

**Joint Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and Housing Authority
Meeting Minutes February 8, 2022
(APPROVED)**

2/8/2022 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

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

CRA members present: Robin Gibson, Jack Hilligoss, Mayor Eugene Fultz, Daniel Williams

Housing Authority members present: Wanda Lawson, Michelle Threatt, Durinda Wells, Narvell Peterson, Helen Walters

Staff Present: James Slaton, CRA Executive Director; Al Kirkland Jr., Executive Director of Housing Authority; Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk.

2. Grove Manor Redevelopment Funding

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: This is a discussion about the next steps concerning the redevelopment of Grove Manor. RECOMMENDATION Staff recommends that the CRA give guidance to CRA staff on next steps towards trying to obtain financing to redevelop Grove Manor.

BACKGROUND Attempts over the past two years to obtain funding to redevelop Grove Manor have not been successful. These efforts were made with the assistance of Smith and Henzy, a partner of the Grove Manor project. In December the CRA board directed staff to send a letter to the Housing Authority with the recommendation to select a new advisory group to help in the effort to find funding. This meeting is to discuss this possibility as well as next steps moving forward.

OTHER OPTIONS Continue with same advisory group and try again next cycle.

FISCAL IMPACT None

[End Agenda Memo]

Chair Robin Gibson reviewed the status of the Grove Manor project. His main concern was getting this done. Failure to obtain funding is very frustrating. Many have suggested that this entity, Smith and Henzy, was doing all it could do. He has been made aware that this is up to chance. This is up to us. The previous selection process led to many lawsuits and delays in funding as some applicants did not feel they were scored correctly. Those up for selection just has to qualify. He reviewed the different avenues of funding attempted. He said we need to try every possible avenue for funding as it is important to us. Qualifying for a few years in a row gives us some preference. A representative from Smith and Henzy confirmed this.

Chair Robin Gibson asked for opinions from members of both boards.

James Slaton, Executive Director, recommended inviting the representatives from Smith & Henzy to explain more about the process.

Darren Smith, Smith and Henzy, reviewed the process of applying for funding. There were 90 applications submitted, 10 were disqualified for deficiencies. These qualifications can be protested. He does it frequently. 6 spots were available for funding. We need a lottery number from 1-20 to get a chance for

funding. Its an algorithm to assign lottery numbers. The board reviews these and resize the lottery. There is a protest period. Everyone looks for funds and ways to challenge the decisions. They won 10 9% deals in 2 years. 8 are Housing Authority redevelopments. He has not protested and knocked someone out. He gave examples of little mistakes. Al Kirkland, Jr. Housing Authority Director, asked if they did everything they can do. Mr. Smith confirmed they do and try to meet every goal possible. He explained how being missed over 2 years gives us preference. There will be 8 deals competing for 2 spots and we are one of the eight. Our chances are good.

Mr. Slaton asked if we are applying for both chances. Mr. Smith reviewed the upcoming chances for funding including American Rescue Plan money. We will aggressively pursue both chances. Mr. Slaton asked about funding cycles. Mr. Smith gave approximate dates in September & November. Mr. Slaton asked for which phases we are applying for funding. Mr. Smith said Phases 1 or 2 and will provide regular updates to both boards if they would like. Mr. Slaton asked if there is anything the City or CRA can do to help. Mr. Smith asked for a letter of support. Mr. Slaton and Chair Gibson both said this good be done. Mr. Slaton said they could do a resolution.

Chair Gibson said we have to be good stewards of this money. He asked input from other CRA members.

Mayor Fultz said it was good to hear the explanation of how this works and is glad for the increased chances this next time. We want to see the city grow. This is important to us.

Commissioner Hilligoss said we need to stick to the plan. Our intent was not to give an ultimatum. Chair Gibson said the letter sent conveyed a sense of urgency. Commissioner Hilligoss said we should just talk about this in the future but he is all in. Mayor Fultz said communication needs to be better so we can work closer together.

Mr. Slaton said we just need to submit paperwork and approve a resolution without starting over.

Wanda Lawson said we do want to continue to work together. It is a good plan and we have confidence in Smith & Henzy. We do want Lake Wales to be connected. This conversation has been good.

Durinda Wells said she has faith in our developers. This is going to happen. She also has confidence in Al. We do need to work on communication.

Helen Walters said we will succeed and said she has confidence in Housing Authority staff and board.

Michelle Threatt said she is confident that this is their year. She hopes this can happen with everyone working together.

Narvell Peterson said he has learned a lot in this meeting and appreciated everyone's comments.

Chair Gibson said the meeting is helpful as the two groups have not worked together before. This gives both a better appreciation of each other. The CRA attaches great importance to this project and the Housing Authority.

Commissioner Hilligoss said he was all in and thinks we should stick with it.

Mayor Fultz said this project will bring unity and equity. We have common cause here.

Chair Gibson asked Housing Authority and Mr. Smith for wording for the Resolution.

Mayor Fultz commended Executive Director Al Kirkland for his efforts and hard work. He will get whatever we need to make this work.

3. COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

James Slaton, Executive Director, had no report.

5. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 3:47 p.m.

Chair/Vice-Chair

ATTEST:

City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk