

CRA BOARD MEETING
December 6, 2021
7:00 PM

This CRA Board Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology. Some Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application to respect the social distancing guidelines.

CRA BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Shirley Groover Bryant, Presiding Officer (Not Present)
Harold Smith, Chair
Tambra Varnadore, Vice Chair
Tamara Cornwell
Sheldon Jones
Brian Williams

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Jeff Burton, CRA Director
Xaiver Colon, Assistant CRA Director
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant
Vanessa Cochran, Assistant City Clerk

STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

1. Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.
2. CRA BOARD AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion: Ms. Cornwell moved, Ms. Varnadore seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the December 6, 2021 CRA Board Agenda.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. MINUTES: October 4, 2021
- b. LEGAL BILLS
- c. RFP-RECOMMENDATION OF AWARD AUDIT SERVICES

Motion: Ms. Cornwell moved, Mr. Jones seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented by staff.

5. AMENDMENT TO HOTEL INCENTIVE CONTRACT (J. BURTON/M.BARNEBEY)

Mr. Burton provided a summary of the previous incentive agreement that is related to the 247 room convention center hotel. The Hotel financing was delayed due to Covid-19, but now the project is back online and moving forward. The City received a \$1.5M grant for construction of the 7th street road and roundabout at Haben Blvd. Because of the delay, the CRA will see a reduction in future tax increment financing (TIF) revenues of about \$800,000 due to the delay. However, the CRA will still receive millions of dollars over the life of the CRA due to the new hotel. Commissioner Varnadore asked about performance bonds. Attorney Barnebey said there is a performance bond on the road which this agreement addresses. There is no requirement for a performance bond on the hotel because if the hotel is not built, the CRA does not pay the incentive.

Motion: Ms. Cornwell moved, Mr. Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the Hotel Revised and Restated Improvement and Increment Agreement with 600 US 41, LLC and authorize the Chair or Vice Chair to execute the Revised Agreement.

6. MAIN STREET PROGRAM DESIGNATION (X. COLON)

Mr. Colon, Assistant CRA Director, explained this action is to accept the Main Street Designation the CRA applied for and received earlier in the year.

Motion: Ms. Cornwell moved, Ms. Varnadore seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to authorize the CRA Presiding Officer or CRA Chairman to sign the 3-Year agreement.

7. CONNOR PARK UPDATE (J. BURTON)

Mr. Burton, CRA Director, wanted to provide an update to Commission on the Connor Park project since the Board voted at the November meeting regarding Option A and Option C. Mr. Burton informed the Board the CRA is moving forward with Option C.

Attorney Barnebey indicated he spoke with Ms. Colman's new attorney and based on discussions with her attorney, she has no interest in conveying any property to the City. As a result of that decision, and the action that was taken by the Board at the November meeting, staff will be moving forward with option C.

8. CRA DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Burton received two inquiries regarding the sign at Riviera Dunes by the DeSoto Bridge that the City owns. One request was from Manatee Farm Bureau to use the sign for six months to promote the State farmer of the year award winner Jerry Daiken to recognize his achievement. They offered to pay for the use of the sign and cost of the image/skin. The other request was from some residents at Riviera Dunes to take the sign down. Mr. Barnebey said the billboard is grandfathered in and cannot be put back up if it is taken down due to the Florida Scenic Highway Act.

Ms. Cornwell is not interested in taking the sign down, but was very complimentary of the Daiken Family and their work in the community.

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Ms. Varnadore supports putting it up for the Daiken family, but we need to have a workshop before moving forward. It was decided that this item would be brought back to the January meeting for additional discussion.

9. CRA PRESIDING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

No comments

10. CRA BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Williams expressed his disappointment that Commission voted on Connor Park and the Trail and due to his potential conflict he was not able to vote. He would have preferred that Commission wait until a future meeting so he would have had the opportunity to speak on the matter. He stated the Commission has done this on similar matters in the past.

Ms. Cornwell stated Commission was not informed in advance that Mr. Williams would not be attending. If that had been asked or stated in advance, she would have honored that request for her perspective. It was not the intent to exclude him from the discussion.

Chair Smith agreed with the comments, and he agrees that had they known, they would have deferred action until a future meeting.

Ms. Varnadore also mentioned that another reason they moved forward is staff indicated the City missed a grant opportunity and needed to make some decisions. She questioned why Mr. Williams did not bring up these points when the item was discussed earlier in the agenda. She mentioned that they did not vote on the trail in total, and Mr. Burton confirmed that they approved only improvements on the Connor Park project not the entire trail. She suggested asking for reconsideration if that is his desire.

Mr. Jones stated the vote moved forward because of the grant and need for a timely decision. In addition, they gave two weeks for the Option A and C decision to be made. He also asked if further discussion could be had regarding scheduling of special meetings.

Mr. Williams wanted to make a motion to reconsider the action taken in November, but withdrew after he understood Option C was approved and does not go on Ms. Coleman's property as it uses City right of way.

Ms. Cornwell commented on the option A and C and why the Commission gave two options to consider. Based on the response from Ms. Colman, the City has decided to move forward with Option C.

Ms. Varnadore asked if the Board has approved the entire trail or just sections. Mr. Burton stated that the entire trail is in the CRA plan as was approved in 2013 and includes the properties that were needed for the trail. Mr. Burton will go back and verify.

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Mr. Williams asked about the former West Cost property that was given to the CRA. Mr. Burton confirmed the gazebo is still in the park improvements as no decision has been made by the Board to remove the structure from the plans. Mr. Burton is not in favor of benches in the park. Mr. Gause discussed the benches and it is about \$25,000 and the Board needs to decide if they should remain or be removed.

Ms. Cornwell suggested maybe removing benches from the budget and having a community program to dedicate benches.

Ms. Varnadore suggested bringing it back to a future agenda to make a decision on these items in January.

Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: JANUARY 3, 2022

JAMES R. FREEMAN
JAMES R. FREEMAN
CITY CLERK