



MINUTES

Community Redevelopment Agency Meeting

5:30 PM – Thursday, December 12, 2024 – City Hall

Call to Order: 5:30 p.m.

Acknowledgement of Quorum and Proper Notice

PRESENT: Mr. Gary Ashcraft, Ms. Christine Cruz, Mr. Willie Hawkins, Vice Chair Emily Lee and Chairman Michael Holland

1. Approval of Minutes

August 1, 2024 CRA Meeting

Motion made by Mr. Ashcraft, Seconded by Mr. Hawkins, to approve the Minutes. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Mr. Ashcraft, Ms. Cruz, Mr. Hawkins, Vice Chair Lee, Chairman Holland

2. CRA Item with Board Discussion, Public Hearing and Direction

2.1 CRA Resolution Number 24-01: Approving An Exclusive Rights to Negotiate Development Agreements For The Eustis Downtown and East Town Redevelopment Agency Former Waterman Hospital

Tom Carrino, City Manager, asked if the board would accept public input since there is no Audience to be Heard. The Board agreed to allow public input prior to getting into discussion on the issue. It was agreed to allow three minutes per person.

Chairman Holland opened the floor to public comment at 5:31 p.m.

George Asbate noted that it took the City of Winter Garden almost 25 years to get their plans completed. He commented on the need for the agreement to include items such as benchmarks for standards, pre-development agreements, thresholds and other issues. He stated the subject agreement is a good foundation but needs to have the items he mentioned added. He recommended postponing consideration until other items may be added to the agreement.

Sean Jenness expressed opposition to the agreement. He indicated the project should not be market driven but should be a market driver. He recommended that the City create a community advisory committee under the CRA to provide input from the community. He added that previous discussion was for underground parking and the agreement calls for surface parking. He suggested that the properties be subdivided with the public spaces and green spaces carved out.

Daniel DiVenzano commented on the nature of the agreement being non-binding and premature given the expected growth of the market in Central Florida. He expressed concern about the possibility of the project including low income housing. He stated that surface parking would not suffice for the project. He referenced Item #8 in the

agreement and cautioned getting locked into something. He stated the agreement is premature.

Mr. Asbate referenced Item #9b and said that it indicates milestones that were not attached to the agreement.

Chairman Holland asked City Attorney Sasha Garcia for her input.

Attorney Garcia indicated she had reviewed the agreement and noted there are elements missing from the agreement.

Mr. Carrino explained that the agreement is just the first step in a number of agreements. He stated that the CRA is not ready to commit to G3C2 as they still need to flesh out their concept. He added that this is a compromise for a first step. He further explained the agreement does not commit the CRA to any money and only provides for the CRA to work with G3C2 for six months while they develop a concept for the project using the master plan as a basis. He stated that is why there is not a lot of details in the agreement. He continued that the agreement allows G3C2 to develop their initial concept and bring it back to the CRA. They have six months to accomplish that. Once the preliminary concept is submitted, the CRA can review it and decide if they want to move to the next step or go in a different direction. He indicated that, if the agreement was for the sale or lease of the property or for a long term commitment, then it would be premature. He emphasized it is just a first step to develop the concept for the project. It simply guarantees the CRA will work with them exclusively for six months. He confirmed it does not lock the CRA into any commitment. He added that it only applies to the Waterman three-block site.

Mr. Hawkins commented on the previous Atrium proposal and stated he does not blame a company for wanting some assurance about the CRA working with them exclusively and stated that the agreement is a good first step.

Jerry Gunther, G3C2 Representative, commented on their request to have six months to develop a plan to give the City a concept for the way to move forward.

Mr. Hawkins asked if G3C2 would agree to benchmarks within the six month timeframe with Mr. Gunther agreeing to that. He expressed agreement to provide a timeline.

Mr. Ashcraft stated that the six months is the benchmark with Mr. Hawkins indicating there needs to be a timeline for their work.

Discussion was held regarding possible benchmarks and when concepts would be provided with Mr. Carrino indicating that staff could place them on the agenda every month or two months to provide an update.

Discussion was held regarding the need to move forward with Ms. Cruz expressing concern about moving forward based on the comments made by the City Attorney.

Attorney Garcia indicated that the proposed agreement needs to include some termination language that would allow the agreement to end if the Commission is unhappy with what is presented at the benchmarks.

Vice Chair Lee questioned why are the concerns only coming up that night instead of being addressed previously.

Mr. Hawkins asked when the agreement was submitted with Mr. Carrino indicating the template was presented by Derek Wallace about three to four weeks previously and they have been working on it since then.

Mr. Wallace explained it is a basic agreement that would then move to a pre-development agreement. He stated there is a lot of work that has to occur within the next six months.

Mr. Carrino asked Attorney Garcia if the monthly updates would satisfy her concerns with Attorney Garcia responding that could be included. She emphasized her concern that it does not include termination language so the CRA does not have to continue for the entire six months if what they present in the interim does not meet with the CRA's satisfaction.

Mr. Gunther responded that this is just a start; however, if the project does not meet expectations, they would be happy to bow out as their time is what is valuable to them.

Mr. Hawkins noted that G3C2 would be expending money over those six months; however, the CRA would not be; therefore, they would not be risking anything.

Mr. Wallace noted the concepts are present in the master plan and the project will consist of a number of smaller projects.

Chairman Holland asked about the stability of their business relationship with Mr. Wallace and Mr. Gunther assuring them they are working together.

Mr. Carrino confirmed they need the resolution voted on by the CRA.

Discussion was held regarding adding the benchmarks into the agreement.

Mr. Carrino also confirmed that the agreement does not have to go to the Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Hawkins, Seconded by Mr. Ashcraft, to approve CRA Resolution Number 24-01 with the addition of the benchmarks. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Mr. Ashcraft, Mr. Hawkins, Vice Chair Lee, Chairman Holland

Voting Nay: Ms. Cruz

3. Adjournment: 6:03 P.M.

**These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to www.eustis.org and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*

CHRISTINE HALLORAN
City Clerk

MICHAEL L. HOLLAND
Chairmen