

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY MEETING

A Regular Community Redevelopment Meeting was held on January 24, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

CRA Board President Wilkeson called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. Roll call was taken. Present were members Jodi Wilkeson, Lance Smith, Kenneth Burgess, Alan Knight, Charles Proctor and Mayor Gene Whitfield. City Manager William Poe and City Attorney Matthew Maggard were also present.

Staff present: CRA Director Gail Hamilton, Police Chief Derek Brewer, Planning Director Todd Vande Berg, Public Information Officer Kevin Weiss, IT Director Mike Panak, Main Street Director Faith Wilson and City Clerk Lori Hillman.

1. BUSINESS ITEMS

1.1 Approval/Correction of Minutes – November 29, 2021 Minutes

Lance Smith moved to approve the November 29, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Alan Knight. Motion passed unanimously.

1.2 Little But Loud – Backyard Park Presentation

Aaron Banks – Furr Wegman & Banks Architects, P.A. – 625 E. Orange Street – Lakeland, FL 33801

Mr. Banks narrated a PowerPoint Presentation of the Little but Loud Park final concept plans. A level of vitality and activity will be added downtown by creating a plaza on the corner of 6th Avenue and 8th Street with outdoor dining, individual shade structures, a multi-purpose stage with amphitheater style seating, outdoor lighting and indoor/outdoor carpet; the essence of “backyard.” The wall of the CPA office adjacent to the site has been commissioned for a public art mural and will serve as a surface to project movies on movie night. Low fencing will front 8th Street to define the space and provide a level of security for families with small children. The container restaurant’s seating will overlook the covered stage area and electric and water will be provided for food trucks lining the street to eliminate generators. Substantial improvements will be made to the alleyway between the Eagles and Barber Shop buildings with lighting, landscaping and accessibility to attract patrons with a formal entryway on 8th Street. Black metal materials will be used to tie into the metal on City Hall and the Library along with the block awnings and black metal acorn light fixtures throughout downtown. Red brick and black iron were used to tie into the municipal architecture of the City. Existing restrooms will be accessible on 5th Avenue.

CRA Director Gail Hamilton advised Main Street’s Design Committee has reviewed and approved the construction documents which will require low maintenance. She said the site will provide merchants on 5th Avenue with an opportunity to promote their businesses and envisions utilizing the stage for aerobics and yoga on Saturday and/or Sunday mornings with the park programmed on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday afternoon through an agreement with Main Street. The CRA is in the early stages of securing a lease with someone to address maintenance, secure furniture and lock structures in the evening.

A discussion began around the Little But Loud venue as a City park that will follow the same rules as other parks and close at 10 p.m. The site could be used as an incubator with short-term leases for micro businesses. Music could be provided to the venue using existing speakers and music controlled by the City or citizens could use their phones to connect to preapproved music through Bluetooth. Council concurred a storage container on rollers was needed to secure furniture, cushions, etc. when the venue is closed. Board member Knight was adamant that no alcohol be served.

Spoke from the floor: Eileen Westermann – 5522 17th Street – Zephyrhills, FL

Ms. Westermann said the homeless and panhandler situation needs to be addressed prior to creating a new park venue as the homeless currently sleep in the downtown area. She referred to the park concept and questioned whether a stage was needed with an existing stage in Clock Plaza on 5th Avenue.

CRA Board President Wilkeson suggested moving into an interim phase to view dimensional floorplans with examples of materials with elevations rather than moving immediately into construction documents.

Lance Smith moved to proceed forward with project development of a schematic phase of design and materials. Seconded by Kenneth Burgess. Motion passed unanimously.

1.3 Residential Ownership Incentive Grant: 38533 8th Avenue, Sarah and Tim Walsh

CRA Director Gail Hamilton said the grant application meets all the requirements and recommended Council's approval of the \$5,000 Residential Ownership Incentive Grant.

Lance Smith moved to approve Business Item 1.3. Seconded by Alan Knight. Motion passed unanimously.

1.4 Residential Facade Grant: 38533 8th Avenue, Sarah and Tim Walsh

CRA Director Gail Hamilton said the grant application meets all requirements and recommended Council's approval of the Residential Facade Grant. Applicant will add Hardie Siding, remove asbestos, repair windows, and add an addition to the rear of the structure. The application meets all the requirements of the grant and staff recommended approval.

Kenneth Burgess moved to approve Business Item 1.4. Seconded by Lance Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

1.5 Residential Paint Grant: 38533 8th Avenue, Sarah and Tim Walsh

CRA Director Gail Hamilton said the grant application meets all requirements and recommended Council's approval of the \$500 matching Residential Paint Grant.

Lance Smith moved to approve Business Item 1.5. Seconded by Kenneth Burgess. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Burgess recommended staff request homeowner's presence in the future.

2. CRA DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2.1 CRA Director Gail Hamilton said survey work is ongoing at Hercules Park, staff is working with consultants to schedule a public meeting with the Parks Advisory Board, and a Request for Quote (RFQ) is being created for a Construction Manager at Risk as part of the design for value added engineering with Kimley Horn. Surveying has begun for the 10 miles of sidewalk project, final street sign plans are being reviewed for 5th Avenue and cameras have been installed downtown.

3. MAIN STREET ACTIVITY REPORT

3.1 Main Street Zephyrhills Founders Day: Board Vice President and Promotion Committee Chair Devin Alexander

Mr. Alexander provided a brief history of Founder's Day which began in September 1949 as Pioneer Day to highlight the work of Founder Captain Jefferies. He said Main Street approves their event schedule in December prior to the upcoming year and schedules Founder's Day on the first Saturday in March closest to the 10th (on or prior to the 10th). In an effort to provide a timeline of events, he explained Main Street was notified in September 2021 that the Chamber of Commerce was selected by the Florida BBQ Association to host the 2022 State BBQ Championship at the Pigz in Z'hills BBQ & Blues event on March 5, 2022. Main Street Director Faith Wilson met with the BBQ & Blues committee to potentially join the two events and the Pigz in Z'hills BBQ & Blues committee was not keen on the idea. At this point, Main Street returned to the drawing board to entertain viable options and decided to host an event at the conclusion of the BBQ and Blues event on March 5, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in Clock Plaza with a band and food trucks to keep with the Founder's Day tradition, minus the parade. The Main Street Board was advised by City Manager William Poe that the City did not have resources for police and public works personnel available to support both events on the same day. The Main Street Board met to weigh the pros and cons and collectively decided to move the event to an alternative date for 2022 only. Moving forward, the Main Street Board requested no more cross scheduling of events to eliminate this situation from reoccurring in the future to assure all organizations within the City are supported 100%.

A conversation began with CRA Board Member Knight and Mayor Whitfield opposing Main Street's decision to host Founder's Day without the traditional parade, alternate dates were discussed when City resources would be available, and a possible conflict was mentioned with scheduling events on two consecutive weekends utilizing City resources for police and public works personnel, event sponsorships from local businesses, and recruiting volunteers who are shared by the Chamber and Main Street. Lastly, a decrease in parade participation.

CRA Board President Wilkeson suggested moving the Founder's Day Parade to March 12th with the understanding it will be a strain on resources. She suggested reaching out to other community civic organization such as Rotary, Kiwanis, and the Eagles to assist with the event.

City Manager William Poe advised Main Street's goal tonight was to respond to the outcry from residents on Facebook with cancelling the Founder's Day Parade and have a conversation with the CRA Board to explain their thought process. The Main Street Board is working to figure out what does Founder's Day look like this year minus the parade. If Council is set on a parade, there has to be time to plan and secure participants and sponsors or the event will take place this year without a parade and return in traditional form next year. He said the message that needs to go out tonight is that Main Street needs more hands on deck and requested citizens bring their talents, abilities and willingness to help.

Mayor Whitfield said he is the elephant in the room because he made a comment to the news which he does not regret and cleared the air by stating social media got it wrong because he did not say anything derogatory about Main Street. He said he was surprised that Main Street had decided not to host a Founder's Day Parade and he was concerned. He said he supports the parade and would like to decide on an alternative date. He said history is too valuable to lose and if we don't carry on the tradition, we have nothing to pass onto our children. He said it was the tradition originally to hold Founder's Day in September but due to hurricanes, the date was moved to March. The City is to blame for citizens not knowing what is going on because there is nothing on the City's website explaining the cross scheduling of events.

CRA Board President Wilkeson said the CRA Board is evenly split between reimagine next year and hosting a parade on an alternative date. She requested Main Street bring information to the next meeting to make a final decision.

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Spoke from the Floor: Eileen Westermann – 5522 17th Street – Zephyrhills, FL

Ms. Westermann said she called Main Street Director Faith Wilson and offered her assistance to help with the parade and recruit volunteers. She said she restored the Captain Jefferies House and understands how important Founder's Day is to the City's history. She shared Ms. Wilson's vision to host an evening parade themed for a specific era followed by a street party with attendees dressed up in the selected era with a band and food. She said she feels bad that Main Street took such a beating on social media. She said she is the founding president of Main Street and the Founder's Day Parade is very dear to her heart.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:15 p.m.
Submitted by Lori L. Hillman