

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Community Redevelopment Agency
West City Community Redevelopment Area Steering Committee
Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 27, 2025

The West City Community Redevelopment Area Steering Committee met in formal session Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 5:00 P.M. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Arthur Culbert at 5:00 P.M., and the following members were present:

1. Roll Call: Arthur Culbert, Chairperson
Danya Markovits, Co-Chairperson
Brooke Bohall
BJ Kalaidi
Jeffrey Kempf
Jeanne Moeller
Wanda Sams

Absent: None

Staff Present: Jaime D. Perkins, Manager, Neighborhood Services and CRA
April Owen, Assistant City Attorney
Jill Collins, Administrative Coordinator, Neighborhood Services and CRA

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

a. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (January 9, 2024)

MOTION

Jeanne Moeller **MOVED to APPROVE** the meeting minutes from November 14, 2024, with identified corrections. The motion was **SECONDED** by Jeffrey Kempf and **APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE**.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT OR COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS NOT REQUIRING SEPARATE COMMENT PERIOD

3 Minutes per Individual

The Board heard from the following member of the public:

- Corrina Joyner

4. PRESENTATIONS & UPDATES

a. WCCRA Draft Plan Review and Approval

Jaime D. Perkins, Neighborhood Services and CRA Manager, provided an update to the latest version of the draft of the West City Community Redevelopment Area (WCCRA) Redevelopment Plan (Plan).

Ms. Moeller noted on page forty-two, under Mobility and Connectivity, a water taxi was listed and questioned where that could launch since the San Sebastian River was tidal and would pose difficulty going under the King Street bridge.

Ms. Perkins said it gave the option if the opportunity presented itself in the future, to

address something with a water taxi and there were no definitive plans for implementation.

Ms. Perkins reviewed a timeline for the Plan to be adopted, and if approved by the WCCRA Steering Committee, she would go to the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board on April 28, 2025, to ask for authorization to take it to the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) meeting on May 6, 2025. She said any updates recommended by the PZB would be made before going back to the CRA for a special meeting on May 12, 2025, and that same night at the Commission meeting there would be a first reading of the resolution to adopt the Plan and at the June 9, 2025, Commission meeting, a second reading of the resolution would be read and expectantly, the Plan would be adopted.

Arthur Culburt asked whether there would be an advantage for any of the steering committee members to attend those meetings.

Ms. Perkins encouraged the Steering Committee to attend the CRA, PZB and Commission meetings, to speak during public comment and/or to reach out to the Commissioners individually to express the work that was provided for the Plan and support for it to move forward. She added that she would email the Committee the adoption schedule.

MOTION

Ms. Moeller MOVED to approve the WCCRA Redevelopment Plan as written. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Markovits.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: Moeller, Markovits, Culbert, Kempf, Sams, Bohall

NAYES: Kalaidi

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ITEMS

a. Other/New Business

(None)

6. ITEMS BY CITY ATTORNEY

Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney, provided an update to the Committee regarding two companion bills in Tallahassee that could greatly affect CRAs statewide. She said the key elements were that CRAs would not be allowed to expend new funds in the next fiscal year, which meant no new projects could be added to the budget. She said this could greatly impact West City since there was no budget this year, it would mean that no West City projects could be identified and budgeted for future funding. She noted there had been many leaders in Florida advocating against the bills and the City hired a legislative consultant or lobbyist to advocate for the City who does not believe those bills would not progress successfully through the state legislature because of wide-ranging opposition.

Ms. Perkins asked if there were any directives Ms. Lopez could offer the board regarding the bills.

Ms. Lopez encouraged the board and community to individually write letters. She said Ms. Perkins had emailed the board the information regarding the bills and who to contact at the state and local level to express opposition.

Ms. Moeller asked if the bills passed would there be an opportunity to work with the City and County to implement the projects and programs in the Plan that West City needed to address the blight and slum in the area until a new legislature formed in February or March of 2026.

Ms. Lopez explained it would be largely more difficult to address blighted conditions in West City outside of a CRA which utilized the special Tax Incremental Funding (TIF).

Ms. Perkins added that CRAs proved to be a vital tool to blighted and slum communities for revitalization.

Ms. Moeller expressed concern over the implementation timeline of an age-in-place program and the reality that many residents were in dire need. She said those residents could be displaced or pass away if the initial administrative funds the City extended were required to be paid back to the General Fund.

Ms. Perkins said that if nothing happened in Tallahassee this year and the WCCRA could move forward, it would require time to allow the TIF funds to accrue, which meant implementing programs and projects would not be immediate.

Ms. Moeller said she realized that enough funding would not be accrued until 2029 through 2031 and having to repay the \$100,000 to the General Fund would delay the accrual of TIF funds and which made it that much longer to offer assistance programs to the residents in most need.

Ms. Perkins stated that if the \$100k repayment to the General Fund was something she was ardent about, attending the Commission and Agency meetings to voice her concerns was highly recommended.

Ms. Lopez stated anyone on the board or in the community could attend the Commission and Agency meetings to suggest the money be paid back in increments or when there could be more substantial funds accrued to pay it back further into the Plan. She said it would allow implementation of an age-in-place repair program on the front end to quickly assist elders.

Ms. Perkins clarified that this was a topic to take to the Commission not the CRA board because it related to the General Fund.

Ms. Lopez added they could email the Commissioners tonight to make their recommendation about how the money would be repaid.

Mr. Culbert asked if there were talking points Ms. Lopez could provide to use that would be effective when reaching out to the legislature.

Ms. Lopez said she would email talking points to Ms. Perkins to be forwarded to the board.

Mr. Culbert asked if, in the future, he had a specific request for a program to be implemented in West City would it be appropriate to attend upcoming meetings to suggest those.

Ms. Lopez said that after the committee dissolved, the members were encouraged and free to work together to advocate for the specific programs and projects they supported, since they would no longer be under Sunshine laws.

7. ITEMS BY CITY STAFF

Ms. Perkins announced the City of St. Augustine Community Redevelopment Agency was celebrating *Redevelopment 25!* for the twenty-fifth year anniversary of establishing the first CRA, the Historic Area Community Redevelopment Area (HACRA). She said during the year-long celebration, there would be a series of community engagement efforts starting in the newest area, West City, and would end in the oldest, the HACRA. She said Wednesday, April 16, 2025, all were invited to come out to hear the live band, pizza, and public engagement during the West King Wednesday Market. She stated many of the West City businesses donated gift cards and discounts for giveaways and a flyer would be circulated with the information and although the board was dissolving, they were encouraged to continue involvement as constituents in processes as much as possible.

Ms. Perkins expressed gratitude to the committee members on behalf of the City of St. Augustine for their time and effort provided during the process and completion of their civic duty.

Mr. Culburt expressed his appreciation on behalf of the board to Ms. Perkins, Ms. Lopez and Ms. Collins.

Diana Markovits asked Ms. Perkins to expand on the award for West City.

Ms. Perkins said that the Florida Redevelopment Association (FRA) highlighted projects and programs for the individual CRAs in the state and the West City Finding of Necessity Study was chosen for the Plans and Studies Award. She added this was the first award the CRA had won and it was displayed in the CRA lobby.

8. NEXT MEETING DATE:

None.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 P.M.

Minutes Transcribed by: Jill Collins