

City of Clearwater

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



Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 14, 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, September 14, 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 minutes of the July 13, 2020 CRA Meeting as submitted in written summation by the City Clerk.

Trustee Hamilton moved to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2020 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

Kathy Flaherty submitted an eComment regarding the CRA's

purchasing policies that was read into the record by the City Clerk (see page 12).

4. New Business Items

4.1 Review the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) draft strategy that outlines the CRA's work program from October 2020 through December 2022.

The purpose of this item is to present the proposed October 2020 - December 2022 Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) implementation strategy for discussion and feedback from the CRA Trustees. Revitalizing a downtown is a long term, complex process at the intersection of community engagement, economic development and urban planning. The CRA relies on partnerships, both city departments and external organizations, to bring the adopted vision for downtown to life. Commitment to a work program and funding priorities allows staff to successfully plan for multi-year projects and communicate potential CRA investments to its partners.

In May 2018, the CRA Trustees adopted a new Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan which outlined a vision and goals to increase the attractiveness of downtown as a place to live, work and play. The 2018 redevelopment plan also established an operational framework and capital improvements budget for the next 5-10 years. On October 29, 2018, the CRA trustees adopted a more detailed 18-month implementation strategy to guide the short-term work of CRA staff and investments. The strategy had one main outcome, *"to shift the perceptions held by the public and investors about city government and downtown Clearwater to one that aligns with the 2018 adopted vision."* This strategy had four objectives; each objective contained a variety of tasks:

- Creating and sharing authentic, positive stories about Downtown Clearwater
- Beginning construction on Imagine Clearwater
- Permitting 600 housing units
- Attracting \$100 million dollars of private investment

The CRA was able to achieve significant progress in each area, including a shift in operations to prioritize marketing, beautifying public spaces and providing new signature events. RFPs were issued for three CRA owned sites and seven food and drink grants were awarded. The CRA hosted the "Dreams of Dali" virtual reality exhibition for six months attracting over 4,600 visitors to downtown and winning an "Best of Bay" award. The 15% design was completed for Imagine Clearwater as well as the Harborview Center was demolished. However, during this time very few housing units were constructed and there was little private investment. This was primarily due to the lack of investor confidence in downtown's ability to attract customers/residents, the difficulty of

obtaining financing to construct multi-story housing and the CRA's limited network of potential investors.

This year has brought significant changes for the CRA including new trustees, the COVID-19 pandemic, a shift in the design of Imagine Clearwater to emphasize the live performance venue and a new funding source through Pinellas County for workforce housing. Downtown businesses and City/CRA staff have responded to these challenges with creativity through the temporary closure of the 400-500 blocks of Cleveland Street and the restaurant voucher program among other initiatives.

Over the next two years, there will be significant construction of public improvements throughout the CRA with Streetscape Phase III/Mercado in the Downtown Gateway and the waterfront redevelopment in the Downtown Core which will impact the accessibility and visibility of current businesses. There could be a referendum on the sale/lease of the bluff properties and the establishment of a conservancy which will need the support of Clearwater voters and donors to be successful. There will be increased county funding for workforce housing developments as well as the continuance of the Opportunity Zone federal tax benefits which could stimulate multi-family housing construction. Physical distancing impacts from COVID-19 will be in place through Spring 2021 limiting in person special events continuing the need to create new ways of gathering. Anticipating the impact of these factors is an essential part of our planning for the next two years. It is vital that the CRA keep downtown at the forefront of our residents' and visitors' minds to sustain current businesses and build up patrons for future ones.

The outcome of the proposed strategy is the same at the 2018 strategy - to change the perception held by the public and investors about downtown to one that is positive and encourages investment. All the proposed CRA programs, capital improvement projects and activities are designed to change the perception of downtown to show it is welcoming, arts infused, vibrant, diverse and sustained by partnerships. The work will be contained in three focus areas:

1. Creating and sharing positive, authentic stories about downtown Clearwater
2. Increasing investor confidence
3. Investing in placemaking and placekeeping

The plan lists the proposed activities for each focus area as well as how we will measure our success. Highlights include new business assistance grant programs, identifying "Downtown Champions" to bring their ideas to life in downtown, the redevelopment of CRA owned properties with housing, public art projects and increased marketing efforts to target developers. Staff has created momentum over the past two years and are poised to continue the ongoing transformation of downtown. Staff looks forward to the Trustees' feedback and guidance on this approach. Staff anticipates bringing a final strategy for adoption in October 2020.

APPROPRIATION CODE AND AMOUNT:

CRA expenditures are identified and approved as part of the annual budgeting process.

CRA Executive Director Amanda Thompson provided a PowerPoint presentation.

In response to questions, Ms. Thompson said the perception of downtown has been changing slowly but steadily; interest has increased from real estate developers and restaurant businesses in the CRA are more stabilized. A statistically significant survey of Clearwater residents and surrounding municipalities regarding their perceptions of downtown has

not been conducted. The community survey that is conducted every other year included a question on Downtown that asked what residents would like to see. Ms. Thompson said staff believes the survey should be divided into two audiences - investors and visitors. She said several small focus groups have been held for real estate brokers. Staff is creating a slide deck that will include CRA demographics, economic development information and property information with desired establishment that will be used for an advertising campaign targeting investors and investment firms. The advertising campaign will be conducted November through February. Staff will approach property owners regarding including their information in the slide deck. Ms. Thompson said the purpose of the CRA is to restore function of a private market and will only be in existence for 13 years. The CRA is looking to sell properties but not opposed to leases; there are three available properties.

In response to a suggestion, the City Attorney said staff can provide the Trustees at the next meeting a memo analyzing legal limitations associated with incentivizing or penalizing property owners with vacant storefronts. The memo will also include the constitutional issues associated with not-for-profit owned properties.

In response to questions, Ms. Thompson said in some cases the vacant property owner does not have the funds needed to invest for improvements and the CRA cannot fund the build-out of every space. The knowledge of a property owner's financial standing is limited to what the owner shares with staff.

One individual submitted an eComment in opposition that was read into the record by the City Clerk (see page 13).

In response to the public comment, the City Manager said the statement attributed to him was incorrect.

There was consensus for staff to move forward with the presented work program and to consider conducting a scientific survey of the downtown, with a radius greater than Clearwater, on the perception of Downtown and what keeps individuals away.

4.2 Approve the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Community Redevelopment Agency Preliminary Budget, adopt CRA Resolution 20-02 and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same.

The purpose of this item is to adopt the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2021 Community Redevelopment Agency budget. The proposed budget provides funding to implement the 2018 Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan. CRA programs are focused on creating and sharing positive stories about downtown, increasing investor confidence and placemaking. CRA projects include the redevelopment of CRA owned sites into mixed income apartments, business retention programs, the beautification of public space through park and streetscape improvements and increasing the capacity of downtown organizations to lead redevelopment efforts.

The highlights of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2021 preliminary budget are as follows:

Tax Increment Revenue increased by 15% over the Amended 2019-2020 budget, reflecting an increase in taxable value of approximately 9% in the original CRA area, and an increase in taxable value of approximately 14% in the expanded (Downtown Gateway) CRA. These compare with citywide 6% increase in value.

CRA funds are divided between Operating Expenditures and Project Funds. Operating Expenditures include the services, supplies and expenses that occur during the fiscal year and are primarily used for conducting the CRA's day to day operations as well as consulting services that will begin and end within the fiscal year. Project Funds include Interlocal Agreements, Capital Improvements and funding for established programs whose work extends beyond one fiscal year. Project Funds carry over from year to year. This year's budget incorporates the newly established project funds that distinguish between City and County TIF dollars.

Operating Expenditures have decreased by \$114,565 from FY 19/20 to FY 20/21. This majority of this decrease is from the cancellation of the Blast Friday event series (\$100,000). Operating Expenditures also includes the pass-through revenues, \$340,088, to the Downtown Development Board

(DDB).

Transfers Out designates the funding this fiscal year that will be allocated to various Project Funds. County TIF Funds, \$2,079,624 for this fiscal year, are restricted to capital improvement projects, housing and land acquisition. The County TIF funds have been allocated to Economic Development (\$500,000), Housing (\$1,000,000), Transportation (\$79,624) and Infrastructure (\$500,000). The costs for Interlocal agreements with the City and Police Department are found in the General Fund and Community Policing lines for a total of \$720,000. The remaining City TIF revenue has been allocated to Community Engagement (\$236,564), Infrastructure (\$250,000), and Housing (\$1,000,000).

In response to questions, CRA Executive Director Amanda Thompson said funds used to mediate blight have been used to support the Community Garden, to improve the façade at Philly Joe's, and to fund 2 officers for Community Policing throughout the CRA district. Funds designated for travel are for the 4 CRA employees to attend training events that are also used as an opportunity to network with investors.

An individual submitted an eComment requesting consideration to mediate blight prior to spending funds on marketing and art. The City Clerk read the comment into the record (see page 15).

In response to questions, Ms. Thompson said the advertising budget decreased because a majority of the funds were shifted to the community engagement line item. The last façade grant was awarded to 808/803 Court Street in May/June for Edible Arrangements and Simulated Center. The JB Executive Center and the Verizon Frontier building are planned for capital improvements this year. She said the Planning and Engineering departments are leading the transportation improvements, which include upgrades to the Pinellas Trail; the CRA will fund the design and some of the enhanced lighting or landscaping. The significant jump in revenue was associated with the Nolan coming online.

Trustee Hamilton moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Community Redevelopment Agency Preliminary Budget. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

CRA Resolution 20-02 was presented and read by title only. Trustee Hamilton moved to adopt CRA Resolution 20-02. 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

- 4.3** Approve an Interlocal Agreement between the City of Clearwater and the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to provide staffing and administrative services for the CRA, provided for the reimbursement of certain expense by the CRA to the City, and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same.

As per Section 163.387, Florida Statutes allow that money in the redevelopment trust fund may be expended from time to time for undertakings of the Community Redevelopment Agency, include providing for staff, as describing in the community redevelopment plan and the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan established that funds received by the CRA through the use of Tax Increment Funding (TIF) may be for certain redevelopment activities.

The CRA agrees to provide TIF funding in a total amount not to exceed \$500,000 for this contract year.

This amount includes \$451,841 for staffing and \$48,159 for other administrative services. These amounts are subject to adjustment and approval in the CRA budget each year.

Trustee Hamilton moved to approve an Interlocal Agreement between the City of Clearwater and the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to provide staffing and administrative services for the CRA, provided for the reimbursement of certain expense by the CRA to the City, and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

- 4.4** Approve an Interlocal Agreement between the Clearwater Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the City of Clearwater to provide CRA funding in Fiscal Year 2020-2021 in the amount of \$250,268.12 to underwrite the cost of additional Community Policing services by the Clearwater Police Department in the Downtown Gateway District, Prospect Lake District, and the Downtown Core District, encompassed by the CRA to address quality of life issues, drug dealing, prostitution, and homelessness and authorize the appropriate officials execute same.

Quality of life issues, drug dealing, prostitution, and homelessness, all negatively impact the re-development plans. Additional community policing resources are needed to effectively address these issues above and beyond the level provided by routine road patrol functions.

An allowable funding source of this active item is the use of CRA Tax Increment

Financing (TIF) funds. Florida Statutes allows for the use of TIF funds for “community policing innovations” in the Community Redevelopment Areas. For the first time, the CRA is providing an additional \$40,000 to work with the police department to develop a community policing co-responder program. The program will assist police officers with connecting persons encountered in the CRA area with services needed to address homelessness, mental health, drug addiction and physical support services.

The CRA and Clearwater Police Department have reached an agreement on a proposed scope of services and terms as delineated in the Interlocal Agreement. Included in the scope is the delineation of specific, measurable crime reduction targets by which to monitor the success of the initiative as well as providing clear language required by statute assuring that the resources are applied to the CRA/Downtown Gateway area.

APPROPRIATION CODE AND AMOUNT:

Funding for this Interlocal Agreement will be from CRA Project Code R2001 Community Policing.

An individual submitted an eComment in support that was read into the record by the City Clerk (see page 16).

Trustee Hamilton moved to approve an Interlocal Agreement between the Clearwater Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the City of Clearwater to provide CRA funding in Fiscal Year 2020-2021 in the amount of \$250,268.12 to underwrite the cost of additional Community Policing services by the Clearwater Police Department in the Downtown Gateway District, Prospect Lake District, and the Downtown Core District, encompassed by the CRA to address quality of life issues, drug dealing, prostitution, and homelessness and authorize the appropriate officials execute same. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

- 4.5** Approve the Interlocal Agreement with the Downtown Development Board (DDB) to provide personnel, administrative and management services during Fiscal Year 2020-2021 in the amount of \$76,084.92 and refund the CRA tax increment fee of \$340,088.01 and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same.

Florida Statutes 163.387 requires all taxing authorities, which includes the DDB, to make an annual appropriation in an amount equal to the incremental increase in the ad valorem revenue within the CRA area. The DDB’s increment payment is \$340,088.01 according to the Pinellas County Property Appraiser’s office. In a spirit of cooperation to further the downtown redevelopment plan, the CRA Trustees executed the first Interlocal Agreement in Fiscal Year 1999-2000 to

provide personnel, administrative and management services to the DDB and to refund the difference between the increment payment and the management fee. This is the twenty first fiscal year that the CRA would enter into the agreement.

Pursuant to Florida Statute 163.01, the CRA and DDB can enter into this agreement in which the DDB agrees to perform certain responsibilities and functions including funding projects and programs consistent with the downtown redevelopment plan. The intent of this agreement is for the DDB and the CRA to work collaboratively on projects and programs that further downtown goals and objectives. The management of the DDB by CRA staff enables the CRA and the DDB to utilize the public dollars more efficiently.

The DDB shall pay the CRA \$76,084.92 for the services agreed to in the Interlocal Agreement.

The DDB approved the Interlocal Agreement at their meeting on August 27, 2020.

An individual submitted an eComment in opposition that was read into the record by the City Clerk (see page 17).

In response to a concern, the City Attorney said the City is following the law; the funds being returned to the DDB are an increment of their millage. She said the geographic area of the DDB is smaller than the overall CRA.

Trustee Hamilton moved to approve the Interlocal Agreement with the Downtown Development Board (DDB) to provide personnel, administrative and management services during Fiscal Year 2020-2021 in the amount of \$76,084.92 and refund the CRA tax increment fee of \$340,088.01 and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

5. Director's Report

CRA Executive Director Amanda Thompson said staff is receiving quotes for the Holiday Extravaganza for different installations. The ice rink is estimated to cost \$130,000 and not environmentally sustainable. She said staff is focusing on different light installations and working with Jazz Holiday on potential outdoor performances on a CRA property that is smaller. The DDB election ballots are being mailed today and due by October 13, 2020. She said there were 190 applicants for the mural program; staff has been connecting the muralist with property owners throughout the city for potential mural opportunity. Ms. Thompson

presented a proposal for the Cleveland Street Median Lighting Project from the Moment Factory.

In response to a question, Ms. Thompson said the CRA would purchase the lighting, which will be considered an enhancement to the streetscaping. Staff is meeting with the building owner to discuss the projection. The tree canopies along Cleveland Street are too small for image projections. The lighting can be designed to have it project an image if no one is using the interactive component.

Staff was directed to provide a list of the cities where the lighting projections have been used.

Ms. Thompson requested direction if the Trustees wish to schedule their meetings at a different time. Staff has been trying to limit the worksession/CRA meetings to 3 hours but that is not always possible.

There was consensus to keep the CRA meetings at the same time.

One individual questioned who can vote in the Downtown Development Board election.

Ms. Thompson said individuals who own property in the downtown may vote; one designated vote per property is permitted. Individuals who work, live or own property in the downtown may sit on the Board.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

Attest

City Clerk

Chair
Community Redevelopment Agency

Call, Rosemarie

From: noreply@granicusideas.com
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New eComment for Community Redevelopment Agency on 2020-09-14 9:00 AM

Kathy Flaherty submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: Community Redevelopment Agency on 2020-09-14 9:00 AM

Item: 3. Citizens to be Heard Regarding Items Not on the Agenda

eComment: It is my understanding that the City is currently reviewing / updating the CRA's purchasing policies. This has not been done since 2005. I think that the Council should do annual reviews of purchasing and bidding policies.

