

City of Clearwater

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



Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 13, 2020

9:00 AM

Main Library - Council Chambers

Community Redevelopment Agency

To ensure public safety and comply with the Governor's Safer at Home order in response to the COVID-19 virus, the Clearwater City Council will hold a public meeting on Monday, July 13, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. using communications media technology.

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 20-69, issued by the Office of Governor Ron DeSantis on March 20, 2020, municipalities may conduct meetings of their governing boards without having a quorum of its members present physically or at any specific location, and utilizing communications media technology such as telephonic or video conferencing, as provided by Section 120.54(5)(b)2, Florida Statutes.

Roll Call

Present 5 - Chair Frank Hibbard, Trustee David Allbritton, Trustee Hoyt Hamilton, Trustee Kathleen Beckman, and Trustee Mark Bunker

Also Present – William B. Horne II – City Manager, Micah Maxwell – Assistant City Manager, Michael Delk - Assistant City Manager, Pamela K. Akin – City Attorney, Rosemarie Call – City Clerk and Amanda Thompson – 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 Hibbard

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. via communications media technology.

2. Approval of Minutes

- 2.1 Approve the June 15, 2020 CRA Meeting Minutes as submitted in written summation by the City Clerk.

Trustee Hamilton moved to approve the June 15, 2020 CRA Meeting Minutes 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 Amend the operating budget for the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) for fiscal year 2019-2020, approve budget amendments to the CRA Capital Improvement Projects

and adopt CRA Resolutions 20-01.

Revenue amendments in the operating budget reflect a net increase of \$325,810. This includes the following increases to bring the budget in line with revenues received to date:

- An increase of \$132,978 in County TIF revenues
- An increase of \$147,767 in City TIF revenues
- An increase of \$16,580 in DDB TIF revenues (offset by payment to DDB)
- An increase of \$28,485 in interest earnings

Expenditure amendments in the operating budget reflect an increase of \$325,810. This includes the following amendments:

- An increase in \$16,580 in payments to the DDB to match revenues received
- An increase of \$2,000 to training and reference to reflect actual expenditures to date
- Transfers of excess revenues to capital projects:
 - \$174,252 in City TIF/Interest to R2003, Economic Development-City
 - \$132,978 in County TIF to R2010, Housing-County

The proposed amendments to the CRA Capital Improvement Project reflect a net increase of \$859,604.59. This includes the following amendments:

- The recognition of \$497,974.59 in TIF revenues representing excess cash from FY18 and FY19 in project 94714, Downtown Redevelopment
- An increase of \$54,400 in revenues from the DDB to fund program expenses in 94889, Placemaking Activities
- An increase of \$174,252 in FY20 City TIF/Interest to R2003, Economic Development-City
- An increase of \$132,978 in County TIF to R2010, Housing-County

With the passing of HS Bill 9, Pinellas County has requested new annual reports in the categories of Community Policing, Community Engagement, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Transportation, and Housing. Staff is recommending amendments to close current projects, transferring available project revenues to newly created projects are outlined in the attached CRA Capital Improvement Project Fund schedule.

Trustee Hamilton moved to amend the operating budget for the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) for fiscal year 2019-2020, approve budget amendments to the CRA Capital Improvement Projects. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

CRA Resolution 20-01 was presented and read by title only. Trustee Hamilton moved to adopt Resolution 20-01. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:

Ayes: 5 - Chair Hibbard, Trustee Allbritton, Trustee Hamilton, Trustee Beckman and Trustee Bunker

4.2 Discussion on the 2020-2022 Community Redevelopment Agency strategy in the areas of special events, redevelopment priorities, building local leadership capacity and performance measures.

The purpose of this discussion is to provide staff direction in areas that present a change in policy direction from previous CRA activities in preparation for the adoption of a 2020-2022 implementation strategy. At the May 2020 meeting, CRA trustees confirmed that they would like to have three strategy focus areas of Creating and Sharing Positive Stories, Increasing Investor Confidence and Placemaking that contribute to the overall goal of changing the perception of downtown to align with the adopted vision. The previous discussion also outlined the external forces that would impact CRA activities over the next two years including the impact of COVID 19 on special events, construction of Imagine Clearwater and Streetscape Phase III and the ending of the federal Opportunity Zone investment period in December 2021. Since May, there has also been significant cultural and political movement towards addressing systemic racism by calling on institutions to examine their leadership and funding priorities.

1. Redevelopment Priorities

The downtown redevelopment plan vision describes a live/work/play community. The CRA has an opportunity to implement this vision through the redevelopment of city/CRA owned properties and incentivizing partners to provide those uses. Over the next two years staff recommends focusing on the live and play aspects of plan. CRA properties and grants funds should prioritize:

- Construction of rental housing units
- Activation of vacant spaces for cultural and entertainment uses
- Retaining current restaurant and retail uses
- Retaining current office uses

2. Local Leadership Capacity

Downtown revitalization requires numerous for profit and not for profit organizations and individual leaders who champion different parts of the vision to bring it to life in partnership with the CRA. Currently there is limited organizational and leadership capacity in downtown. A small number of volunteers serve downtown organizations with overlapping missions and small operating budgets. These factors limit the overall ability

of the community to implement new ideas and create significant, lasting change in the downtown environment.

