



## STAFF REPORT

### CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

**TO:** City Council Regular Session

**MEETING DATE:** January 20, 2026

**FROM:** Mike Null, Interim City Manager

**SUBJECT:** Review of Bid RFP 2025-04 – Rivers House Interior Buildout and Council discussion of Rivers House disposition. *Mike Null*

#### BACKGROUND

When the property located at 219 Spring was advertised for sale in 2020, the City purchased the property with the intent of controlling the future of the property since it abuts Spring Park.

Since then, there has been no clear direction from the City Council as to what the final use of the property should be. The only consensus from the City Council was to not demolish the house. In 2021, the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was tasked with developing suggestions for a final use for the property to be reported back to the City Council. The attached list titled “Rivers House Sub-committee” was presented to City Council on May 3, 2022. The list of proposed uses included eco-tourism, community center, small business incubator, or a small café.

In January 2023, staff proceeded with removal of lead and asbestos from the house in preparation for future restoration. Much of the siding was removed as part of the abatement process and the house sat partially exposed for over a year. The second document titled “Rivers House” was presented to City Council on March 21, 2023. City Council directed staff to move forward with gathering data for pricing and use. City staff proceeded with a limited structural review which was presented to City Council on July 11, 2023.

Based on Council direction, staff published a bid in September 2023 to make certain repairs, to which there were no responses received. In April 2024, a second bid was published. One response was received, but not by a licensed contractor so it was rejected. Then in June 2024, staff published a bid for contractors to make exterior improvements including:

- Make repairs to the front porch
- Remove the sleeping porch
- Demolish an addition on the right side of the building
- Reclaim as much siding as possible
- Paint the exterior
- Complete limited structural repairs underneath the building.

One bid was received from Bourre Construction, who was awarded the contract. During the construction process, replacement of the roof and the exterior siding was added to the scope of the project. This project was completed in January 2025.

In June 2025, an RFP (Request for Proposals) was published with the intent of receiving submittals from potential tenants to occupy the building. One proposal was received from Steven Kelley representing the

Rivers House Welcome and Adventure Center. The proposed funding source was CRA funding or other grant funding to be secured by the City, Clay TDC Grants and private funding. The budget for this project is approximately \$500,000.

Staff is requesting direction from the City Council as to whether to accept or reject this proposal. Given that there is no funding currently programmed and the City's current finances, staff recommends rejecting this proposal at this time.

Staff continues to explore grant opportunities and has the County grants team seeking out grants on our behalf. The challenge is that any grant will generally have a turn-around time of two months or less, and we will have to have a specific use identified. Many grants will also require a 50% match. While staff is not expecting any final decisions this evening, we further request guidance from City Council regarding a timeline as well as any process suggestions to determine a single proposed use to enable staff to target viable grant funding sources.

## FISCAL IMPACT

To date, the City has expended approximately \$672,097 broken down as follows:

- Appraisal – \$1,500
- Purchase – \$285,795
- Hulsberg - limited structural review - \$2,000
- Lead and Asbestos Removal – \$26,000
- Dry-in, siding, roof, structural repairs - Bourre Construction Group - \$356,802.

There are no funds budgeted in the FY26 city budget and there are no funds proposed in the FY26 five-year CIP budget. As mentioned above, staff does not recommend expending city funds on this project in FY26 or FY27 or until the city's financial position improved markedly.

## RECOMMENDATION

Subject to Council Direction regarding use, timeline and funding.