



STAFF REPORT

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

TO: Community Redevelopment Agency **MEETING DATE:** April 4, 2024
FROM: Gabriel Barro, Planning & Zoning
SUBJECT: Public Art Strategies March 7, 2024 Special Session Recap

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the March 7 meeting of the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Board discussing public art projects. More specifically, this report is intended to briefly highlight ideas proposed by the public for ideas on art installations and other projects intended to help the city be more visually appealing and attract tourism. This was the second meeting of the CRA Board to discuss utilizing funds from the defined CRA area and grants, such as the Florida Arts and Culture grant or the National Endowment for Arts, to create public art projects within the city of Green Cove Springs.

Mike Daniels, Development Services Director, opened the meeting by briefly explaining the purpose of a CRA. Mike Daniels then introduced Kimberly Morgan, Director of Tourism & Film Development for Clay County, who gave a PowerPoint presentation on ways to integrate the history and culture of Green Cove Springs into potential public art projects. Kimberly Morgan began by listing the various unique cultural events that occur within Clay County and Green Cove Springs, specifically mentioning the Clay County Fair and the Scottish Games. An emphasis was placed on the idea of defining and promoting Green Cove Spring's 'brand'. This would involve utilizing the history of Green Cove Springs and Clay County in tourist attractions. Specifically, a southern rock and roll hall of fame, public art installations, festivals, unique retail locations, breweries/distilleries, and (eventually) major attractions were identified as key attractions to be invested in. The initial steps of creating a brand for the city involved using CRA funds and grants to create public art installations.

After the presentation, the discussion was opened to public comments. Citizens were allowed to make recommendations for what they thought would make good use of CRA funds in public art projects.

Public Comments

Angie Hindle voiced concerns that the CRA should include the entire city. It was explained that the CRA funds can only be applied to a specific area after a series of studies are conducted to determine which areas need redevelopment.

Barbara Cornet proposed the creation of a sculpture at the city gateway signage location dedicated to the musical history of the area. She especially emphasized using the quote "lift every voice" as inspiration for this sculpture.

Henrietta Francis envisions a trail in honor of Augusta Savage or other artists. She was concerned that the Augusta Savage Arts and Community Center was an uninteresting building and could use a facelift to help the building reflect its artistic nature. She later proposed creating an interactive mural on the side of a gym.

Jim Arnold mentioned a restaurant that had walls decorated with the works of famous artists. He proposed incentivizing local restaurants to do the same. Jim Arnold also had the idea of a line of statues running down US 17. The first statue would be of a Native American reaching out to the next statues. The next statue would then be one of the first European settlers to arrive in Florida, also reaching to the next statue. This pattern would follow a line of statues running the length of US 17, with the statues being of local historical figures lined in chronological order.

Pat Garlinghouse proposed the idea of painting a mural on the side of the Clay County courthouse.

Heather Ivy of The Art Room described a series of sculptures located in Gainesville. The sculptures consisted of the solar system, with the sun and the planets all being to scale respective of one another. The sun and planets were then displayed in order with their distance apart also being to scale. The solar system was displayed on a trail called the Solar Walk.

Kimberly Morgan stated that the CRA would create an opportunity to decorate the exterior of abandoned buildings so they would be less of an eyesore until they can be sold and revitalized.

Other Recommendations

In order to establish a brand that represents the City of Green Cove Springs, ideas for potential themes that relate to the city's history and culture were gathered.

Spring Park/springs – The city and local area is known for natural freshwater springs.

Boats/ships – Green Cove Springs great access to the waters of the St. Johns River, promoting boat manufacturing and private boat ownership.

Dairy cows – The Gustafson Dairy Farm is a notable part of the city's history.

Monarch Butterflies – The city is a member of Monarch City USA, which promotes the preservation of monarch butterflies.

Bees – Green Cove Springs is a city with an interest in the conservation of nature. Protecting bees is a potential way of building on that image.

Decorating city utility infrastructure – Stormwater drains, and electric transformers are often an eyesore. Painting or otherwise decorating these utility items could be a unique way for the city to help with unsightly infrastructure while also creating an image of Green Cove Springs as an arts-oriented city.

Art Walk- Hosting a monthly art walk or art related event could draw more tourism and establish Green Cove Springs as a center for arts and culture. Walnut Street and Spring Park would make good locations to host such events.

Potential Fundraising Sources

Funding from the CRA will not be available until 2025. In the meantime, city staff is identifying other means of funding to get arts and culture projects started until then. Other than previously mentioned grants, city staff has identified two other potential sources of funding. One option for funding comes from Clay County's Tourism Department. The Clay County Tourism Department offers grants for signature events, special events, and sports events. Another potential source of funding comes in the form of allocating funds from the City of Green Cove Spring's budget.

The potential projects mentioned above are relatively inexpensive and can be implemented sooner rather than later. Utilizing funds from sources other than the CRA leaves open the possibility of expanding certain art projects past the limits of the defined CRA and into the whole of Green Cove Springs.