Over the next two years staff recommends establishing programs that build capacity by:

- Providing funding to strengthen organizational capacity to assist with downtown redevelopment
- Supporting new voices to be champions for downtown through training, ideas contests and cohort programs
- Adopting an explicit focus on community building and connecting neighborhoods to downtown

3. Special Events

Special events are a critical component of downtown revitalization. Events are an expression of a community's values and ultimately their identity. They are experiences that set cities apart from suburbs and strip commercial developments. Vibrant downtowns have a mixture of small and large events on a regular basis that provide a balance between serving residents and visitors as well as a variety of interests. In the past, most events in downtown have been centered around live music concerts which has limited the types of people who come downtown. With the Dreams of Dali exhibition, the Craft Beer Festival and Holiday Extravaganza events, we have started to attract residents who had never before visited downtown.

Building on the success of new event offerings, given the construction timeline for Imagine Clearwater and the ongoing impacts of COVID 19, staff recommends the following approach for special events:

- Partner with community organizations to solicit different event ideas that can comply with social distancing or mix in person and virtual elements
- Continue to develop virtual programming that is accessible to audiences 24/7 via the internet
- Secure large visual art installations that promote downtown's brand and serve as a destination throughout the year
- Leverage the Cleveland Street closure (whether temporary or permanent) to provide series of smaller, ongoing events
- Cease funding for large, live music events (Blast Friday) and consider new ways to deliver live music experiences

4. Performance Measures

How might we define success? Outputs, like event attendance, are relatively easy to capture. Capturing a change in perception, beyond personal antidotes, is more challenging but that is what we need to know. Staff recommends exploring techniques like sentiment analysis to better understand how CRA activities are changing the perception of downtown by investors and residents.

CRA Executive Director Amanda Thompson provided a PowerPoint presentation.

In response to questions, Ms. Thompson said cultural/entertainment activities and recreational/family activities are not mutually exclusive. She said there is a business opening that has simulation games for families and staff is meeting with Jazz Holiday Representatives about office space on Cleveland Street for their continued education programming. The City is rarely an early adopter; the City is not the first to pursue pedal pubs or electric scooters, or try new technology. When dealing with economically depressed areas, one way to revitalize the areas is with less regulations. Wynwood Yard was a vacant lot where the owner built an open-air bar in the center, food trucks along the edges, and a simple covered stage. Programming was provided from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. She said it was a relatively inexpensive way to bring in new businesses and try new food concepts and have a community living room. The location became so popular that the property site was sold for high-rise condominium development. Ms. Thompson said the perceptions of downtown were based on the many conversations staff had with business owners, residents, property owners and downtown employees. The 2018 Downtown Redevelopment Plan engaged the public with respect to the desired activities in downtown and the Second Century Studios surveyed and sought public feedback for 1.5 years. She said the Downtown Development Board has issued a survey seeking public feedback on the type of activities the Board should organize. The CRA has not issued a survey seeking public input on desired downtown activities. Ms. Thompson said staff has not tracked racial/income demographics; staff has been trying to reach as many individuals as possible because the population in downtown is low. The events' target audience has been downtown employees, Clearwater residents and tourists. She said holiday activities need pivot due to COVID-19 and will require city partnership.

One individual suggested engaging the elderly by holding programs they would enjoy.

In response to a suggestion, the City Manager said that direction has not been given to hold free activities for seniors in the community. There is a cost associated with all programmed activities.

Discussion ensued with comments made that historically the CRA has focused 100% on dining and nighttime activities and that patience is needed because retail investment has been impacted by the current COVID-19 pandemic. It was suggested that more family-centered activities, outdoor

activities, and events that would engage more minorities should be pursued. There was consensus for staff to move forward with getting quotes for holiday activities that would appeal to a broad audience.

5. Director's Report

CRA Executive Director Amanda Thompson said all restaurant vouchers have been claimed. Since one restaurant dropped out of the program, the program will open-up again to issue 250 vouchers. She said the dedicated webpage received over 20,000 views in a few days; the site typically gets 3,000 views in a month.

One individual expressed a concern that she, as a business owner in the CRA district, never received a call or visit about the activities in downtown and where the CRA funds should be directed.

The City Manager said staff is doing a lot of outreach via technology and is seeing a trend that there is a segment of the population who want individual attention. Staff is determining if they are equipped to visit businesses to have these types of conversations.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

Attest

City Clerk

Chair
Community Redevelopment Agency