

**CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING**

**October 5, 2020**

**4:30 p.m.**

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order. Some Elected Officials and 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, Mayor

Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:**

Tambra Varnadore, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 2 (Entered the meeting at 4:37 p.m.)

Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2

Jonathan Davis, Commissioner-at-Large 1

Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3 (Entered the meeting at 4:37 p.m.)

**STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:**

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney

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

Jim Freeman, City Clerk

Mayor Bryant opened the meeting at 4:31 p.m.

**Mayor Bryant switched items 2 and 1 of the Agenda.**

**1. CRA PROPERTY 911 5TH STREET WEST LEASE DISCUSSION**

Jeff Burton, CRA Director, discussed the current lease and maintenance for the 911 5<sup>th</sup> Street West property. He explained that the Growers Hardware's property was leased for a location to build the seahorse, and the lease has expired. The tenant, next to Growers Hardware, wants to tent their building for termites. Mr. Burton commented that these buildings are adjoining to one another, so one building cannot be tented without tenting the others. He expressed that his goal is to demolish the structure along with the other steel building next to it. Also, the other buildings are under emergency demolition, and he is waiting for the contractors to return their contracts, and these buildings will come down first. Mr. Burton added that the Growers Hardware property can continue to be leased, but he does not want to pay the tenting. He disclosed that the current tenants were notified of the situation and haven't spoken to him about their intentions, but he is aware that they want to pay their tent portions and extend their leases. He specified that the City Attorney needs to review the parties' existing contracts for modifications and return it to the Board for a decision. Mr. Burton also informed the Board that the City Attorney is preparing a lease for storage, in the small stand-alone building on the property, for a business waiting to purchase land that the City has for sale. He expressed that this lease too will be brought to the Board for a decision at the next CRA Meeting, December 7, 2020.

Mayor Bryant inquired if the parties have received prices on the tenting, and an agreement on what they want to do. Mr. Burton responded yes, and some parties are here to speak to the Board.

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### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Angelina Tello, a Blake High School student and an apprentice at Berman Studio, stated that it was a privilege to assist with the preparation of the seahorse. Miss Tello stipulated that she wants to work on future projects that benefit the City of Palmetto.

Ron Berman, Berman Studio, thanked Angelina Tello for her comments, and summarized his art experiences, and expressed his wishes to have his lease extended.

Dominic Leclizio reported that the current parties have 3 quotes for the tent service, and Growers Hardware's portion is \$2,700 dollars. He assured that Palmetto Plumbing and the Palmetto Art Center have their tent payment portions and are committed. He expressed that whatever decision the Board reaches for Growers Hardware, the parties will support it.

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney, inquired how long the Berman Studio lease should continue. Mr. Burton, CRA Director, responded that depending on the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), the building could stay for mid-term, which is a 5 years span, and this will be discussed in the negotiations. Attorney Barnebey advised that the leases must be implemented under Florida Statute Chapter 163 and done quickly.

Commissioner Cornwell expressed that the meeting was being conducted as a Commission Meeting instead of a Workshop and requested clarification. Mayor Bryant responded that this is solely for information, and we are not taking a vote.

Commissioner Williams remarked that he is in favor of having a business at the location instead of a parking lot. However, he stated that firewalls were connected between the buildings, and he is not aware of anything but metal linking the Growers Hardware building.

Mr. Burton, CRA Director, replied that the CRA had the Growers Hardware property inspected, and it is a steel building with some minor pieces of wood between the walls. Mr. Burton added that one building was built in the 1950's and the other built later, so he don't think a firewall was built between them.

Mayor Bryant requested that Mr. Burton provide a copy of the CRA inspection report to the Board, so it may be reviewed.

Commissioner Varnadore stated that the lease expired August 31, 2020 and asked if it is being leased month to month, or if an extension was completed to keep it current. Mr. Burton replied that it is leased month to month. Commissioner Varnadore declared that she is in support of Mr. Berman remaining in the building, but prefer a 2 or 3 years lease with a 1 year renewal option instead of a 5 years lease. Mr. Burton stated that he will work with the City Attorney on the issue.

Mayor Bryant asked if any other Commissioners have any comments.

