

# Lealman Community Redevelopment Area Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

### August 22, 2017 ~ 6:00 PM

The meeting was held on Tuesday, August 22, 2017 in the Crown Buick /GMC Dealership Training Room, 5237 – 34<sup>th</sup> Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33714.

#### 1. Call to Order (Steve Cleveland, Chair)

Chairman Cleveland called the meeting to order at 6:05pm

#### 2. Roll Call

**Members:** Steve Cleveland (Chair); Cheryl DiCicco; Dwayne Hawkins; James Roberto; Gary Grooms; Sean Ingber; and Enoch Nicholson

**Absent Members:** Danielle Barber and Brian Ellis

**County Staff:** Chris Young, Renea Vincent, Marcel Mosheni, Ryan Brinson & Marcella Faucette

**Public:** Kayla Petrak; Vilem Petrak; Eric Schleich; Russell Scott; Paul J. Grecia

#### 3. Approval of Minutes – (July 25, 2017)

***Upon motion by Mr. Gary Grooms, seconded by Mr. Enoch Nicholson, the minutes of the meeting of July 25, 2017 were unanimously approved.***

Mr. Young informed the attendees that he was planning to invite other County Departments to the LCRAAC meetings when the agenda permits, to speak about something of interest to the LCRA Community. He then introduced Planning Director, Renea Vincent.

Ms. Vincent in turn gave a synopsis of her role as Planning Director as it relates to the LCRA and asked her staff (Mr. Young, Mr. Mosheni, Mr. Brinson and Ms. Faucette) to introduce themselves and their roles as well. The Committee and the visitors were given the opportunity to introduce themselves and to express their interest in the LCRA Community.

#### 4. Presentation (Penny-4-Pinellas)

Ms. Vincent provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Penny-4-Pinellas referendum to be voted on November 7th, she explained the Penny-4-Pinellas purpose, its history and pointed out the highlights and accomplishments from previous years as well as future plans for the Penny. Handouts were provided to supplement the presentation. She gave the attendees the opportunity to ask questions and she and/or her staff responded. Ms. Vincent explained that there were at least two projects in the Penny that would affect the LCRA and stated that she would have the specifics before the next meeting.

She encouraged everyone to submit ideas to Mr. Young for projects in the LCRA and stated that she'd look into ways for ideas to also be submitted online.

#### 5. Old Business

- CRA program door hanger

Mr. Young stated that the Communications Department is very busy and wasn't able to make the door hanger; however, Chris stated that Planning would make a static hanger, give it to Communications and they would put into a template and print it out on eight and a half by 11 sheets for handouts that could be passed out or emailed. Mr. Young stated that he hopes to have a copy by the next meeting.

The visitors from East Lealman were interested in having Mr. Young provide some handout and

to come to their Community Group Meeting that meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Faith Assembly Church 3900 -28<sup>th</sup> Street North at 7:00pm. Mr. Young is planning to attend.

- Little library update

Mr. Young informed the Committee that there are fifteen (15) tiny library stands. Several schools had been contacted regarding the project. Five –six schools have responded and are interested in having one – three. An auto body shop is donating some time into cleaning up the newspaper stands and having them primed and painted to get them ready for distribution. Mr. Brinson added that donation requests from big box stores had been made (Wal-Mart, Lowe's, Sherman Williams {donated primer}) and that approximately \$1,200 - \$1,500 had been received. Ms. DiCicco stated that she has received six additional boxes of books. Mr. Young anticipated delivery during the first few weeks of September.

- Property liens discussion (CRA example)

Mr. Young stated that at the last meeting the group briefly discussed code enforcement issues and properties sitting vacant within the LCRA. Many are saddled with huge liens. The Committee was interested in the process for taking possession of such properties. Mr. Young stated that traditionally the County has not pursued possessing houses and that this is a relatively new interest with the development of the LCRA. He asserted that there are a couple of ways that the County is trying to move forward in this area. One way is if the property owner wants to donate the property or will the property to the County. Ms. Vincent supported Mr. Young's statements by reiterating that historically the County has not been aggressive about foreclosing on properties that have colossal amounts of code enforcement liens. She added that there are different types of code enforcement liens: those that can't be negotiated that have to be paid; and, those that once the property is in compliance, the owner can go back and request a reduction in fines. Those in the second category are the properties that the County is most interested in working with. There is interest also in banks that have properties in foreclosure, that are not homesteaded and with mammoth fines that they want to offload. If the County can get those type of properties in compliance, the fines could probably be eliminated and be more viable for rehab and resale. Ms. Vincent continued that at some point, Planning would have to have a policy discussion with BCC to see if they are supportive of that venture, as this is new territory for such undertakings. Some type of methodology would need to be developed as well as a path forward. She additionally stated that Planning would be working with Code Enforcement and the County Attorney's office to see how to move forward. Lealman would be treated as a pilot area.

Mr. Brinson added that some of the municipalities (i.e. Dunedin, Pinellas Park, St. Petersburg) each having their own programs, have been successful. The attendees then discussed a variety of problem properties in the CRA.

## 6. New Business

- Residential Improvement Program Year 1 Alternative Approach (A Better Block improvement Initiative)

Mr. Young stated that going back to the Residential and application process that there is a time crunch for the money to be spent. As a result, he asked if the Committee their thoughts in doing something similar to the "Better Block Initiative". The goal would be to take a group of homesteaded houses on one application and hire a contractor through the County that would do light work at a set price (i.e. mailbox repair, fence repair, exterior painting etc.) at each of the houses. The applicant would be able to pick what they wanted done to the house and County staff would deal with the contractor. The program would be

set up as a 50/50 split. He explained further that \$72,000 was available in Residential Improvements and that approximately \$36,000 would be used for the original application process that anyone could apply for and the other \$36,000 would be used for a group housing project in order to cover more projects and to help more people under one application without changing the application process. It would allow for a string of impact on an area.

In response to questions from the Committee and to address their concerns, Mr. Young further explained that CRA Redevelopment staff (Rachel Booth, Christopher Young and Ryan Brinson) would oversee the contractor, distribute the money and ensure quality. Mr. Young asserted that the plan was to commence at the beginning of September. One of the initial areas that staff would try this approach with is off of 55<sup>th</sup> North behind the park. The County has been in talks with a developer who's interested in doing something in that area. The plan is to see if the developer could talk to the neighbors, to push out the program so that hopefully at least 3-4 houses on that block would be beautified to test drive the program and also be a highly visible product for the community.

The property must be homesteaded residential property; the resident must own the property, the property should not have any major issues, the property must be lien free in order to qualify for participation in the program. True safety hazard issues would be open for discussion.

- Business outreach & coordination Discussion /Suggestions

Mr. Marcel Mosheni stated that he has been meeting with local business owners within the LCRA, primarily along 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue North in attempts to form a Business Association to discuss issues within Lealman and ultimately serve as the voice of businesses in the area. He stated that there is little participation. Several business owners within the Joe's Creek Industrial complex have expressed concerns about motorists using shortcuts and speeding through the complex. Several business owners also expressed concerns about the questionable activities on 28<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mr. Nicholson stated that although a nuisance, the extra traffic can be advantageous to getting more people to patronize the businesses and inquired about assisting the businesses in getting new signs etc. to be more attractive.

Ms. Vincent stated that it is important to get a core group of business owners who want to engage to discuss such things. She welcomed business outreach suggestions on how to focus and where to go to get to a critical mass beyond 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue, as Planning has limited resources for getting out to meet people.

Mr. Young stated that there are 3 grant applications going through the finalized phase at this time that will be ready to roll out in September (Residential, Business Facade Improvements and Business Expansion)

Mr. Brinson added that a challenge is getting the allotted money spent before the end of the fiscal year and that maybe making facade improvements or landscaping to a strip plaza would make the most impact. He further stated that it is important to change the character of a blighted area. Making an area more pedestrian-friendly makes a huge impact. He stated that there is a common theme that businesses are affected by: parking issues, code enforcement violations, unpermitted uses, retention – huge storm water fees.

Suggestions were made from the group regarding uniformity in the LCRA specifically on 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 49<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Streets. Ms. Vincent informed the group of the 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue complete streets project starting with in next few months which would lay the groundwork as to how do

we invest in the area and implement changes/improvements (i.e. sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, streetscaping, landscaping, public-private interface with facades etc.) that Planning would like to see continued on 49<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Young stated that regarding previous conversations on business outreach, he wanted to know the Committee's thoughts on possibly having a one group meeting i.e. CRA meeting then rolling into a separate Business Association Meeting for those business owners that come that want to stay and hear about what's going on. Day and time are flexible for Planning staff.

Mr. Nicholson suggested moving the meeting to different places within the LCRA specifically into industrial pockets. Ms. Vincent asked if he was suggesting that businesses host the meetings? He responded affirmatively.

Mr. Grooms stated that he didn't think that many business people would want to attend the LCRA portion of the meeting. The main objective for business people is "what's in it for me?" He said that the most important concern for business owners is: How to find good people!

Ms. Vincent stated that from her experience, the best time for business meetings were first thing in the morning with donuts and coffee. She continued that it would probably be best to ask the local business owners directly, a) What is the best time for you to attend a business meeting; b) Where should we have it; c) What time of day?

Mr. Nicholson suggested the development of some type of brochure, questionnaire etc. for the local business owners. Mr. Young added that Planning has a brochure which includes basic economic information (basic revenue, income, businesses of the area etc.)

## 6. Comments

Mr. Young also informed the Committee of what's going on in the area:

- 42<sup>nd</sup> Street – sidewalk improvements from 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue by the school Engineers have drawn up the plans and anticipate completion within a year once funding is approved.
- Community Development Housing Project at the intersection of 38<sup>th</sup> Street and 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Complete Streets Project along 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to 49<sup>th</sup> Street (*complete streets projects look at safety in terms of high pedestrian count, walkability, street lights, speed control, parking issues etc.*)
- Existing recreational improvements
- Joes Creek Parkway Alignment Study – approved by Forward Pinellas and tapped for Penny money. It will be going before the Kenneth City Council on September 6, 2017 at 6:00p.m.
- A craft brewery is coming to the LCRA off of Haines Road – near the NAPA /CrossFit
- 5 permits were pulled for residential development
- Mr. Young will have office space at Lealman Heights, one day a week, possibly Thursdays from 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. to 5p.m.

## 7. Next Meeting Date and Items for Next Agenda (Tentative)

- Tuesday September 26, 2017

## 8. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Sean Ingber made the motion to adjourn which was seconded by Ms. Cheryl DiCicco. The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.