

SPECIAL CRA BOARD MEETING
APRIL 18, 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)
Cheryl Miller, Finance Director
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Cassi Bailey, Assistant City Clerk
Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant

STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

1. Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 8:14 P.M.

2. CRA BOARD AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION:

Varnadore moved, Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the April 18, 2022, Special CRA Board Agenda.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Special CRA Board Meeting

April 18, 2022

Page 2 of 4

4. CONSENT AGENDA
 - a. Minutes: 03/07/2022, 04/04/2022
 - b. Growers Lease Renewal

MOTION: Williams moved, Cornwell seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the April 18, 2022, Consent Agenda as presented by staff.

5. RIVERSIDE PROPERTY SALE (X. COLON)

Xavier Colon, Interim CRA Director, gave a background on the Riverside Property Sale. He recapped the workshop meeting where the presenters assured the Commission that they would include boat parking at the site. The developers also clarified that they would build the parking lot and turn it back over to the City.

Public Comments:

Phill Baker commented on his concerns with the boat trailer parking set-up. He also spoke on the terrible traffic, and the impact this development would have. He wants the City to buy back this property from the CRA.

Julie Brown echoed the same sentiments regarding the traffic. She also expressed that these developments did not seem to be supporting families.

Brian Bustle wants the Commission to listen to the opinions of the people of Palmetto.

Jim Eliason stated that on May 7th, the Jerry Hill Fishing tournament will take place. He has concerns that with this development, these events will not be possible.

Rod Griffon believes the development will be a detriment to the river.

Rick Gullett conveyed that no one is in favor of this property being developed.

Brad Johnson agrees with everyone who spoke before him.

Elaine Johnson expressed her opinion on this project.

Lynn Meier stated that the waterfront should be the property of the City. She does not think there should be any more housing added to the area until the sewage issues have been resolved. She wants the people of the City of Palmetto to vote on this matter.

Gary Plum commented that we are a boating community. He said that this boat ramp makes up 40% of the County's parking spaces at boat ramps.

Allen Tusing sympathizes with the boaters but said the intent of the land was not to be used for parking. It was purchased for redevelopment. He said 14 years ago the Commission voted to increase density in that area for development.

Special CRA Board Meeting

April 18, 2022

Page 3 of 4

Ellen Wile agrees with many of the boaters regarding the ramp. She also agrees with Mr. Tusing. She stated that there are not any perfect answers.

Board Comments:

Mr. Colon spoke on the subject. He reminded the Board that the decision is whether they are going to continue negotiations with one of the developers. He also stated that they bought the land to remediate it and increase their tax increment to be able to do more projects for the City.

Mr. Smith questioned why the CRA still owes \$900,000 on the property. Mr. Colon responded that they had to do remediation on the property.

Additional Public Comments:

Jimmy Lake questioned why the CRA is spending money when they still owe money.

Betty Rhoades questioned the Mayor on the cost of the Sea Horse. She wants the Board to listen to the people.

Board Comments:

Mr. Williams stated that he has always wanted an additional 50 spaces at the boat ramp. He also stated that the Board has a fiduciary responsibility to take care of the bills in the City. He asserted that he does not like the plans that have been proposed but they do have a responsibility to redevelop the land. He expressed that this is a hard decision.

Ms. Varnadore would like to look at other parcels for the proposed plans. She does not want either of these plans on the Riverside property. She would like to have other options to choose from. Ms. Varnadore also stated that this decision is not about the boaters. She is concerned with the amount of people it will bring to the area and the traffic it will cause.

Mr. Smith agrees that he does not know what they should do with the Riverside property. He doesn't agree with anyone stating that boaters from outside the City shouldn't come to the boat ramp. He said they should be encouraging people to come to our City.

Mayor Bryant stated that this is a really good opportunity to have developers that are willing to work with the City in order to create a compromise with the boaters. This is not an easy decision.

Ms. Cornwell declared she would go with the Hatfield Developers because they presented with visuals. Commissioner Jones agreed. Commissioners Varnadore, Williams, and Smith did not want either developer.

Mr. Colon clarified that there were originally four developers. Two of which were assisted living developers, which the Commission took off the table. He also reiterated that both developers were willing to work with the Commission and the community.

Mr. Williams stated that he understands that there needs to be development there. But he wants there to be more bids and have other options for redevelopment.

Special CRA Board Meeting

April 18, 2022

Page 4 of 4

Sheldon Jones left the chambers at 9:18pm, just prior to the vote.

MOTION: Ms. Varnadore moved to reject all offers and go out for new proposals, Williams seconded, and the motion carried 3-1. Cornwell voted nay. Jones was not present at the time of the vote.

At 9:21 the meeting was adjourned for a 5-minute recess.

Chair Jones reconvened the CRA meeting at 9:31pm.

Mayor Bryant and Mr. Williams were absent.

Mr. Williams entered at 9:32pm.

Director Comments:

Mr. Colon spoke and gave updates on future CRA events.

Chairman Comments:

Chair Jones appreciated the work that has been done to try to develop this land. He wants there to be more collaborative work with the Board and future developers.

Board Comments:

Mr. Smith stated that he would like to know all developers that are interested in the site in the future.

Mayor Bryant re-joined the meeting at 9:39 P.M.

Mr. Williams would like to sit down and discuss with the Board what they would like to see developed on the Riverside property.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 9:42 P.M.

MINUTES APPROVED: MAY 2, 2022

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK