future linear park.

Linda Hewlett spoke of the road going through James Paul Park and resurfacing so it looks less like a road.

A citizen asked for clarification that the road for resurfacing is the one from City Hall that is blocked off from road traffic. Ms. Hewlett advised that it was.

Chair Evans stated he thinks that it would be a good idea.

Chair Evans stated we need to have a master plan for the parks. Ms. Rodriguez advised that she is working with the Parks and Recreation Board and the Recreation Director to put this together to be included in next year's budget.

Member Weller spoke of the possibility of considering a dog park.

A citizen asked if they have considered hostile accommodations for walkers, runners and bicyclists. Member Weller stated that could be something that could be addressed in the thirty-year plan or in the master plan.

Linda Hewlett stated that Poe Springs Park, a County Park, is set up for camping accommodations but they are not currently being used for that now.

CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of the need to increase the affordable housing. Spoke of the need of repair for homes within the CRA.

Chair Evans stated that he would like to see the Residential Façade Grants increased from \$1,000.00 to maybe \$5,000.00. He states that this improves the look of the whole area.

Cindy Bass spoke of business owners and residents not applying for the façade grants due to the time frame restrictions, for selling, attached to them.

CRA Director Rodriguez stated that she has spoken with the Downtown Businesses, has had overwhelming support, regarding helping maintain the flower pots downtown.

Billie-Jo Benedict spoke of moving the clock from downtown. She stated that the clock is expensive to repair and maintain. She has spoken with Sylvia Newcomb, who donated the clock in honor of her father, regarding moving the clock over by the caboose and setting that hands to 7:00. She spoke of putting some kind of statues over where the clock is currently located.

CRA Director Rodriguez stated most of the land where the clock is currently located is D.O.T property. She stated that when D.O.T. does come in to resurface the road they will be taking a portion of this land.

Chair Evans states that putting a statue may impede the vision when trying to turn right.

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Member Jamison asked that we put this on a Commission Agenda for discussion and have staff come up with the cost and what would need to be done to move the clock.

Ms. Benedict asked where the CRA currently gets their funding. Ms. Rodriguez advised that they get funding from the city and county. She states that a portion of the property taxes in the CRA come back from the businesses and residences downtown; this is why there are restriction on the money.

Discussion on how to help promote the businesses downtown.

CRA Executive Director stated she would like within the next three years to have a rebranding of the CRA, so they have their own standalone website and logo.

Cindy Bass spoke of the need to have a billboard on the interstate. Ms. Rodriguez stated that the CRA cannot fund a billboard if it is located outside the CRA.

CRA Director Rodriguez stated we will be working on new signs for the area.

CRA Director Rodriguez spoke of the buildings downtown being old, having no firewalls, or fire sprinklers. She stated that we could make grants available for the business to put in firewalls or fire sprinklers.

Motion Member Weller to adjourn.

Second Member James.

Chair Evans adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.