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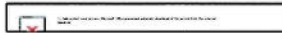
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New eComment for Community Redevelopment Agency on 2020-09-14 9:00 AM

Kathy Flaherty submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: Community Redevelopment Agency on 2020-09-14 9:00 AM

Item: 4.1 ID#20-8170 Review the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) draft strategy that outlines the CRA's work program from October 2020 through December 2022.

eComment: To remind all the CRA Board of Trustees gets its authority through Florida Statute Chapter 163. To quote from Florida Statute Chapter 163.335 a CRA district "is formed when there exist a state of slum which constitute a serious menace, injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of the state; that the existence of such areas contributes substantially and increasingly to the spread of disease and crime, constitutes an economic and social liability imposing onerous burdens which decrease the tax base and reduce tax revenues, substantially impairs or arrests sound growth ..." As a resident and business owner in the CRA district I can tell you that the 2018 "Strategy of creating and sharing positive stories about Downtown Clearwater" has not resulted in any benefit to the blighted conditions. Through out the CRA area there is open prostitution, blatant drug dealing, derelict homes / apartments, derelict lots, derelict / closed businesses and just general blight. As for investors, the Tampa Bay Times article dated July 25, 2020 titled "Clearwater asked 50 developers to pitch ideas for its waterfront. Two responded." sums up the lack of interest in the city. So as you can see, even though the CRA administrator may say that the 2018 strategy has been a success, it clearly is not. Please do not follow this strategy any longer. It is a waste of time an money and also costs tax revenue, home values etc.. I urge the council to think of another strategy . The powers of this Council are in Chapter 163.370. The Council has the power to initiate programs and projects that directly effect the blighted areas - all sorts of great, meaningful projects and programs. The Downtown core area has CRA funds through the Downtown Development Board so that area is always guaranteed to have guaranteed improvements other areas such as the Eastgate have been ignored per Mr. Horne since 1998.. Making up stories and ignoring areas in the CRA for 20

years has not helped reduce blight. Programs and projects that physically reduce the slum conditions do. The Council has a fiduciary duty as Trustees to look out for the entire CRA area and spend the funds wisely.

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New eComment for Community Redevelopment Agency on 2020-09-14 9:00 AM

Kathy Flaherty submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: Community Redevelopment Agency on 2020-09-14 9:00 AM

Item: 4.2 ID#20-8163 Approve the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Community Redevelopment Agency Preliminary Budget, adopt CRA Resolution 20-02 and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same.

eComment: I think that the budget should reflect the needs of the community. At the present time funding Community Engagement \$250,000 seems high. The CRA area is still blighted. Installing art before infrastructure is improved does not fight blight. The council needs to think of mediation of blight before advertising and art.

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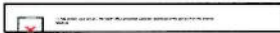
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New eComment for Community Redevelopment Agency on 2020-09-14 9:00 AM

Kathy Flaherty submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: Community Redevelopment Agency on 2020-09-14 9:00 AM

Item: 4.4 ID#20-8162 Approve an Interlocal Agreement between the Clearwater Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the City of Clearwater to provide CRA funding in Fiscal Year 2020-2021 in the amount of \$250,268.12 to underwrite the cost of additional Community Policing services by the Clearwater Police Department in the Downtown Gateway District, Prospect Lake District, and the Downtown Core District, encompassed by the CRA to address quality of life issues, drug dealing, prostitution, and homelessness and authorize the appropriate officials execute same.

eComment: As a resident and business owner in the Eastgate this program has helped to reduce the level of prostitution, drug dealing and crime. There are still prostitutes, pimps, Johns and drug dealers on the corners but their numbers have been reduced where I live. I have noticed that some have moved to other areas of the CRA so it is vital to keep this program. The lead officer is a blessing to this area.

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New eComment for Community Redevelopment Agency on 2020-09-14 9:00 AM

Kathy Flaherty submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: Community Redevelopment Agency on 2020-09-14 9:00 AM

Item: 4.5 ID#20-8159 Approve the Interlocal Agreement with the Downtown Development Board (DDB) to provide personnel, administrative and management services during Fiscal Year 2020-2021 in the amount of \$76,084.92 and refund the CRA tax increment fee of \$340,088.01 and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same.

eComment: CRA funds should be spent collectively throughout the CRA district. As the CRA administrator explained in a recent email exchange "The DDB has more flexibility than the CRA on types of activities it can fund and primarily focuses on special events although they are expanding support for businesses". This agreement does not help to alleviate blight which is the CRA's purpose. The DDB should not get any special treatment related to the funds they raise in that district. This basically allows for CRA funds to be spent in ways not allowed by law.

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