

**Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)**  
**Meeting Minutes April 13, 2021**  
**(APPROVED)**

4/13/2021 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

**CRA Members Present:** Chair Robin Gibson, Commissioner Curtis Gibson, Mayor Gene Fultz, Commissioner Howell, Commissioner Goldstein

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

Chair Robin Gibson called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 p.m.

Chair Robin Gibson read a statement: The Governor's Executive Order 20-246 allowing for meetings of a Municipality's governing boards without having a quorum of its members present physically or at any specific location has expired as of Nov. 1. However due to the ongoing State of Emergency, while a majority of CRA Board Members must be present in the Chambers, members of the staff and public may still participate in our meetings virtually.

Members of the public are welcome to come into the Commission Chambers to participate in our CRA Board Meetings. We ask that everyone be mindful of social distancing, wearing a mask is required, and please sit in designated seating. Citizens may submit comments and Questions at [www.lakewalesfl.gov/comments](http://www.lakewalesfl.gov/comments) for either a specific Agenda Item or for Communications and Petitions.

Albert Galloway, Jr., City Attorney, read a statement on Procedures for this partial virtual Public Meeting. Mr. Galloway asked the Board Members, "are you comfortable with all the notice provisions set forth and these uniform rules of procedures we have established for this Virtual meeting? The Board answered affirmatively.

2. Minutes - February 9, 2021

Mayor Fultz made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Goldstein seconded the motion.

By Voice vote:

ALL "YES"

Motion passed 5-0.

3. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

4. Main Street Update

Chair Robin Gibson commended Karen Thompson, Main Street Director, for being accepted into a program by the International Downtown Association to learn about Downtown Redevelopment.

Karen Thompson, Director of MainStreet, explained that this is a year long program and she was one of 30 selected.

Ms. Thompson invited the board to the 3rd Thursday Market on Thursday and announced that the Ranch Taproom opens on Friday. She reported on the Ranch Taproom's progress and they have exceeded

expectations.

Ms. Thompson introduced Lester Gulledge our new horticulturist to talk about a landscaping project.

Lester Gulledge shared some of his background and plans to put landscaping near the new mural. He shared pictures of the area and plants for what will be planted. He described the next steps involved. There will be volunteer days to get this project done. Maintenance afterwards is important. Chair Robin Gibson expressed support for this plan.

#### 5. Memorandum Of Understanding – Redevelopment Of Distressed Properties

[Begin Agenda Memo]

**SYNOPSIS:** The proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Lake Wales and the City of Lake Wales Community Redevelopment Agency will provide a method to redevelop or restore distressed properties within the CRA.

**RECOMMENDATION** Staff recommends that the CRA Board approve the Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **BACKGROUND**

To address the potential redevelopment of distressed properties, staff has been working on creating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The proposed MOU will provide a framework for the establishment of "Redevelopment Agreements" for properties.

Included in the Redevelopment Agreements will be provisions that allow developers to use the payment of code enforcement liens to restore the property. This would be accomplished by placement of the liens into an escrow account, with payouts to be controlled by City staff.

By allowing for the use of funds from for restoring distressed properties, it will serve as an incentive to facilitate redevelopment, especially in the core area of Lake Wales.

On March 16, 2021, The City Commission approved the MOU.

**OTHER OPTIONS** Not approve the agreement.

**FISCAL IMPACT** The redevelopment of distressed properties will ultimately contribute to the City's tax base.

[End Agenda Memo]

Mayor Fultz asked if about a grant recently applied for to help with distressed properties. James Slaton, Executive Director, said yes we applied for a CDBG grant to help with housing rehabilitation. We have yet to receive word on whether we have received the Grant or not. Mr. Slaton said that those funds are not exactly related to what this memo. Mayor Fultz said those funds will help with some of this. Mr. Slaton said possibly.

Mayor Fultz made a motion to approve the memo. Commissioner Curtis Gibson seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

ALL: "Aye"

Motion passed 5-0.

6. Grove Manor Funding Request From The Lake Wales Housing Authority.

[Begin Agenda Memo]

**SYNOPSIS:** The purpose of this memorandum is to give an overview of the funding Grove Manor is seeking from the City of Lake Wales.

**RECOMMENDATION** Staff recommends that the proposed funding request from Grove Manor be denied due to lack of funds available.

**BACKGROUND** On March 24th, Al Kirkland, Executive Director of Grove Manor, reached out to Darrell Starling, CRA Coordinator, in reference to an article in the Lakeland Ledger. The article stated that Lake Wales will be receiving \$7.04 million dollars through the Federal COVID Stimulus funding. On March 30th, Mr. Kirkland submitted a proposal for a \$1 million contribution from the City of Lake Wales. The \$1 million will help position Grove Manor to win the 4% State Apartment Incentive Loan program. They will apply for the funding in August 2021.

**FISCAL IMPACT** The CRA budget does not have \$1 million allocated for housing assistance.

**OTHER OPTIONS** To award Grove Manor with \$1 million requested.

[End Agenda Memo]

Al Kirkland, Director of the Lake Wales Housing Authority, introduced himself. Rick Fergun, Pantheon Development Group, introduced himself. Mr. Kirkland reviewed their funding request. He explained that they did not get the tax credits they applied for to redevelop Grove Manor. Lakeland won them instead. They are exploring other options. They are exploring other funding possibilities such as SAIL financing. Mr. Fergun explained how the funding works. They are confident that with a City contribution they can get this financing.

Chair Robin Gibson asked what the relationship is between the City and the Housing Authority. Mr. Kirkland explained that the City Commission appoints members to the Housing Authority. City cooperation and partnership can help get funding and make Lake Wales a better place. Chair Robin Gibson asked if the Housing Authority reports to the Florida Housing Authority. Is that who supervises and audits the Housing Authority? Mr. Kirkland said they are under HUD (Housing and Urban Development). He explained that the Federal Government is moving away from public housing and encouraging local Housing Authorities to find other ways to meet Community needs and provide housing. Chair Robin Gibson asked if this is a competition or lottery to get funding. Mr. Fergun explained that it is competitive but ends with a lottery ball. The competitive part is checking all the possible boxes. Chair Robin Gibson said we would do well if it were completely competitive.

Mayor Fultz asked for the criteria for living in the new affordable housing. Mr. Fergun said about 30% of income. The Federal Government would like Housing Authorities to provide vouchers to help with rent. They would like Grove Manor to be more mixed income. All the units would be the same.

Commissioner Goldstein confirmed that the \$460,000 that the CRA pledged previously won't be spent now. Mr. Fergun confirmed this. Commissioner Goldstein asked what happens to the \$1 million if they don't get the money. Mr. Slaton reviewed possible uses for American Rescue Plan funds. Does the CRA want to contribute \$1 million from the trust fund and what projects to defer? Mr. Slaton recommended against providing the \$1 million.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson asked who would own and run the housing complex? Will Housing Authority be the majority owner? Mr. Fergun explained that investors and developers would be part owners. Commissioner Curtis Gibson asked what amount the Housing Authority is contributing? Mr. Fergun said about \$400,000. Commissioner Curtis Gibson expressed disappointment that we were beat out by Lakeland. He asked the Housing Authority to keep the City informed. He asked if they can use the money already allocated. Mr. Fergun said that the match requirements change. He knows that Grove Manor is

important to implementing the Lake Wales Connected. He said we should stick with what we already allocated.

Chair Robin Gibson asked when they would need to have the \$1million. Mr. Furgun said that is yet to be determined but probably 2-3 years. Chair Robin Gibson asked when the next opportunity for tax credits is. Mr. Furgun said in 2 years.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson asked if they pay taxes. Mr. Slaton said the units will be taxed but not the land.

Mr. Slaton asked when the application deadline is? Mr. Furland said in August for the 4% plan. He reviewed timeline for funding and construction.

Chair Robin Gibson said the design of the building is a concern as they need to conform to the Lake Wales Connected Plan. Mr. Furgun said they must first follow Florida Housing Requirements. Chair Robin Gibson confirmed that Grove Manor is an important part of Lake Wales Connected. If the CRA contributes we would be a significant partner. Mr. Furgun said it would be a give and take partnership. They can't promise anything now.

Chair Robin Gibson said we have until August to decide. Commissioner Goldstein said maybe before August staff meet on this and work out some issues. Mr. Furman said they will be back in July for a decision. Chair Robin Gibson said we might look at possible tax increment increases with these improvements.

#### 7. CRA Annual Report (Fiscal Year 2019-2020)

[Begin Agenda Memo]

**SYNOPSIS:** The purpose of this memorandum is to give an overview of the CRA's projects from fiscal year 2019-2020.

**RECOMMENDATION** For information purposes only.

**BACKGROUND** The Annual Report is a requirement each year. Besides providing financial information, it allows us the opportunity to showcase the impact of redevelopment within our 3 district areas.

**FISCAL IMPACT** None

**OTHER OPTIONS** Not Applicable

[End Agenda Memo]

Mark Bennett, Development Services Director, reviewed the Annual Report. Mr. Bennett said these reports are often used for marketing to show what the CRA has done over the past year. The Restaurant Incentive Program, the Dover-Kohl Plan and hiring Darrell Starling are all included. A picture of the mural is included to emphasize our partnership with Main Street. The report will be submitted for hopefully another award.

Chair Robin Gibson reviewed the financial portion. He may sit down with Dorothy Abbott to understand where the money goes.

James Slaton, Executive Director, said as the budget season is coming up staff will provide revenue forecasts to the board. Chair Robin Gibson said we need to see if we can help Grove Manor somehow. Mayor Fultz said helping Grove Manor would help two goals affordable housing and connecting the two areas.

Commissioner Goldstein said the two new Commissioners coming in will have to learn about all this. Mayor

Fultz said that Mr. Slaton plans on meeting with them to fill them in.

Commissioner Goldstein asked if there are more applications for the Restaurant incentive program. Karen Thompson, Assistant CRA Director, said no not currently. She reported that MainStreet has money to offer incentives.

Mayor Fultz said the Ranch Taproom once open will be good for downtown.

8. Dashboards

James Slaton, Executive Director, reviewed the highlights of the projects tracked on the dashboards.

9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

James Slaton, Executive Director, reported on upcoming groundbreaking events for affordable housing projects.

Darrell Starling, CRA Coordinator, explained that the first ground breaking is the Keystone houses and the other is the Florida Development Corporation Houses. He also announced about the Northwest Community Market on May 1st.

Mr. Slaton said there are plans for more of these. They have gotten more grant money to help people get into homes. Mr. Starling said there will be a vendor at the market to help with those interested in getting a house.

Michelle Threatt shared plans to open a business in a permanent location.

10. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

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Chair/Vice-Chair

ATTEST:

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City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk