

**Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
Meeting Minutes August 8, 2023
(DRAFT)**

8/8/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

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

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

Dorothy Scott Wilson, resident, shared about recent food drive efforts and spoke about the Community Garden at the Austin Community Center. She and other volunteers are forming a Friend of the Gardens organization to support the garden.

3. Minutes - July 11, 2023

Commissioner Krueger made a motion to approve the minutes of July 11, 2023. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

ALL "YES"

Motion passed 4-0.

4. Approval Of Contract For Law Enforcement Services: Lake Wales Housing Authority

[Begin Agenda Memo]

Synopsis: The CRA will consider approving a contract with the Lake Wales Housing Authority to continue providing supplemental law enforcement services at the Grove Manor and Sunrise Park public housing complexes.

RECOMMENDATION It is recommended that the CRA Board:

1. Authorize the Chair to execute a Contract for Services with the Lake Wales Housing Authority for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

BACKGROUND Since 2011/2012 the CRA Board of Commissioners have approved funding a law enforcement officer position to provide supplemental law enforcement services toward designated CRA areas and the Lake Wales Housing Authority, Grove Manor Complex.

In an effort to continue providing these supplemental law enforcement services to the Lake Wales Housing Authority, Grove Manor and Sunrise Park Complex residents, the Lake Wales Police Department seeks approval to enter into a new contract for FY2023/2024. This contract for supplemental law enforcement

services provides for a monthly payment due the City in the amount of \$3,280.00 from the Housing Authority.

The Lake Wales Housing Authority Board approved the contract for services during their last meeting, held on June, 21 2023.

[End Agenda Memo]

James Slaton, Executive Director, reviewed this item.

Chair Robin Gibson asked for clarification as to who this contract is between. The document says the City, but has signatures from the CRA. Mr. Slaton said the funding is from the CRA but the officer is a City employee.

Mr. Slaton said the officer is dedicated to the CRA area but if the CRA does not wish to fund this it can come from general fund.

Chris Velasquez, Police Chief, said that the Housing Authority reimburses 50% of the costs and reviewed the services the Police Department provides in those areas.

Chair Robin Gibson asked about the level of protection for the residents of the neighborhoods given recent incidents. Chief Velasquez reviewed the two recent tragic incidents in Sunrise and Grove Manor and explained that little could have been done to prevent them. This was discussed.

Chair Robin Gibson asked if the two housing complexes pay ad valorem tax. Mr. Slaton said no.

Commissioner Thompson asked what the relationship is with other section 8 housing. Chief Velasquez said they work with each of those complexes and assist as necessary. They notify management of houses or units that they continually are called out to. Chair Gibson asked how they help with evictions. Chief Velasquez said they don't evict someone but provide support if needed.

Chair Gibson said we need to fix the contract so that the CRA is a party to the contract. Chief Velasquez said the officer focuses exclusively on CRA areas. Chair Gibson said both the CRA and the City should be part of the Contract and both should sign it. It should be clear where the money comes from.

Commissioner Thompson said there needs to be a contract between the CRA and the City.

Chair Gibson asked if the CRA should still provide funding. Mr. Slaton said either the City or CRA could fund this service.

Chair Gibson said he is fine with the CRA funding this but this needs to be clear in the contract.

There was consensus to revise the contract and table it until the next meeting.

Mayor Hilligoss made a motion to table this item. Commissioner Thompson seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

ALL "YES"

Motion passed 5-0.

5. The Donation Of Two Parcels To Keystone Challenge Fund To Be Redeveloped For Affordable Housing

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: The purpose of this request is to consider the donation of two parcels owned by the CRA to the Keystone Challenge Fund.

RECOMMENDATION It is recommended the CRA Board consider the following action(s)

1. The CRA Board authorize the donation of the CRA property at 610 Dr. J A Wiltshire Ave W and 315 Dorsett Ave to Keystone Challenge Fund. Property number (s): 27-29-34- 873000-002100 and 27-30-02-899000-008100.
2. Authorize the Executive Director of the CRA to enter into a developer's agreement and said agreement shall, include, at a minimum, a reverter clause and project timeline.

BACKGROUND On January 21, 2021, the CRA Board approved the donation of two CRA properties to Keystone Challenge Fund. The donation created a series of collaborations between Keystone and the CRA that resulted in six (6) affordable homes that were built and two (2) homes rehabbed. In July 2023, through the foreclosure process, the CRA acquired three (3) properties in the Northwest neighborhood; 610 Dr. J A Wiltshire Ave and 315 Dorsett Ave and 138 E. Street. To keep our affordable housing momentum, the CRA spoke with nonprofit organization, Keystone Challenge about partnering for the construction of two affordable homes at 610 Dr. J A Wiltshire Ave and 315 Dorsett Ave. LAKE WALES CONNECTED PLAN

ACTION STEPS

Action # Description

- 9 Provide down payment assistance and low-interest mortgages for infill housing in the Northwest Neighborhood
- 27 Identify properties owned by CRA or the City and explore joint ventures for new housing
- 38 Provide first-time homebuyer counseling and education (via Keystone Challenge Fund)
- 39 Provide down payment assistance and low-interest mortgages for infill housing

KEYSTONE CHALLENGE FUND OVERVIEW AND PLANS FOR REDEVELOPMENT Keystone Challenge Fund is a non-profit developer that has serve the Polk County area by developing affordable housing specifically in low-income communities.

For over 35 years, Keystone has provided affordable housing to low and moderate-income homebuyers to connect families with homeownership. As a result, nearly 4,200 families have become homeowners throughout Polk County. One of Keystone's most recent projects was the construction of two homes in Lake Wales City. Attached are pictures of the Keystone Phase III, which are examples of the homes that will be built in Keystone Phase IV.

If the CRA approves the donation, site development would commence sometime around the end of the year and take approximately 4-6 months from start to finish. When completed, two houses with an estimated value of \$215,000 each will be in place, continuing the affordable housing momentum we have in the Northwest neighborhood.

REVENUE VALUE

Jurisdiction Millage

Polk BoCC 6.6920

City of Lake Wales 6.3626 Total 13.0546

Assessed Value (Less Homestead Exemption) \$165,000.00 (per home)(assumed)

Tax Increment Revenue \$2,154 (per home)

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

CRA Investment \$0

Tax Increment Revenue \$4,308/Year (2 homes)

Total Return on Investment (ROI) 0 Years

FISCAL IMPACT The Cost to the CRA will be \$0.

[End Agenda Memo]

James Slaton, Executive Director, reviewed this item.

Chair Gibson said he is glad these titles came to us so we can take care of them.

Mayor Hilligoss made a motion to approve the donation. Commissioner Krueger seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

ALL "YES"

Motion approved 5-0.

6. Legacy Housing Rehabilitation Program

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: The purpose of this request is to consider the increase in project cost of the Legacy Housing Rehabilitation Program.

RECOMMENDATION It is recommended the CRA Board consider the following action(s)

1. The CRA Board authorize the Executive Director of the CRA to increase the project cost for the Legacy Housing Rehabilitation Program to not exceed \$35,000 per project. With the contingency that CRA staff and contractor work to keep cost down all while not affecting the program's goal.

BACKGROUND On May 11, 2021, the CRA Board authorized the Executive Director of the CRA to enter into an agreement with Keystone Challenge Fund for the Legacy Housing Rehabilitation Program with funding not to exceed \$17,000 per home. Due to the rise in construction cost, the amount needed to complete the work for the Legacy Housing Rehabilitation Program has since doubled in some cases. Since its inception, the Legacy Housing Rehabilitation Program has helped twenty (20) seniors throughout the Northwest neighborhood repair their homes.

LAKE WALES CONNECTED PLAN ACTION STEPS

Action # Description

26 Explore potential for funding forgivable loans or grants for painting and other exterior improvements among nearby homes to enhance the appeal of close-in neighborhoods.

FISCAL IMPACT The cost to the CRA will be \$350,000 for ten (10) homes during FY 23/24.

OTHER OPTIONS Not accept CRA staff recommendation.

[End Agenda Memo]

James Slaton, Executive Director, reviewed this item.

Deputy Mayor Gibson said this program is one of the most satisfying things we do. In terms of dollars and cents he asked if there has been an increase in value in this CRA area 3. Mr. Slaton confirmed this. Mr. Slaton said that this is an investment. We spend money on the front end then we get tax increment increases for 30 years. Chair Gibson confirmed that we eventually get our money back. Mr. Slaton confirmed this. Our tax increment values have increased double digits these past few years.

Commissioner Krueger said when we go into a home and open up walls you don't know what you are going to get.

Mr. Slaton said that with these additional revenues we can do more of this.

Chair Robin Gibson asked how this works with the budget. Mr. Slaton said this is in the proposed budget.