Commissioner Smith asked Mr. Burton what his plans are for the 911 5<sup>th</sup> Street West building. Mr. Burton summarized his plans that were submitted to the Board before Covid-19. Commissioner Smith requested the square footage of the building, and Mr. Burton responded that he will collect it and provide it to the Board.

Mayor Bryant requested that Mr. Burton provide Commissioner Smith with his request and move to complete the negotiations with Attorney Barnebey for the CRA and Commission's approval.

2. RIVERSIDE PROPERTY REDEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION

Before Jeff Burton, CRA Director, introduced Mr. Randy Iboni, Realtor, he commented that Mr. Iboni wants to hear the Board's ideas on what the City seeks to achieve on the Riverside Property, and to speak about marketing analyses. Mr. Burton informed the Board that Mr. Iboni had access to the documents that were displayed on the Team's site, and his participation is essential for this redevelopment.

Mr. Iboni specified that he was asked to provide marketing analyses and could create the studies for the Board, even though, the real estate is disarranged due to Covid-19. He added that gatherings, confined businesses, entertainments, restaurants, and hotels will change. And, we don't know if some of these businesses will return until there is a vaccine or some way of controlling the pandemic. He declared that the conviction is that the single family residential rentals will become the new big industry. He explained that the businesses are looking for people to work from home and come to the office maybe 3 times a week. As a result, the developers will have to come up with something to accommodate the transformation. For example, renters may request balconies for open space, so they won't be confined in the buildings. The question is will the single residential rental market continue to go into the free standing housings, or the high rise multi-developments. Mr. Iboni answered that he perceives both will be viable alternatives.

Mr. Iboni expressed that Palmetto's downtown boundaries have to be defined, and there has to be a creative visual of where the City is progressing. Specifically, he stated that do we want Palmetto to be a small community and remain a small community. He asserted that the City is in a great location where it is close to the Manatee beaches, a satellite community to St. Petersburg, and a short commute to Sarasota. As a result, these are some of the factors that can be developed upon. Mr. Iboni declared that the Riverside Property is the gateway that will attract people to the area, or guide them to the downtown area. He instructed the Board to offer guidance on what they want to achieve.

Mayor Bryant invited the Commissioners to give their ideas on Riverside property redevelopment.

Commissioner Varnadore stated that she sees Palmetto as a bedroom community quiet and small. She added that she would rather see something new and out of the box than residential high rise buildings. She communicated that she suggested in a past meeting to put this project on hold because of Covid. She asserted that this is a one-time opportunity, and she wants to get it right.

Commissioner Cornwell expressed that she agrees with some aspects of Commissioner Varnadore's remarks. She commented that when one enters the City there should be an interest and a draw, and the building designs should incorporate where the City is evolving. Commissioner Cornwell indicated that she wants Palmetto to be a place where people begin their professional careers and want to raise their families.

Commissioner Davis agreed with both Commissioners Varnadore and Cornwell and replied that we utilize what is best for the down town area.

Commissioner Smith questioned why the two realtors that spoke during a past meeting about the Riverside property were not present. Mr. Burton, CRA Director, replied that the realtors wanted to wait until Mr. Iboni spoke to the Board, and the Board has an idea of what they want to achieve.

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Commissioner Smith acknowledged that it would be good to have hotels, restaurants, and residential dwellings, but the developers must come in and speak to the Board about what they can build. Then, the Board could make a decision.

Commissioner Williams stated that the City needs to concentrate on businesses, and ones that are lacking. He added that the CRA Incentive Program helps draw people, and if we promote the businesses more, it will attract different patrons to the community.

Mayor Bryant stated that Palmetto needs balance because we want that small town atmosphere, but by necessity, it will have to grow within certain constraints. She reminded the Board that the Complete Street Program is underway, and the program would promote anything on that corner because it proceeds down the entire 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mayor Bryant questioned if housing will be a conflict with the commercial section.

Mr. Iboni, Realtor, stated that you will have to generate more people with wealth because over 30% live here in the winter and return home for the summer. He stated that he will review the demographic and the demands and bring it back to the next Workshop, November 16th.

Mayor Bryant congratulated Mr. Iboni on his presentation and adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: NOVEMBER 16, 2020

*JAMES R. FREEMAN*

JAMES R. FREEMAN

CITY CLERK