

**Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)  
Meeting Minutes January 09, 2024  
(APPROVED)**

1/9/2024 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

**Members Present:** Chair Robin Gibson, Mayor Jack Hilligoss, Keith Thompson, Danny Krueger, Daniel Williams

**Members Absent:** Keith Thompson

**Staff Members Present:** James Slaton, Executive Director; Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk; Albert C Galloway, Jr., City Attorney

Chair Robin Gibson called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m.

2. COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

3. Minutes - December 12, 2023

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the minutes of December 12, 2023. Commissioner Krueger seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

All: "YES"

Motion passed 4-0.

4. Friedlander Parking Lot Purchase

[Begin Agenda Memo]

**SYNOPSIS:** Staff is requesting CRA Board approval to purchase the Friedlander parking lot at the corner of Park Avenue East and 1st street North.

**RECOMMENDATION** It is recommended that the CRA Board take the following actions:

1. Approve the purchase agreement.
2. Authorize the Executive Director to sign the agreement.

**BACKGROUND** A Sale and Purchase Agreement has been drafted for the Friedlander Parking Lot at the corner of Park Avenue East and 1st Street North (Parcel ID: 27-30-01-883000-027110). The proposed agreement has been prepared and reviewed by City Attorney, Chuck Galloway. In summary, the Agreement includes the following:

- The price is \$200,000.00
- No contract deposit

- Buyer pays all closing costs

- The due diligence period is 30 days

- Buyer's obligations are conditioned on:

- a. Appraisal at an appraised value equal to or greater than \$200,000

- b. Approval by the Buyer's board

- These conditions expire 45 days after the Effective Date. • Closing Date is 75 days after the Effective Date. Purchase of the property is contingent upon appraisal at an appraised value equal to or greater than \$200,000. An appraisal has been ordered with Cliggitt Valuation in the amount of \$2,200, which should be completed within the next 3 weeks.

**OTHER OPTIONS** Do not approve purchase of Friedlander Parking Lot.

**FISCAL IMPACT** The total fiscal impact for this project is \$200,000 for the purchase.

[End Agenda Memo]

Deena Drumgo, Assistant City Manager, and James Slaton, Executive Director reviewed this item. Mr. Slaton said he would like to improve the site.

Chair Robin Gibson confirmed that some of the improvements are in the Park Avenue Contract. Mr. Slaton said they were. Mr. Gibson said getting control of the property is important.

Commissioner Krueger made a motion to approve the purchase. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion.

by roll call vote:

Commissioner Krueger "YES"

Commissioner Williams "YES"

Mayor Hilligoss "YES"

Chair Gibson "YES"

Motion passed 4-0.

5. Payment Issuance To Ameliorate CDBG Applicant's Home Repairs

[Begin Agenda Memo]

**SYNOPSIS:** Staff is requesting CRA Board approval to issue payment to a CDBG recipient that is dissatisfied with the quality of work received through the CDBG Program.

**RECOMMENDATION** It is recommended that the CRA Board take the following actions:

1. Approve the issuance of \$11,346.69 to the homeowner of 227 D Street (Brenda Meeks).

2. Authorize the Executive Director of the CRA to execute a release agreement with the applicant upon payment issuance.

**BACKGROUND** In 2019, the City of Lake Wales was awarded \$750,000 through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The grant is to be used specifically for housing rehabilitation in the Northwest neighborhood. Due to the dissatisfaction of the original contractor's quality of work and a second contractor's quality of work, the property owner obtained quotes through other vendors for HVAC repairs, drywall repairs, and a granite counter top, which are as follows:

HVAC (Hinds Heating & Cooling, Inc.) \$3,250.00

Granite Countertop (Lowe's) \$5,496.69

Drywall (W. Hood)

\$2,600.00 Total: \$11,346.69

Staff recommends a total of \$11,346.69 be paid to the owner of 227 D Street to complete the final necessary repairs. The property owner would be required to sign a release agreement prior to payment issuance.

**OTHER OPTIONS** Do not approve the payment issuance to the CDBG recipient and obtain a third contractor to complete repairs.

**FISCAL IMPACT** The total fiscal impact for this project is \$11,346.69 from the General Fund.

[End Agenda Memo]

Deena Drumgo, Assistant City Manager, reviewed this item.

Commissioner Williams asked about paying the vendor directly. Ms. Drumgo said that we tried twice but the homeowner was not satisfied. Mr. Slaton said we can get a 3rd contractor out there.

Commissioner Krueger asked about our experience with the first 2 contractors. Ms. Drumgo said we have not had good success with the first but we have been pleased with the second, Keystone. Mr. Slaton said we have had 2 of these. We may not be able to satisfy the homeowner.

Commissioner Williams suggested paying the vendor directly. Chair Gibson said this could be a requirement. Mr. Slaton said we would need a control mechanism to prevent more expensive materials. Chair Gibson asked if this would set a precedent.

Mr. Slaton said for future projects we may modify the scope to not do things like bathrooms.

Darrell Starling, CRA consultant, reviewed this project. He recommend cutting her a check to end the relationship. Mr. Slaton said he doesn't want to continue to work on this project but doesn't want to leave a house incomplete.

Mayor Hilligoss said the staff recommended paying the homeowner. Mr. Slaton confirmed this but we can pay the contractor with a stipulation of a specific dollar amount. This was discussed.

Mayor Hilligoss made a motion to approve the payment to the contractor. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

Mayor Hilligoss "YES"

Commissioner Williams "YES"

Commissioner Krueger "YES"

Chair Gibson "YES"

Motion passed 4-0.

6. Contract Renewal With Lake Wales Main Street

[Begin Agenda Memo]

**SYNOPSIS** To support the continuing revitalization of Downtown Lake Wales, the Community Redevelopment Agency ("CRA") will renew a contract with Main Street Lake Wales, Inc. to provide staff support and funding for promotion for one year.

**RECOMMENDATION** Staff recommends:

1. That the CRA Board approve the proposed one-year contract renewal to support the work of Main Street Lake Wales. 2. That the CRA Board authorize the Executive Director to sign the contract.

**BACKGROUND** In 2020 the CRA approved a three-year contract with Main Street to provide funding for staff support and promotion. This contract expired in January of 2023 and was renewed for one additional twelve-month period. Staff recommendation is to renew the contract for an additional twelve-month period, ending in January, 2025. The attached contract will continue the same funding support for one more year.

**OTHER OPTIONS** The CRA could not provide funding for Lake Wales Main Street

**FISCAL IMPACT** The current fiscal year CRA budget contains a One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollar (\$150,000.00) appropriation for the purpose of funding the staff position and providing the matching funds to Lake Wales Main Street.

[End Agenda Memo]

James Slaton, Executive Director, reviewed this item.

Ronni Wood, Main Street Director, shared about her passion for downtown and reviewed some of what she has done since taking the position. She would like to continue until the streetscape is finished. She reported that on January 18th the rest of Park Avenue will be closed. She distributed a publication to provide updates on the downtown project. They will aggressively market downtown so that businesses will thrive during the construction.

Mr. Slaton said that Ms. Wood works hard and does a good job.

Chair Gibson said the partnership between the City, CRA and Main Street has been a success.

Commissioner Williams commended Ms. Wood's zeal and passion.

Commissioner Krueger made a motion to approve the Contract. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

Commissioner Krueger "YES"

Commissioner Williams "YES"

Mayor Hilligoss "YES"

Chair Gibson "YES"

Motion passed 4-0.

## 7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

James Slaton, Executive Director, confirmed that Park Avenue from 1st Street to Scenic will be closed on the 18th.

Mr. Slaton introduced Eric Marshall, Communications and Engagement Director, to report on recent filming downtown. Mr. Marshall reported on the filming of the short film Myra's Last Hope.

Mr. Slaton said the representatives of the Housing Authority are scheduled for a future meeting to give an update on Grove Manor redevelopment.

Mr. Slaton reported that the County is not supporting the proposed CRA expansion. Albert Galloway, Jr., City Attorney, reviewed this. There will be a future meeting to discuss this. He said they are not sure they are allowed to object. The provision says that the county does not have authority over CRA operations including expansion of boundaries according to Florida Statutes 163.410. The County, under 163.361, they say there are competing plans and goals for the funds. They don't believe there is blight in the area despite our document saying there is. Mr. Slaton said he read through the Resolution. Some of it doesn't apply to us. He has asked Tom Cloud, attorney, to look at this.

Chair Gibson asked about the joint meeting. Mr. Galloway said its a way to resolve disputes. This must be done before litigation. Chair Gibson said we should be as cooperative as possible in this. He has no qualms about litigation, it is a civil way to resolve dispute. Mr. Galloway suggested that Chair Gibson represent the CRA in this meeting. Mr. Gibson said he will do this if the CRA board agrees. There was consensus from the board that Chair Gibson represent the CRA. This was discussed.

## 8. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

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Chair/Vice-Chair

ATTEST:

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City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk