

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

Lincolntonville Community Redevelopment Area Steering Committee
November 10, 2015

The Lincolntonville Community Redevelopment Steering Committee met in formal session at 7:00 P.M., Tuesday, November 10, 2015, at the Willie Galimore Center. The meeting was called to order by Theresa Segal, Chairman, and the following were present:

1. **ROLL CALL**

Theresa Segal
Brian Thompson
Clyde Taylor
Nicholas Noloboff

Absent: Tony Smith

Staff Present:

Erin Minnigan, Planner II
David Birchim, Director Planning & Building
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
(October 13, 2015)

MOTION

Mr. Noloboff moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thompson and approved by a unanimous voice vote.

3. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sue Agresta reminded everyone about the Lincolntonville Festival that weekend.

A question was asked about what was being done about the boarded up houses in Lincolntonville.

Mr. Taylor said that many of the houses have absentee owners and there was not much that could be done in that regard. He said the LCRA could directly

help by referring boarded-up properties with title issues to Legal Aid, and subsequently provide Fix-it-Up funds. He also encouraged residents to call code enforcement if they saw issues.

Ms. Segal added that the remediation of blighted structures was something that existed in the Lincolntonville Redevelopment Plan, however the LCRA was only going into its third year and did not have enough funds to directly address the boarded up houses, but could assist through title clearing and Fix-it-Up grants.

Mr. Thompson asked whether overgrown vegetation was a code violation issue.

Mr. Birchim replied that yes, weeds and grass above a certain height was considered a code violation. He also

said that homes open to trespass was a code violation.

4. DISCUSSION

4. (a) Lincolnton Sidewalk Survey

Ms. Minnigan presented an overview of the agenda item. She said that Public Works had recently completed a survey detailing the condition and location of sidewalks that revealed that sidewalks were absent among the minor, interior streets of Lincolnton. She said a solution would be to add a few strategically placed lengths of sidewalk to connect major areas of Lincolnton. To create a sufficient network of sidewalks in Lincolnton, staff recommended a combination of installing new sidewalks, adding necessary sidewalk ramps, and removing deteriorated sections of existing sidewalks. She said staff recommended four major new sidewalk additions: the area around the Galimore Center and Vickers Park, the south side of Kings Ferry Way, the west side of Washington Street, and the south side of South Street.

She then introduced Ruben Franklin from the Public Works Department who was available to answer questions.

Ms. Segal asked for a walk through of the cost estimates of each recommended sidewalk project.

Mr. Franklin stated the following:

- He explained the cost estimates took into account materials, labor, and equipment.
- He explained that all new sidewalks needed to meet requirement set by the ADA, which stood for the American Disability Act. He said that specifically referred to the ramp cross slope and concrete detectors, which provide wheelchair access and assist the visually impaired.
- He emphasized that the figures provided were only estimates and the sidewalk projects could come in under budget. He encouraged the Steering Committee to choose a few priority sidewalk projects, and later decide how to spend the remaining budget.
- He provided a history of the city's efforts regarding sidewalks in Lincolnton. He said prior to the CRA, the city implemented sidewalks along MLK Ave. and started the attempt to connect Riberia Street to Marine Street along South Street.
- He said Lincolnton exhibited narrow right of ways and large trees that prohibited sidewalk construction.

Mr. Thompson asked if there was any concern from a city perspective of when the sidewalk crosses from one side of the street to the other.

Mr. Franklin said no, as long as it was properly signed and there was a crosswalk.

Public comment was opened:

Ms. Agresta asked if the south street sidewalk would be constructed by taking up part of the roadway.

Mr. Franklin said no, the sidewalk would be built from the back of the curb.

A question was asked about adding sidewalks to Duero Street.

Ms. Minnigan said Duero Street was discussed, but staff opted to recommend other routes.

Mr. Franklin added that staff focused on collector routes, such as South Street between Riberia and Marine, where there were no sidewalks yet.

Mr. Taylor asked why there were no sidewalks in front of Buckingham Smith.

Mr. Franklin responded that Public Works attempted to create connectivity in this area, but there was an accessibility ramp and large oak trees in the right of way.

Blake Souder asked if a speed hump or signal could be added to South Street to slow down traffic.

Mr. Franklin explained there was a form available for anyone wishing to get a speed hump installed, which required five to ten adjacent property owners

signatures. If properly submitted, the form would trigger a speed study that must show that more than 85% of the drivers in that area are exceeding 5 miles over the posted speed limit.

Delonja Duncan asked if South Street would have one-way traffic.

Mr. Franklin replied no.

Maxine Fleming asked how residents go about getting their street a sidewalk.

Ms. Minnigan said the Lincolnton Sidewalk Survey was completed to understand where sidewalks were existing and where it was possible to construct new sidewalks. She said the places where new sidewalks could be constructed was based on available space in the right of way.

Mr. Franklin reiterated that staff focused on adding sidewalks to arterial streets with a high volume of traffic.

Ms. Lopez asked Mr. Franklin to discuss the possibility of one-way pairs.

Mr. Franklin said one-way pairs reduce the traffic lanes and provide more room to work in the right of way. He said that would allow for the construction of more sidewalks as well as more green space.

Mr. Franklin said that a concern with one way pairs was emergency vehicle access due to the reconfiguration of traffic patterns.

Board discussion:

Ms. Segal asked if "Sidewalks and Infrastructure" was identified as a three-year fund in this year's budget.

Ms. Lopez said she recalled it being identified as a three-year revolving fund, but would need to check with the Finance Department.

Ms. Minnigan confirmed that Sidewalks and Infrastructure had been identified as a three year fund in this year's budget.

Ms. Segal asked if there were any sidewalk projects that the City had intended to complete that had now shifted over to the LCRA.

Mr. Franklin clarified that the intent was for the LCRA to pay for materials and the City would cover the equipment and labor.

Ms. Segal asked if the ADA accessible ramps were necessary and paid for by the CRA.

Mr. Franklin said that ADA ramps added to existing sidewalks would be considered a maintained item. Ms. Lopez clarified that maintenance is not paid for by the LCRA, but the LCRA could pay for Capital Improvements.

Mr. Franklin further stated than any work to existing sidewalks was considered a maintenance activity. He said LCRA money would only be used for adding new sidewalks.

Mr. Thompson said he thought it was important to start making connections around the Galimore Center because it was a community location.

Ms. Segal asked if all new sidewalks also needed ADA ramps and signage. Mr. Franklin replied that yes, all new sidewalks needed to meet ADA requirements.

Mr. Taylor pointed out that the MLK Ave. sidewalks were in poor condition. He asked about the possibility of an assessment of those sidewalks.

Mr. Franklin reiterated that the City would handle rehabilitating those sidewalks and not use LCRA money for that work.

Ms. Minnigan asked Mr. Franklin how quickly sidewalk projects get designed and constructed.

Mr. Franklin replied that a new sidewalk required two to three months of construction.

Mr. Taylor said he thought a pedestrian traffic study would be helpful for making a decision. He said he did not see the value of adding sidewalks to Kings Ferry Way and Washington Street because there was little pedestrian activity there.

Ms. Segal said adding sidewalks to the Galimore Center and South Street made sense, so the Steering Committee should move forward with approving those sidewalks.

Mr. Taylor asked about the response of property owners who would have the new sidewalks running through their front yards.

Mr. Franklin said the Public Works' employees would go door to door, and most property owners were receptive to new sidewalks.

Ms. Segal recommended the LCRA host a forum on sidewalks prior to the next funding cycle to gather public input.

MOTION

Ms. Segal motioned to recommend approval for new sidewalks to be added along Cero Street and around the Galimore Center, along South Street, and to the two gaps along Dr. Martin Luther King Avenue. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thompson. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

4. (b) Update the LCRA Steering Committee By-Laws

Ms. Minnigan gave an overview of the agenda item. She said that currently the by-laws outline three criteria for membership on the Steering Committee, stating that "preference shall be given to members who have established their primary residence within the Lincolnton CRA boundaries, have established a business within the Lincolnton CRA boundaries, or own real property within the Lincolnton CRA boundaries." She said that Lincolnton was a dynamic community, home to various

stakeholders, and the Steering Committee might want to consider broadening the criteria for board membership.

Ms. Segal asked if Ms. Lopez had any suggestions for the by-laws.

Ms. Lopez pointed to examples of by-laws from other communities including Pinellas County and Lakeland that allowed for "other stakeholders" as well as "business owners, property owners, or those employed" within the CRA boundaries to serve on the board. She said that at the last meeting there had been a discussion of including language such as "other stakeholders", or breaking it down further to include "non-profits, churches, and encourage diversity on the board."

Ms. Segal said the application used for the LCRA Steering Committee was the same as the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB). She said the Steering Committee should have its own application that clearly stated the membership criteria.

Ms. Segal pointed out that the phrase "preference shall be given" in the by-laws only meant more weight was given to those three categories of members, but did not limit other people in the community from applying to the Steering Committee.

Public comment was opened:

Ms. Fleming suggested including the criteria that a member must have spent at least two years in the community.

Mr. Souder asked if individuals who live on boats within the LCRA boundaries may apply.

Ms. Lopez said those individuals could likely apply if the boat served as their primary residence.

Mr. Thompson said he was concerned about making the by-laws to restrictive. He said the by-laws should encourage a more open group of applicants because there were so many churches and non-profits in the community.

Mr. Souder said some of the Flagler College dormitories were inside the LCRA boundaries and asked if a Flagler student could apply.

Ms. Lopez said that if the student's primary residence was the dorm, then yes they could apply.

Mr. Noloboff mentioned that during the latest HARB member appointment, the City Commission discussed the need for a cover letter, so the Commission could get a sense of why that person was applying and what they could contribute.

Board discussion:

Ms. Segal suggested adding to the current membership criteria "be an active member of a social, recreational,

religious or similar organization" located within the LCRA boundaries. She also suggested that if a person was active within such an organization, but did not live in the community, a letter be provided to show that person is representing the organization.

Mr. Thompson said he was worried about people who applied as a representative of an organization or board, but then ended their involvement after they were appointed to the Steering Committee. He said he felt that requirement created more complications.

Mr. Noloboff said that if someone applied as a stakeholder in a church or non-profit, it was important they identify their role in that organization.

Ms. Lopez suggested simply adding the phrase "or otherwise a stakeholder" to the criteria, and the applicant could explain their role as a community stakeholder and detail their qualifications in their cover letter.

Mr. Taylor asked about the possibility of addressing diversity in the by-laws.

Ms. Lopez suggested adding language that expressed the Steering Committees value of a diverse group of candidates to the City Commission.

Ms. Lopez suggested adding language that expressed the values of the Steering Committee to the City Commission. She suggested adding the statement: "the Steering Committee

values a diverse Steering Committee that is inclusive of various stakeholders in our community, such as but not limited to, non-profit organizations, social welfare organizations, churches, schools, etc.”

Nancy Sikes-Kline said she appreciated all of the Steering Committee’s efforts, especially to enhance the by-laws and to express a value for diversity on the board. She emphasized that the City Commission is responsible for appointing members to the Steering Committee.

Ms. Segal asked if a decision needed to be made that night or if there was still time to work on the by-law language.

Ms. Minnigan said the idea for this discussion was to produce some definite criteria to be added to the by-laws. She said she would use the suggestions from that meeting to revise the by-law language.

Ms. Lopez said staff would edit the by-law language and generate a new application and present that material at the December LCRA meeting.

Ms. Minnigan added that three seats on the Steering Committee would be opening up in the coming year, and she would be personally available to help anyone interested through the application process.

4. (c) Creation of a Contract for the Emergency Assistance Program

Ms. Minnigan provided an overview of the agenda item. She said that year the LCRA allocated \$125,000 to both the Fix-it-Up and Emergency Assistance Programs. She said that was the first year the Emergency Assistance Program was being finance and it needed a valid contract. She said a key difference between the two programs was that the Fix-it-Up provides up to \$7,000 in repairs, while the Emergency Assistance can provide up to \$10,000 in repairs. She said the current contract with St. Johns Housing Partnership for the Fix-it-Up Program cannot include the Emergency Assistance, because that contract stipulates it shall not exceed \$7,000 in repairs. Based on a review of the contract between the City of St. Augustine Community Redevelopment Agency and St. Johns Housing Partnership, and without the support of evidence to the contrary, staff found that the Steering Committee could **RECOMMEND** the establishment of a new contract with St. Johns Housing Partnership for the Emergency Assistance Program to the St. Augustine Community Redevelopment Agency.

Ms. Segal said she initially noticed overlap between the Fix-it-Up and Emergency Assistance Programs.

Ms. Lopez said if the feeling of the board was to create a separate contract, she would take the recommendation to the CRA, and then solicit a request for

proposals (RFP) for the Emergency Assistance Program contract.

Mr. Thompson said that he viewed Fix-it-Up items as something that might take some time, but Emergency Assistance was something that needed to happen immediately. He said there needed to be a clear distinction between the two programs.

Public comment was opened:

Ms. Fleming asked if the Fix-it-Up Program would be changing.

Mr. Birchim said no, the Fix-it-Up Program was not changing.

Ms. Lopez asked if from a contractual standpoint that the board wanted the Fix-it-Up and Emergency Assistance Programs under one umbrella contract.

Mr. Taylor asked if a person could apply for both the Fix-it-Up and Emergency Assistance Programs.

Mr. Birchim said that was never intended, but it should be considered now. He asked if the board thought it was the intent of the plan that a person should be allowed to leverage funds from both programs.

Ms. Segal said no, she did not think that was the intent.

Mr. Thompson agreed with Ms. Segal.

Ms. Minnigan said she had a conversation with staff at St. Johns

Housing Partnership, where they discussed the idea of reviewing the projects on a case-by-case basis and making an administrative decision as to which program applied.

Ms. Segal asked if an individual had received a Fix-it-Up grant, would they be able to apply to the Emergency Assistance Program.

Ms. Minnigan said that currently if an individual received a Fix-it-Up grant they may not apply again to the program.

Ms. Lopez suggested that one application be created, and then based on the needs and the actual structural issues, an administrative decision would be made as to whether it qualified for the Fix-it-Up or Emergency Assistance Program. She said that after an individual received money from either program, they would not be allowed to apply again.

Mr. Nolofoff said he felt there was some degree of want in the Fix-it-Up Program, while the Emergency Assistance was focused on need.

Ms. Segal asked if Bill Lazar could attend a meeting to discuss the difference between the two programs further.

Mr. Taylor motioned to recommend that a new contract be drafted to include the Emergency Assistance Program. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thompson. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

5. CITY ATTORNEY ITEMS

(None)

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6. (a) Announcements Regarding the Lincolnton Festival

Mr. Taylor said the Lincolnton Festival was being held that weekend and was free to the public. He said there would be music all day Saturday and Sunday, and vendors with food, drinks, and arts and crafts.

Mr. Taylor said the Lincolnton Festival Committee was looking forward to next year because it was Lincolnton's 150th anniversary.

6. (b) Upcoming Agendas

Ms. Minnigan said some material had come out of that night's meeting, including having Bill Lazar attend to discuss the Fix-it-Up and Emergency Assistance Programs, as well as review new language for the by-laws and a LCRA Steering Committee application at the next meeting.

Mr. Nolofoff asked about the status of the LCRA logo.

Ms. Minnigan announced that the LCRA was hosting a competition to design its official logo. She pointed out the logo design form and encouraged attendees to submit a design. She said the deadline for submissions was February 1, 2016.

Mr. Taylor asked about the terms of the current Steering Committee members.

Ms. Minnigan said three seats would open up on March 1, 2016.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00PM

Theresa Segal, Chairman

Erin Minnigan, Planner II