Commissioner Krueger made a motion to approve his item. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion.

by voice vote

ALL "YES"

Motion approved 5-0.

7. CRA Plan Update Report

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: On January 17, 2023, the City Commission, by resolution, adopted the FON study and authorized an amendment to the CRA Redevelopment Plan. Inspire Placemaking Collective was contracted to update the Plan. Laura Canary will be at the CRA Meeting to present the draft Plan for Board comments.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Listen, ask questions, provide feedback.
2. Ask Planning Commission to review and provide comments.

BACKGROUND On January 17, 2023, the City Commission, by resolution, adopted the FON study and authorized an amendment to the CRA Redevelopment Plan. In March 2023, Inspire Placemaking was contracted to draft the Plan Amendment. An open house was held at the Eagle Ridge Mall to obtain public input in June. Laura and her team have been working with city staff to gather the data to produce the first draft of the report.

FISCAL IMPACT \$41,700 was previously authorized to conduct the Plan Update.

[End Agenda Memo]

Laura Canary, Inspire Placemaking Collective, gave a report on updating the CRA Plan to include expanded boundaries. The expanded boundaries will include the Eagle Ridge Mall area. It will almost double the size

of the CRA.

Ms. Canary commended staff for the idea to host the open house at the mall. This effort included input from residents who would not normally attend these events. They educated the public on the CRA. Top items the public indicated that they would like to see include public plazas, shade trees, wider sidewalks, and interconnected walkways. Supporting small and innovative businesses was a top CRA priority along with more housing options and safer pedestrian and transit facilities. The updated plan will include the new boundary, updated TIF projections and redevelopment programming.

Ms. Canary explained that elements of Lake Wales Connected and Lake Wales Envisioned will be integrated into the updated plan. These included infill development at the Mall and a health district on HWY 60. An updated 5 year CIP budget worksheet was included. Language related to marketing and promotions was removed. The big idea is connecting assets and opportunities in CRA areas. Ms. Canary reviewed tax increment financing projections over the next 28 years.

Ms. Canary reviewed the next steps for approval including the Planning and Zoning Board and approval by the City Commission by October 3rd. Then it will go to the County for approval.

Chair Gibson reported that he attended the open house at the mall with leaders from the county. He asked where we are with the County in terms of making it happen. James Slaton, Executive Director, explained that we need the County to agree or there's no point in going forward. Chair Gibson said we need to work with the County as partners. Mr. Slaton said we need to meet with County Commissioners. County staff has indicated that the County is not interested in more CRAs in Polk County.

Ms. Canary says we need to convey to the county that this is an investment in Polk County. Chair Gibson said we need to show that it is in much their best interest as ours. We need to make the County equal partners.

Commissioner Krueger asked what the benefit is to the County. Chair Gibson said now they give the City their increment revenue. The City has authority in how that is spent. In this situation the County will have control that they don't have in any other CRA. There will be mutual benefit and mutual control.

Commissioner Krueger asked if the County will benefit from this. Mr. Slaton said when the CRA expires the County will get a higher return in property values when we are done than they would have otherwise. Mayor Hilligoss said the improvement will happen quicker there than traditional CRA areas. We can do something unique that can be a model for other areas.

Chair Gibson said this will make things better for those people we serve. If we work together that's a good return.

Commissioner Krueger asked for some bullet points to help Commissioners and citizens lobby the County Commission.

Commissioner Thompson asked how joint authority would work. Chair Gibson said a board with equal number of votes. Ms. Canary shared an example from Pinellas County. An advisory board was formed just over the joint area with City and County representatives. County dollars would be spent only on County initiatives. Chair Gibson said that would be fair.

Ms. Canary said she could work with Mr. Slaton on some bullet points for the Commission.

Mayor Hilligoss said this has potential given how rapidly the County is expanding. This could be the beginning of a more cooperative relationship.

Mr. Slaton said we need to get it on the County agenda and then convince them. Ms. Canary said they may want to know if the City has approved this. Mr. Slaton said we could do 1st reading and do 2nd reading after the County's approved this.

Mayor Hilligoss said to give them the talking points and we will turn on the charm.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

James Slaton, Executive Director, reported that we have received a grant for the trail in Kiwanis Park. Funds will be available in October.

Mr. Slaton said there is a new CDBG program for larger housing projects. He will talk to the Housing Authority about possibly applying for funding.

Mr. Slaton announced that there is a Legacy Housing wrap up ceremony tomorrow at 9am.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Chair/Vice-Chair

ATTEST:

City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk