

**Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
Meeting Minutes March 10, 2020
(APPROVED)**

3/10/2020 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Board Members present: Chair Robin Gibson, Mayor Eugene Fultz, Commissioner Goldstein, Commissioner Howell, Vice Chair Curtis Gibson.

Staff Present: Kenneth Fields, CRA Director; Albert C. Galloway Jr, City Attorney; Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk; Karen Thompson, Assistant Director of the CRA

Chair Robin Gibson called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

2. AGENDA ITEMS

2.I. Minutes - February 18, 2020

Mayor Fultz made a motion to approve the minutes of February 18, 2020. Commissioner Howell seconded the motion.

By Voice Vote: ALL "AYE"

2.II. Food Incentive Program Application - Cherry's Cafe

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS

In 2016, an economic analysis of the Community Redevelopment Area was conducted which revealed that there is an unmet consumer demand for specialty foods within the NW Redevelopment Area and Downtown Main Street District. The Restaurant Incentive Program is intended to attract food-related service providers, restaurateurs and specialty food providers to locate, relocate or establish another location in the Downtown Main Street District and NW Redevelopment area. This program is designed to incentivize private investment. Cecil S. Cherry & Tami L. Flint Owners, Cherry's Café 340 Lincoln St., Lake Wales, FL 33805 are seeking a \$50,000 Matching Grant to renovate the space and make the extensive improvements required to open a new restaurant and redevelop the property according to the incentive guidelines and requirements.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the approval of the Restaurant Incentive Matching Grant, Cherry's Cafe

BACKGROUND

The Food-Related Incentive Program offers 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. Cecil S. Cherry & Tami L. Flint are renovating the restaurant making all the eligible improvements and meeting all the requirements.

The Food-Related Services Incentive Program is for leasehold improvements to an existing property in order to make it functional for a food-service business. Funds may not be used for normal maintenance

or repair. Specific improvements for which grant funds may be used include, but are not limited to:

- Electrical/ Plumbing upgrades
- Installation of attached fixtures
- Grease traps
- Utility connections
- Venting systems
- Sprinkler systems
- Solid Waste and recycling management
- Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing engineering services (not to exceed 20% of the grant total)
- Monitoring man-hole system installation

Improvements must be consistent with the City of Lake Wales Land Development Regulations and Engineering Standards. Any improvements visible to the exterior in CRA may be subject to Section 23-227 Certificate of Appropriateness and issued by the Historic Regulatory Board.

As a condition of approval, Cecil S. Cherry & Tami L. Flint agree that improvements made using these funds will stay in place a minimum of five (5) years. If improvements are replaced within five (5) years of construction completion, the grant recipient must pay a pro rata portion of the grant proceeds invested in the project for the number of months remaining.

Applicant is responsible for obtaining or having obtained all required local and state approvals and permitting for work undertaken.

Once a maximum grant for any property has been awarded, businesses occupying that property, or the building owner cannot reapply for another grant for the same location for a five (5) year period.

Cecil S. Cherry & Tami L. Flint agree to allow the LW CRA to photograph the project for use in future publications.

OTHER OPTIONS

Not to approve 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.

[End Agenda Memo]

Karen Thompson, Assistant Director of the CRA, reviewed this item. She said the packet is not quite ready as it needs a business plan. We will vote on this next time.

Commissioner Howell asked if their hours can be extended for special events. Ms. Thompson confirmed they could. Chair Robin Gibson commended Ms. Thompson on the quality business plans in past applications. Commissioner Curtis Gibson said he appreciates Ms. Thompson walking applicants through the process.

2.III. Presentation - Lincoln Avenue CDC

Sara Jones, President, Lincoln Avenue Community Development Corporation, distributed an outline of her presentation.

They have three top priorities established from beginning. They are affordable housing, economic

development, cultural and recreation development. A 4th priority was the plan done by Dover-Kohl. The plan being complete there are now three. This presentation intends to make clear their priorities.

Under Affordable Housing there are 4 areas that need to be addressed. One area is heirs property resolution. Many residents in the Northwest area do not have clear title to their property as it belonged to a deceased relative. This makes redeveloping property difficult. She is working with experts to help with this. This includes an education element to develop a program to address this.

Ms. Jones said another step in addressing affordable housing would be a down payment assistance program similar to Lakeland's. This would draw in new residents. In Lakeland there was a 20% cap and applicants had to go through the Keystone program. This amount was too much. She recommended for us \$15,000 with program requirements.

Ms. Jones recommended a Vital Repairs program for Lake Wales similar to Lakeland's which involves a matching grant to help homeowners with repairs to their older houses. This would result in increased property values which she understands is the goal of the CRA board.

She also recommends a facade improvement matching grant to help businesses.

In regards to Business and Economic Development she said that the relationship with the police department was identified as a barrier to opening businesses on Lincoln Avenue so they want to work to improve that relationship.

Also under economic development are roadway projects such as the roundabout that she is calling the Washington roundabout as there is discussion that Washington Avenue might be extended into the roundabout. Even though this is far into the future they would like to start laying the groundwork for that and discussing it.

Improvements to Lincoln Avenue are on the list as they were identified as a first step by Victor Dover.

The third priority about Cultural and Recreational development has been discussed such as murals. It is last as far as a priority but is part of the discussion.

Ms. Jones said that she requests a staff person be assigned to help coordinate these efforts. Her group would like to provide input into this staff person. She also requests that some of these ideas be funded through the CRA.

Commissioner Goldstein asked about grant funding. Ms. Jones said that Lakeland gets grants to fund some of their activities. She suggested that the money set aside in the budget to help with the Housing Authority application for Grove Manor that was recently denied be used towards some of these programs.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson asked if it were true that the Housing Authority Grant were denied. Mr. Fields confirmed this. Next cycle the City will assist with the application to be sure all elements of the Dover Kohl plan are mentioned to make it a stronger application. Ms. Jones mentioned that some professions can get priority in these affordable/workforce housing programs.

Commissioner Goldstein said that he would like to see Lincoln Avenue become a bright spot in our City. He said he was glad to hear this presentation to learn the needs of the community.

Chair Robin Gibson said we can't rely fully on grants. He would like to explore possible use of bonds for some of these programs. Lakeland is bigger than us and has more staff to work on their programs. He said he looks forward to reconstructing Grove Manor. He said we can do some of these on the list they are on the right track and fits with everything else. Mayor Fultz said that it was a great presentation. He encouraged Ms. Jones to try and keep her group together. Ms. Jones described her group and communication efforts with the community. Chair Robin Gibson recommended a community survey.

Ms. Jones said one was done at a community event. Mayor Fultz noted that it was similar to what Dover Kohl came up with through their public input process.

Commissioner Goldstein asked if we know how many heirs properties have title issues. Ms. Jones said they need to do an inventory as she is unsure. Mr. Fields said many were done during the C Street project. Ms. Jones said this could be a project for a staff person.

Mr. Fields said he would like to hire a staff person in conjunction with the Lincoln CDC similar to what was done for Main Street. This would be a CRA staff person. The model with Karen has worked well. Commissioner Howell said this person needs to be hired in consultation with the Lincoln CDC group. This person needs to not just be a City person. They need to get input from the community too. Chair Robin Gibson said like when Karen was hired each side should have veto power. Mr. Fields agreed and said the current model with Main Street, the CRA and hiring Karen has worked well and can do something similar for Lincoln Avenue. Mayor Fultz recommended that this staff person needs to be qualified and understands the community. Ms. Jones said the staff person needs to listen to the community. Karen Thompson said the person must be strong when needed.

Mr. Fields said we can get someone on board soon and use the current job description with some modifications.

Mr. Fields said discussions have begun with the TPO about the roundabout, to get that on their radar. They are also have already been looking into a Facade Improvement program. In regards to a Vital Repair Program this could include painting the exterior. The City can develop a program to help with infrastructure issues for residential and commercial buildings.

Mr. Fields asked for consensus to develop a contract with the Lincoln Ave CDC and move forward with an executive director. The board gave unanimous consent.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kenneth Fields, Executive Director, reported that they have begun the design work for redoing Park Avenue. The timeline is that we will be ready to go out for bids in the summer of 2021. The good thing about this is that their may be funding for stormwater work available. Stormwater work will be needed for rebuilding a street.

Commissioner Howell asked why it will take so long. Mr. Fields said the permitting process is a reason.

The request for proposals for the 1919 building is out and the RFP for the lots on B Street will be out soon.

There will be a presentation in May on possible streetscape improvements for Lincoln Avenue so we may be soon looking to do the design work for that. Victor Dover has a class of students that are helping with ideas.

Hops Shop and Stroll is on March 27. (This was later canceled)

Commissioner Goldstein recommended a workshop with merchants to see what their needs are. Two large businesses are closing downtown and we need to replace them. Ms. Thompson said they have merchant meetings quarterly. She gave more detailed information on the upcoming event. Ms. Thompson reported that Main Street has a committee that focuses on retention and on drawing in new businesses.

Ms. Thompson also announced that Melanie's Seafood will be opening soon.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

Al Davis, resident, spoke on affordable or workforce housing. His sister owned Lincoln cafe. He has property on B Street. He and his wife would like to provide housing for at risk and homeless people. He is concerned about Lot #19. He would like to work something out to do more than a duplex. Mr. Fields asked who owns

lot #19. Mr. Davis said he understands that it is owned by the CRA. Mr. Fields asked Mr. Davis to get information to Ms. Thompson and we can look into this possibility. Ms. Bangley, Assistant City manager, said it would have to be advertised like the others. Chair Robin Gibson said he hoped that there are more interested persons like Mr. Davis.

Commissioner Howell asked about the Food Truck issue. Ms. Bangley said that will come before the City Commission next Tuesday.

5. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Chair/Vice-Chair

ATTEST:

City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk