

2018-2019

# High Springs CRA Annual Report



Artist: Doug Hancock, 2019

Jennifer Stull



## ***High Springs Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)***

# **2018-2019 Annual Report**

October 1, 2018-September 30, 2019 was a highly collaborative, creative, and organizational year for the High Springs CRA ensuring the current and future realization of several projects and setting the stage for major redevelopment projects to occur in years to come to maximize the quality and impact of redevelopment in the High Springs CRA.

### **CRA Board Members**

Nancy Lavin (Chair)

Gloria James (Vice Chair)

Linda Jones

Byran Williams

Scott Jamison

### **CRA Staff**

Joel DeCoursey, Executive Director and  
City Manager

Vacant, CRA/Community Development  
Director

**This report covers an overview of the 2018-2019 achievements and introduces projects that are already in conceptual stages or underway in 2019-2020. We also share a glimpse into the future by sharing common goals that have been established throughout the past year within our numerous workshops and design charettes. We strongly believe in a community-centered approach and the 2018-2019 results indicate this growth while highlighting an overview of the projects, programs, and activities that will best redevelop our historically and culturally significant Downtown CRA.**



## **CRA Investments: Leveraging Private Investment and Inspiring Community Collaboration**

**The High Springs CRA has created extraordinary momentum and has achieved a lot with the \$170,394 we received in 2019 tax increment. Following a restructuring of policies and procedures for the Façade Grant Program and the approach to undertaking redevelopment projects, the CRA Board and Staff identified several key projects and initiatives, which began with innovative collaboration techniques to uncover and operationalize the community vision.**

### ***Community Outreach***

Continued collaboration was ongoing during 2018-2019 to discuss the redevelopment ideas of the Douglass Neighborhood. Following these public participation events, the neighborhood formed an advisory board consisting of 9 community leaders to further discuss neighborhood revitalization.

### ***Finding of Necessity: Douglass Neighborhood***

The City of High Springs authorized GAI Consultants, Inc. from Orlando, Florida to conduct the Finding of Necessity required for the consideration to expand the existing CRA Boundary. This \$15,000 investment demonstrated that the criteria had been met for redevelopment per Florida Statutes. Due to the number of escheated lots that the City will be receiving over the next three years, a Neighborhood Workshop was held on March 7, 2019. This workshop allowed the residents to discuss the available lots and consider the other lots that will be available in the future. This project is now being led at the neighborhood level for the residents to decide the vision and goals of their neighborhood.

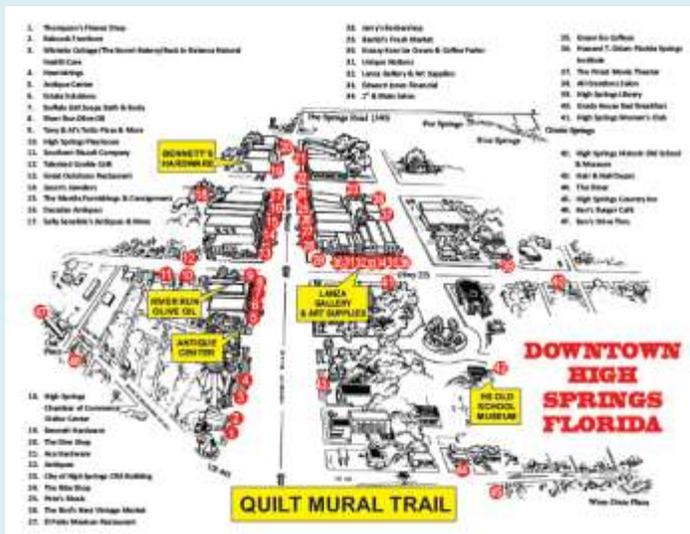
### ***Depot Building Purchase***

The CRA completed \$36,000 in renovations on the Depot Building. This historical passenger train depot has been repurposed to house the CRA offices in the heart of the Downtown CRA. Without this investment, this building was likely to remain vacant as it had been for sale for an extensive period before the High Springs CRA purchased this



historical landmark. The City continues to do improvements on the Depot Building and expect it to be completed FY 2019-2020. The CRA took this long vacant landmark historical building and it has become a valuable asset in our downtown CRA corridor.

The Depot building leases part of the space to the City to create a revenue stream for the CRA.



Historical and Quilt Mural Self-Guided Tour, 2018

**First Fridays:** The CRA in partnership with the Downtown Merchants in High Springs and the Chamber of Commerce have produced several community events, including an all-ages, community-wide Sidewalk Chart Art Event and a Community Block Party to celebrate the opening of the Historic Train Depot Building. Several giveaways and promotions have taken place to promote our historical downtown CRA and our downtown central business district.



### **Farmers Market**

The High Springs Farmers Market has been in existence since March of 2001 and continues to thrive and serve fresh produce and more year-round to our community and beyond.



### **Banners**

The CRA worked with a private company (GAI) to facilitate new banners in the CRA corridor. Many local businesses sponsored banners and advertise their businesses.



### ***Façade Grants***

Revision of Policies and Procedures for Grants: Commercial and Residential Grants-  
façade and paint-only

#### ***Commercial Façade Grants***

<b>River Run Olive Oil Company LLC</b>	<b>\$370</b>
<b>High Springs Brewery Co LLC</b>	<b>\$2,450</b>
<b>Law Office of Maurice McDaniel LLC</b>	<b>\$3,250</b>
<b>Lion's Lair Boutique Spotlight</b>	<b>\$4,367</b>

#### **Nonprofit Façade Grants**

High Springs New Century Woman's Club- Matching grant of \$5,716.50 for building improvements.

### **Music in the Park**



Music in the Park is largely a volunteer effort produced by local philanthropist and musician, Michael Loveday. In the past, the Michael's non-profit has secured grant funding from Visit Gainesville and only receives \$2,500 to compensate impeccable talent throughout the year, including the annual daylong Folk in the Springs event held each year in September.



These concerts are free to the public and are a true community treasure drawing anywhere from 100-1,500 people.



### ***Promotions***

Our historical and culturally significant Downtown CRA truly is a “Gateway to the Springs” and like any tourist community this requires sharing all that we have to offer. To better serve our business community and our residents, we made investments intended to serve the business community, tourism and economic development to continue to grow the number of high-quality jobs available in our CRA and throughout our City. As a result, the High Springs CRA partnered with the City of High Springs to have advanced coverage in this year’s Guide to Greater Gainesville. This \$5,000 CRA

investment will allow our community to gain increased visibility locally, nationally and even internationally due to the publication also having a strong online presence.

### ***Television and Radio Advertising***

The CRA also partnered with the High Springs Chamber and the area merchants to run a series of 3-minute Television ads on NBC 9, CBS 4, My 11, NBC 40, Fox 49, and WFSL Fox 31 feature on Local Discovery: Explore Florida. This investment provided tremendous coverage of the High Springs CRA through multiple cities throughout Florida and in markets in Georgia and Alabama for an investment of \$375. The CRA has also aided our local business community by supporting First Friday events by purchasing ads through WUFT and NPR ads for community events and programs. Y108 has also provided in-kind coverage of the events within the High Springs CRA through live broadcasts during the Christmas Parade and the CRA sponsored the December First Friday coverage and live broadcast.





**Option 2: Market Square Phase I (Source: ML+H, 2019).**



**Option 3: Market Square Phase I (Source: ML+H, 2019)**



## **Financials**

Like most CRAs, the High Springs CRA is primarily funded through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). However, unique to High Springs is the fact that the High Springs CRA receives TIF based on the City Millage rate instead of the County Millage rate. This provides a lower rate for our projects but allows the County to continue to collect some tax revenues while the High Springs CRA partners to make improvements that advance the public health, safety, and welfare. For the fiscal year 2018-19 the TIF received from the County was \$85,197, which is matched by the City for a total of \$170,394. The remaining balance has been placed in projects for workforce and affordable housing, a community resource center, downtown parking, lighting and streetscape improvements and Market Pavilion enhancements.

The official budget and financial audit can be found on the City of High Springs Website: [www.highsprings.us](http://www.highsprings.us) or a copy is available at City Hall.



THIS ANNUAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019 OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF HIGH SPRINGS, FLORIDA, IS HEREBY APPROVED BY THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF HIGH SPRINGS, FLORIDA, IN SESSION DULY AND REGULARLY ASSEMBLED, THIS 14<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF MARCH 2020.

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Nancy Lavin, CRA Chairperson

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Joel DeCoursey, City Manager

ATTEST:

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Jenny Parham, City Clerk