

**Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
Meeting Minutes October 10, 2023
(DRAFT)**

10/10/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chair Robin Gibson, Mayor Jack Hilligoss, Keith Thompson

Members Absent: 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

3. Minutes - August 31, 2023

The minutes of August 31, 2023 were reviewed. Mayor Hilligoss made a motion to approve the minutes of August 31, 2023. Commissioner Thompson seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

ALL "YES"

Motion passed 3-0.

4. 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 for address 440 Alabama St.

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 \$50,000 only for 440 Alabama St. 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. On October 6, 2023, 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 \$35,000 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 over twenty (20) seniors throughout the Northwest neighborhood with repairs to 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 \$50,000 for 440 Alabama St.

OTHER OPTIONS Not accept CRA staff recommendation.

[End Agenda Memo]

James Slaton, Executive Director, reviewed this item.

Chair Robin Gibson asked if we have funds available and what the staff recommendation is. Mr. Slaton confirmed that we have the funds and that staff recommends approval.

Chair Gibson asked if these efforts result in increased value of the homes. Mr. Slaton said we don't have this information.

Chair Gibson asked if the homes are below the level they are to be taxed. Mr. Slaton said they are contributing to the tax increment. He does know that the Northwest overall is at record pace for improved tax increment. Chair Gibson said it would be more significant if we can show the values of the homes are increasing. Mr. Slaton said we can look at that.

Commissioner Thompson asked if there is increased sales activity in that neighborhood. Mr. Slaton said yes.

5. Restaurant / Food-Related Incentive Program (The Rose Bud Inn And Café, Inc. 215 Lincoln Ave N. Lake Wales, FL 33853)

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: The purpose of this request is to consider a third and final extension for a period of 6 months between the CRA and Rose Bud Inn and Café, Inc. regarding the development agreement for the Restaurant / Food-Related Incentive Program.

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

1. Authorize the Executive Director of the CRA to sign a development agreement for a new 6-month contract that ends March 29, 2023.

BACKGROUND The Food-Related Incentive Program offered up to \$50,000 in dollar-for-dollar matching funds to assist in establishing food-related businesses in the NW Redevelopment Area and Downtown Main Street District. Matching funds are a grant that can be used to offset the cost of eligible lease-hold improvements necessary to establish and operate a food service or restaurant business. Ms. Peggy Jean Young Williams is renovating the café and making eligible improvements.

On January 14, 2020, the CRA Board originally approved Ms. Peggy Jean Williams', owner of Rose Bud Inn and Café, request for \$50,000 from the Restaurant Incentive Program. The site of her proposed restaurant is located in the CRA III district and she has been gradually working on making necessary developments towards the establishment of her café.

On September 29, 2021, the CRA agreed approved Ms. Williams first extension and entered into a one-year grant agreement. This agreement allowed Ms. Williams to withdraw funds from the grant in installments versus seeking one payment only when a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued. Her previous grant

agreement expired on September 30, 2022. Ms. Williams was then granted a second extension on October 11, 2022, which has since expired as of September 30, 2023. On behalf of Ms. Williams request, staff is willing to offer her a third and final extension of an additional six months to complete her restaurant.

Ms. Williams recently spent \$34,575 to update and re-pipe the plumbing of her proposed restaurant located at 215 Lincoln Ave W. Her final plumbing inspection was completed as of September 20, 2023. Her next step is to update the electrical work and install new sinks, toilets, and faucets in the downstairs restaurant. The opening of this restaurant will boost economic development within the Northwest Community, while supporting growth and providing an establishment to support the community needs.

OTHER OPTIONS Not to approve the twelve-month extension of the Restaurant/ Food-Related Incentive Program Grant.

FISCAL IMPACT The Food-Related Incentive Program offers up to but not limited to \$50,000 in dollar-for-dollar matching funds. Ms. Williams has been issued a total of \$25,542.72 from the grant with a remaining grant balance of \$25,457.28. In order for Ms. Williams to receive all of her Food-Related Incentive funds, she must spend out of pocket \$48,914.56 in approved projects for her building at 215 Lincoln Ave (Rose Bud Inn).

[End Agenda Memo]

James Slaton, Executive Director, reviewed this item. Staff recommends approving the extension.

Commissioner Thompson asked if six months is enough time. If this is the last extension then he wants to be sure she has enough time.

Ms. Peggy Williams, owner, said she hopes to be ready in 6 months but would appreciate more time. She asked for a year.

Mr. Slaton said staff is fine with a year's extension.

Chair Gibson asked Ms. Williams how much of her own money she has put into this. Ms. Williams said she has spent \$34,000 since this grant was approved but spent more before that.

Darrell Starling, CRA Consultant, said Ms. Williams has stayed in communication with staff throughout this project.

Mayor Hilligoss made a motion to approve the extension for a year. Commissioner Thompson seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

ALL "YES"

Motion passed 3-0.

Chair Gibson said we want this project to succeed.

6. The Construction Of The Whadda Wing's Restaurant At 39 Lincoln Ave W

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: This update on Whadda Wings is for information purposes only.

BACKGROUND On February 2, 2022, the CRA advertised a Request for Proposal (RFP 22-505) for the property at 39 Lincoln Avenue. The intent of the RFP is to offer the property for sale to promote redevelopment. The redevelopment of the property was intended to provide a restaurant establishment on Lincoln Avenue.

On January 10, 2023, the CRA Board authorized the Executive Director of the CRA to enter into a revised development agreement and at a minimum include a reverter clause and a one-time extension for the site development within twelve (12) months and begin building permitting within twenty-four (24) months. The Ranking Committee reviewed the proposal, one proposal was received from Whadda Wings. Staff made a recommendation to the CRA Board to accept Whadda Wing's bid. This is based on the company's plan for redeveloping the property by building a restaurant on Lincoln Avenue.

Whadda Wings, LLC submitted conceptual plans to build an 1800 SQ. FT. restaurant that will serve as an economic catalyst for business on Lincoln Avenue.

President/Manager of Whadda Wings, Stephanie Mosley previously presented to the CRA Board to explain why the extension was needed. Mrs. Mosley requests to address the CRA Board with a brief update on the progress of her restaurant development.

LAKE WALES CONNECTED PLAN ACTION STEPS

Action # Description

11 Construct missing sidewalks in the Northwest Neighborhood: include a sidewalk on at least one side of each street; key connectors should have sidewalks on both sides.

46 Implement Lincoln Avenue improvements (shade trees and plantings)

65 Continue to construct missing sidewalks in the Northwest Neighborhood

66 Continue to implement a connected trails system in Lake Wales

FISCAL IMPACT For information purposes only.

[End Agenda Memo]

James Slaton, Executive Director, reviewed this item. He said they hope to break ground within 90 days.

7. BizLINC Mural

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: The purpose of this memorandum is to inform the CRA Board of a mural that will be located on the east side of BizLINC's building, 225 Lincoln Ave W.

RECOMMENDATION For information purposes only.

BACKGROUND Action Step 12 in the Lake Wales Connected plan states that investment in public art should take place in the North West Community within 1-3 years

LAKE WALES CONNECTED PLAN ACTION STEPS

Action # Description 12 Invest in Public Art

BIZLINC MURAL PROJECT The CRA, in partnership with Florida Development Corporation (FDC), will have

a mural painted on the eastern side of their business incubator, located at 225 Lincoln Ave W. The design's main image is an artistic light bulb with various colors. The light bulb symbolizes innovation while the colors also have separate meanings. For example, 'yellow' represents happiness and hope. 'Green' is for new beginnings and growth while 'blue' represents calmness and friendliness. Lastly, purple is symbolic of uniqueness and imagination. The image was designed to strike inspiration, creativity, and motivation as both new and existing entrepreneurs enter into the business incubator. The mural is also designed to be an Instagrammable location, which will help thrust Lake Wales further onto the map.

To bring this painting to fruition will be the renowned artist, Terrance Wilson. Mr. Wilson has traveled across the nation to work on various art projects and has been a professional artist for over four years. He also works as an art instructor for the 'DIY Room' and 'Painting in the Trap'. Mr. Wilson has completed murals in restaurants, clubs, and sports gyms. He has even created works for Sacramento Kings player, Terrence Davis and Houston Cougars NBA G league player, Taze Moore as well as hip-hop artist Rick Ross.

Mr. Wilson aims to start the mural on October 30, 2023. The mural should be finished within one week and no road closures will be necessary.

FISCAL IMPACT \$10,000

OTHER OPTIONS Not Applicable

[End Agenda Memo]

James Slaton, Executive Director, reviewed this item.

Chair Gibson asked how BizLinc is doing. Darrell Starling, CRA Consultant, said they had 6 members and have 20 applications.

8. Park Avenue/Market Plaza Streetscape Construction Agreement With Gomez Construction

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: Staff is requesting CRA Board approval of Change Order #6 with Gomez Construction for rain gardens soil mix, stone, and irrigation valve boxes and controllers.

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

1. Approve Change Order #6 with Gomez Construction.
2. Authorize Executive Director of CRA to execute agreement on behalf of the CRA.
3. Authorize expenditure of \$67,289.60.

BACKGROUND Change Order #6 includes changes to the rain gardens soil mix and stone. As well, the change order includes additional irrigation valve boxes, controller and backflow. In accordance with the Lake Wales Connected Plan, the CRA designed a full streetscape treatment to Park Avenue from Scenic Highway to Wetmore Street. It is the Community Redevelopment Agency's ultimate goal to encourage redevelopment and activation of the City's Historic Downtown District. By leading the way with this significant public infrastructure investment coupled with utilizing proven streetscape techniques, staff believes that these goals will be realized.

OTHER OPTIONS Do not approve Change Order #6 with Gomez Construction.

FISCAL IMPACT The total fiscal impact for this change order is \$67,289.60.

[End Agenda Memo]

Deena Drumgo, Assistant City Manager reviewed his item and said staff recommends approval.

Commissioner Thompson made a motion to approve the Change Order. Mayor Hilligoss seconded the motion.

by voice vote:

ALL "YES"

Motion approved 3-0.

9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

James Slaton, Executive Director, announced that the new Circulator route will have a ribbon cutting on Friday at 10am at the Austin Community Center.

Mr. Slaton shared a slide of the property at Bullard and 1st. He said he would like the CRA to buy it and develop it with infill attainable houses that can be sold for maybe in the \$300,000 range. The design would be similar to other historic homes in the area. The CRA would make money on the sale of the homes and these would bring in tax revenue. This project may also encourage other infill development. Mr. Slaton asked for support before he contacted a realtor or developed a business plan.

Mayor Hilligoss said he liked the idea and asked if the CRA would help potential owners with a down payment. Mr. Slaton said yes, the details have to be worked out. Mayor Hilligoss asked to confirm the design will be similar to other homes in the area. Mr. Slaton confirmed this and said he will get a design for CRA board approval. Mayor Hilligoss said this could be a start on the Lake Wales Envisioned Plan.

Commissioner Thompson said he liked this idea and this could be a test site or model for infill development. Mr. Slaton said we need to take initiative and run with it.

Chair Gibson said he agrees with being carefully aggressive. As a government we have some advantages and we partner with the private sector. We should not allow ourselves to be a lender. We should get in and get out. Eminent domain could be an option. There is a lot of infill potential.

This idea was discussed.

The CRA board gave consensus to the Executive Director to explore this idea. Mr. Slaton said he will explore this and develop a business plan to bring before the board.

Chair Gibson asked that we be sure the sound is working for the video on Thursday and for next week's Commission meeting. Mr. Slaton said they will.

Chair Gibson asked for an update on the CRA expansion. Mr. Slaton said this should go before County Commission soon. He said he is looking into see if we need the County's approval. This will be done by the end of the year approved or not.

10. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Chair/Vice-Chair

ATTEST:

City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk