

**CRA BOARD
AUGUST 15, 2011**

CRA Board Members

Shirley Groover Bryant, Presiding Officer
Brian Williams, Chair
Mary Lancaster, Vice Chair
Tamara Cornwell
Tambra Varnadore
Alan Zirkelbach

Staff Present

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Jeff Burton, CRA Executive Director
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Allen Tusing, Public Works Director
Rick Wells, Chief of Police
Diane Ponder, Deputy Clerk-Administration

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Presiding Officer Bryant called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m.

1. CRA BOARD AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION: Mrs. Lancaster moved, Mr. Zirkelbach seconded and motion carried 5-0 to approve the August 15, 2011 CRA Board agenda.

2. CRA BOARD CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

A) Minutes: June 14, 2011 (Joint CRA/CRA Advisory Board), August 1, 2011

MOTION: Ms. Varnadore moved, Mrs. Lancaster seconded and motion carried 5-0 to approve the August 15, 2011 CRA Consent Agenda.

3. 5th STREET STREETScape

Mr. Burton informed the Board that Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) has issued the acceptance agreement for the \$585,000 matching grant, which is in the hands of the attorney for review. The project will encompass the area of 5th Street between 8th Ave. and 10th Ave. The CRA will fund close to \$1million of the project. The matching portion of the grant will fund the stormwater component of the streetscape project. The project will include the CBI parking lot and the demolition of the CBI building.

Mr. Burton stated the topic was being brought forward as informational only to ensure the Board is aware of the proposal for the CBI building and lot, and to allow for public comment. He confirmed that the grant could be in jeopardy by not taking action at this meeting, because the funds come available October 1st. Delaying the approval of this project could jeopardize future SWFWMD grant applications.

Mr. Burton confirmed that at this point the streetscape is still conceptual. Once the final design is completed, it will be provided to the Board. Board input on the amenities of the project can occur during the process.

The conceptual plan complies with the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Development Guidelines. The CBI building does not conform to either document, thus the plan to demolish the structure. Mr. Burton discussed the parking, stormwater treatment, and possible private sector building construction on the Olympia Theatre parking lot that will be created during this project.

A letter from Jane Hunter commenting on the streetscape project and the planned demolition of the CBI building was read into the record.

Chris Humphrey commented on the fact that he has asked to purchase the CBI building for three years, stating his opinion the building can be used.

Mr. Burton rebutted some of the items mention in Ms. Hunter's letter, explaining:

1. The public lot at City Hall, not the City Hall parking lot, was suggested for a streetscape on 8th Ave. The CRA Advisory Board did not approve the proposed project.
2. The proposed area of the 5th Street streetscape was chosen because of complaints received from the then Public Works Director of Operations, Mr. Kinn.
3. The project will serve as a pilot program for SWFWMD [stormwater treatment].
4. The project was created according to City documents that are currently in place governing development in the downtown commercial core.
5. The project will serve as a plan to create a pedestrian-friendly downtown.

Discussion ensued on the response to RFP issued for the CBI building. The plan for the building would have seen the outer metal shell removed and a total new façade and roof skin installed, together with bringing the building to code. Mr. Burton stated that being so new to his position, he had not had the chance to read all the documents governing development that were in place; i.e; the Downtown Development Guidelines. Once it was determined that document was enforceable by law, the building did not fit; therefore, the RFP would not have been appropriate.

Attorney Barnebey confirmed that the CRA Board has received information on this topic as far back as September, 2010. He and Mr. Burton wanted to make sure it is understood that during this project the CBI building will be demolished.

4. CRA DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

A conceptual plan for the gateways will soon be coming forward. A conceptual plan for the Green Bridge entrance will be made by local art students that will cost approximately \$3,000. He will also work with agriculture students for the median plantings. He was cautioned to work closely with the students to ensure the proper theme and plantings are considered in the plans.

5. PRESIDING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Complimented Mr. Burton and his staff, and Mr. Tusing and the Building Official, when holding meetings with potential businesses coming into town. So far, they have facilitated two new businesses and are working on the third.

6. CRA BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Cornwell inquired if Mr. Burton has met with the eye doctor. Mr. Burton will make another contact.

She passed on information about Haines City and other cities that have centers she would be interested in field tripping to see. One is a swimming pool center.

Attorney Barnebey commented on considering the SWFWMD Grant contract, and the fact the next CRA and Commission meeting is not scheduled until September 12, 2011. He stated the contract is generally consistent with their normal provisions and it could be approved contingent upon attorney and the chair (presiding officer) approval.

MOTION: Mr. Williams moved, Mr. Zirkelbach seconded and motion carried 5-0 to approve, and authorize execution by the Mayor, the grant agreement contract with Southwest Florida Water Management District, subject to Chair and City Attorney approval.

Attorney Barnebey recommended that the agreement also be approved by Commission.

Mr. Burton stated that the CRA Advisory Board will hold a special meeting August 25, 2011 to discuss the CRA budget.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Minutes approved: October 24, 2011

James R. Freeman

James R. Freeman
City Clerk