

**CRA BOARD MEETING  
MAY 2, 2022  
7:00 P.M.**

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.

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:**

Shirley Groover Bryant, Presiding Officer  
Sheldon Jones, Chair  
Brian Williams, Vice Chair  
Tamara Cornwell  
Harold Smith  
Tambra Varnadore

**STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:**

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney  
Xavier Colon, Interim CRA Director  
Jim Freeman, City Clerk (Not Present)  
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director  
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police  
Cassi Bailey, Assistant City Clerk (Not Present)  
Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant

**STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:**

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 8:14 p.m.

1. CRA BOARD AGENDA APPROVAL

**MOTION:**

**Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Jones seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the May 2, 2022 CRA Board Agenda.**

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes: 04/18/2022
- b. Approval to start conceptual of MLK Play Area Site
- c. Purchase of Property: 336 10<sup>th</sup> Ave W

**MOTION:** Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Jones seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve item 4.a. on the Consent Agenda as presented by staff.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Jones moved, Commissioner Cornwell seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve item 4.b. on the Consent Agenda as presented by staff.

Commissioners discussed the location, asking price and ultimate value of purchasing the vacant 1/2-acre property at 336 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue West. Commissioner Jones felt the City already had a lot of property with no movement/ no plans. He feels we need to start helping people with housing.

Mr. Colon responded that "Slick's property" is being remediated. Affordable housing is incentivized. This particular property is part of the 2018 parking development plan. Plans have been in place for 15 years and they change every time the Board changes. He opined that this will be an essential piece of property that is being bid on by other developers.

Mayor opined the City and CRA are hoping to increase affordable and workforce housing but we need to get residential properties online.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Cornwell seconded, and the motion failed 2-3 to purchase the property at 336 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue West. Commissioner Jones, Smith and Varnadore voted nay.

Mr. Barnebey noted the proposed property is connected to the current parking lot we own and it would theoretically make our property more valuable, and we have a 45-day due diligence period and we are required to pay just value.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Varnadore moved, Commissioner Cornwell seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to submit the counteroffer contract with an extended due diligence to 90 days for appraisal to establish a reasonable price and authorize the CRA to order an appraisal.

#### 4. ALTERNATIVE RECREATION SITE

The majority of the Board wanted the CRA staff to consider other sites, including Sutton and Lamb parks which are City properties. Realtors may be able to help provide estimated values of City and CRA properties if they were for sale.

#### 5. CRA DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

CRA Advisory Board meeting Wednesday May 4, 2022. Mrs. Lynn Daniel is the new member, replacing Mrs. Barb Gaulien.

6. CRA PRESIDING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Mayor Bryant thanked Mr. Colon for inviting Sara Hand, CEO of Spark Growth to accept the proclamation recognizing the importance of economic development. The Mayor hopes we are able to work together with Ms. Hand in the future.

7. CRA BOARD MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Williams moved to reconsider the developer's proposals for the Riverside property, and Commissioner Cornwell seconded. He emphasized that the Commission needs to start working together in order to preserve our community. Mr. Barnebey clarified that this motion will only put it back to the RFP position before the vote on April 18, 2022. Commissioner Varnadore and Smith expressed concern about more traffic on Riverside.

Mr. Colon stated because Commission rejected the bids, the CRA will have to go back to square one and the process would take about 4 months. The property is still for sale but we are not taking offers. Mr. Colon said he would verify that there is a For Sale sign on the property.

Commissioner Williams spoke about roundabouts to ease the traffic. He suggested boat entry off 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue or maybe 10- 15 boat parking spaces could be in Estuary Park with a boat ramp where there is plenty of parking. He opined we could build up seven stories on Riverside.

Commissioner Cornwell stated both developers were willing to negotiate. She felt that if the City does not continue to grow, we will be forced to raise taxes. She stressed that the Commission must consider smart growth.

Mayor Bryant talked about revitalizing our community by rebuilding our urban core. Residents and walkability would bring businesses, which would increase vibrancy and bring more residents. She encouraged everyone to let the bridge connect us rather than separate us.

Mr. Barnebey repeated the Commission will have to consider the two outstanding bids before accepting new offers.

Commissioner Varnadore insisted that traffic is still the problem. She opined that site is not big enough for a huge apartment building. Commissioner Smith spoke about the importance of meeting with the developers and growing our tax base. Commissioner Williams stated that daily trips have not changed in about 15 years. We have to do this for the town.

**MOTION: Commissioner Williams moved to reconsider the developer's proposals for the Riverside property, and Commissioner Cornwell seconded, and the motion carried 4-0. Commissioner Varnadore had left the room.**

Both of the developers were willing to attend a workshop or town hall but the Commission would have to identify which contractor to bring back for negotiations. Commissioner Williams would rather hear from Hatfield. Commissioners Smith and Jones wanted to hear more from both contractors. Commission decided the item should be on the June 20<sup>th</sup> workshop agenda to get the town's opinion.

Mr. Barnebey clarified that the Commission wants both developers to attend the June 20, 2022 workshop to hear the concerns about their proposals.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the CRA Board meeting at 9:35 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: MAY 23, 2022

***JAMES R. FREEMAN***

JAMES R. FREEMAN

CITY CLERK