

City of Clearwater

*Main Library - Council Chambers
100 N. Osceola Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33755*



Action Summary

Monday, June 17, 2024

1:00 PM

Main Library - Council Chambers

Community Redevelopment Agency

Roll Call

Present 5 - Chair Bruce Rector, Trustee Ryan Cotton, Trustee Michael Mannino, Trustee David Allbritton, and Trustee Lina Teixeira

Also Present: Jennifer Poirrier – City Manager, Michael Delk – Assistant City Manager, David Margolis – City Attorney, Rosemarie Call – City Clerk, Nicole Sprague – Deputy City Clerk, and Jesus Niño – CRA Executive Director

To provide continuity for research, items are listed in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

Unapproved

1. Call to Order – Chair Rector

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

2.1 Approve the minutes of the April 15, 2024 CRA Meeting as submitted in written summation by the City Clerk.

Trustee Cotton moved to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2024 CRA meeting as submitted in written summation by the City Clerk. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

3. Citizens to be Heard Regarding Items Not on the Agenda – None.

4. New Business Items

4.1 Approve the 2023 Annual Financial Statement.
Presentation of the fiscal year 2023 Annual Financial Report by external auditors.

Carr, Riggs and Ingram Partner John Brielmaier provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Trustee Teixeira moved to approve the 2023 Annual Financial Statement. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

4.2 Presentation on Art Oasis Mural Fest 2024.

Arts and Cultural Affairs Manager Amber Brice provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Discussion ensued with comments made that the mural fest attracted diverse participants and received a lot of positive feedback.

4.3 Approve the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Business Spotlight program that will provide exposure to businesses within the Downtown Clearwater CRA and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same.

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) recommends approving the CRA Business Spotlight Program to support its goals of attracting residents, visitors, businesses, and employees to downtown. Over six months, CRA staff has engaged with business owners and community stakeholders to develop partnerships that foster meaningful connections within the community.

The purpose of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Business Spotlight program is to promote local businesses within the community. It provides exposure and support to these businesses, helping them thrive and contribute to the economic growth and vitality of the area. The program involves showcasing different businesses through marketing efforts or other initiatives to attract customers and increase awareness of the products and services offered by local establishments. It will foster a sense of community pride and engagement by highlighting the unique offerings of businesses in the area.

The **Business Spotlight Program** directly promotes goals and objectives of the 2018 Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan, specifically:

People Goals: Downtown shall be a place that attracts residents, visitors, businesses, and their employees and enable the development of community. The City shall encourage a vibrant and active public realm, recreation and entertainment opportunities and support the community and neighborhoods.

Objective 1D: Encourage a variety of office-intensive businesses, including finance and insurance, IT/Software, professional services, data management, analytics and services, and medical to relocate and expand in Downtown to provide a stable employment center.

This program is intended for local business owners who meets specific criteria, including location within designated Downtown Clearwater redevelopment boundaries, legal compliance, active operational status, and a commitment to

community involvement. Eligible businesses surrounding various sectors, including retail and restaurant businesses, personal services industries, galleries, theaters, and other cultural and community gathering spaces.

Upon approval, the Business Spotlight will follow a marketing and communications plan. The application window will be open for four weeks to allow businesses to submit their applications. Once the application window has closed, committee members will carefully review and assess all received applications. Upon completion of the review process, approved businesses will be notified, and meetings will be scheduled to discuss timelines, expectations, and other pertinent details. At a future CRA meeting, a presentation of the final recipients of the Business Spotlight Program will be recognized.

The proposed program meets the goals of the downtown redevelopment plan and provides a partnership opportunity for business owners who wish to establish a sense of community in our redevelopment area.

Funding for this program in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 will be used for

printing flyers and other marketing to help administer this program as authorized by Florida Statute 163.387(6)(c)1.

APPROPRIATION CODE AND AMOUNT:

Funding for this program in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 are available in R2002 Community Engagement.

In response to questions, CRA Specialist Julia Baltas said the program will spotlight businesses that do not have any code violations or liens issued against the property. Mr. Niño said staff will work with business owners who have code violations or liens in an effort to mitigate the problem and in hopes of having them qualify for the program in the future. CRA Senior Div. Manager Anne Lopez said staff will create an application that will be reviewed by an internal committee. The intent is to spotlight businesses that have a large impact in the Downtown area.

One individual questioned how the businesses will be spotlighted and how much money will it cost to implement the program.

Mr. Niño said, if the program is approved, staff anticipates having the application available within 30 days. There is no monetary incentive for businesses receiving the spotlight recognition; the program will highlight a business on the CRA and City's social media accounts.

Trustee Allbritton moved to approve the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Business Spotlight program that will provide exposure to businesses within the Downtown Clearwater CRA and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

4.4

Provide direction on Cleveland Street Shipping Container/Mobile Vendors.

CRA staff met with city departments to discuss the feasibility of shipping containers and mobile vendors on the pedestrian corridor of Cleveland Street, with the goal of creating new commercial activity not within traditional storefronts. Shipping container businesses will not be allowed on the public right of way, but mobile vendors can be granted access to operate within this area as a new form of commercial activity. This commercial activity could be Airstreams, food trucks, and other businesses operating on wheels.

The following three ideas could bring new commercial activity to the Cleveland Street corridor:

1. Dedicated Commercial Activity

The road closure on the 400 block of Cleveland Street provides an opportunity for new commercial activity within the center turn lanes. This currently empty and unused space could potentially accommodate two vendors at Fort Harrison Avenue and one vendor at Osceola Avenue, creating up to three new business locations. Businesses operating from these locations could operate as their primary place of business. Although technically mobile, these businesses would remain within their designated location. The addition of parklets in nearby unused parking spaces could help further enhance these new business locations with outdoor seating and other public amenities.

2. Event Commercial Activity

Mobile vendors could be utilized during special events, such as food truck festivals. These special event vendors could operate out of the unused parking spaces and open areas along both the 400 and 500 blocks of Cleveland Street. This type of activity would generate an influx of activity during special event times, and it could become a monthly or seasonal event.

3. Hybrid Commercial Activity

A hybrid could be utilized with mobile vendors to establish regular dedicated ongoing new businesses. Plus, special events could be created to bring an influx of new commercial activity during those events.

These plans to enliven the Cleveland Street corridor do meet the following CRA goals and objectives:

Goal 1 - People

- Objective 1E:
Maintain Cleveland Street as Downtown's Main Street which is valued for its historic character and pedestrian scale.
- Objective 1H:
Maintain, activate, and program parks, plazas, and recreational areas.

Goal 2 - Accessibility

- Objective 2B:
Strengthen Cleveland Street, Osceola, and Fort Harrison Avenues as local, pedestrian-oriented streets. Identify other local streets to be reinvigorated with active ground-floor uses.
- Objective 2H:
Support temporary techniques that improve the street environment, such as murals, temporary planters, sharrows, bike lanes, and painted intersections until permanent improvements are made.

Goal 3 - Amenity

- Objective 3G:
Create and activate space to work as signature destinations, including civic plazas, markets, and retail gathering places that promote economic growth for Downtown.

Goal 4 - Urban Design

- Objective 4A:
Encourage redevelopment that contains a variety of building forms

Staff Recommends a hybrid model to provide a mixture of opportunities for consumers and enliven the Cleveland Street corridor.

Mr. Niño provided a PowerPoint presentation.

In response to questions, Mr. Niño said, if approved, the mobile vendors will be semi-permanent, as long as the street remains closed. Staff envisions the mobile vendors will be there at least three times a week.

Discussion ensued with comments made that the commercial activity must be diverse, include a retail component, and cannot be a monthly driven activity to be successful. There was consensus to pursue Option 3.

In response to comments, Mr. Niño said Florida Statutes require community redevelopment agencies to have a community

redevelopment area plan and staff is working the current Clearwater CRA plan. If the current plan is not making sense or working, then the plan should be reviewed and amended. He said the Clearwater CRA area plan was last updated in 2018. The City Manager said the CRA area plan is one component of the City's efforts to improve Downtown. Staff continues to meet with the Downtown stakeholders, which includes Pinellas County and the Church of Scientology.

Staff was directed to pursue Option 3.

5. Director's Report

5.1 Directors Report - June 2024

Mr. Niño provided a PowerPoint presentation.

In response to a question, Ms. Lopez said there is one Economic Recovery Grant remaining; the applicant is still submitting the required documentation. She said staff will be reallocating the balance as part of an upcoming budget amendment. Mr. Niño said staff is in the process of consolidating all of the CRA grants and will implement a communications plan to target and educate prospective grant applicants.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Attest

Chair
Community Redevelopment Agency

City Clerk