

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Nixon.

Roll call

Present: Chair R. Nixon, Member D. Milton-Jackson, Member S. Hannigon, Member F. Bass-Prieto, Member Price

Also present:

CRA Manager Regina Davis
Attorney Brown

Agenda

The sole purpose of meeting is to identify priorities and determine direction; meeting to move forward with said items.

Member Demous enters.

CRA Manager's Report – the regular CRA board meeting was last Tuesday, they were presented with the proposed budget adopted by the Advisory board, they had the following concerns:

- SEEP – Questioned the amount set aside for the program and whether or not the program should be revised
- Façade Program –whether or not the amount should be moved a bit to include the additional funding for the Gadsden Arts Center. The Art Center had a separate line item for \$10K that will be folded into this line item.
- Tanyard Creek – During the regular board meeting there was discussion as to the budget for Tanyard Creek projects. The manager recommends a \$0 budget for the 2016-17 year vs. the current year's budget of \$90,000. These funds could then be used for economic development and possible the catalysts projects. The City and CRA attorneys will meet August 17th, 11am at City Hall to discuss the future of Tanyard Creek and to determine what is the best avenue as to whether the City of CRA should be completing this project and handling the maintenance. In her opinion spending a third of TIF funds for Tanyard Creek is not a good idea as it does not generate any TIF dollars. Not a wise investment of CRA funds. They will be holding a workshop regarding this item.

The budget will be forwarded to the Finance Department as drafted. Will move forward in budget hearings for input from Commissioners and public. The regular board will hold a workshop to discuss Tanyard Creek and finalize the budget.

As discussed in last month's meeting, each member was asked to contact the Commissioner for there area, discuss their priorities and bring that information back to advisory meeting.

Member Demous (Dowdell) – priorities are economic development, job creation, small businesses, ditches and infrastructure.

Member Bass-Prieto (Gay) – needs more time to determine what those priorities are but economic development is always a priority. Would like to stay away from loans or bonds for projects, look for grants for old Police building.

Chair Nixon would like to see the following:

- * coordinate façade grant on Adams Street
- * coordinate façade grant on front street
- * North infield project

Complete of the first two should provide something visible that will hopefully motivate other businesses.

Member Price

- * water park on vacant land to generate revenue and increase tourism
- * would like to see a park in Oak Park Community (Circle Drive area)

Member Bass noted that a park is in the works.

Manager stated that the business park might be a good area. She also noted that this is a project she brought to the board previously but they declined. A feasibility study was needed at an approximate cost of \$10K.

It was agreed that the priorities brought forth by Advisory Board would be:

1. North Infield project

* Manager Davis indicated she is working with the property owner to finalize the purchase amount. She explained that the state is currently testing the property for contamination. This is a process that has gone on over a period of years, to date no contamination has been found.

* Member Hannigon pointed out that there is some work being done on the infield site already. Manager explained that the State is actually doing testing at the site, this is a recurring process and so far it has not shown any toxins. Asked that we receive documentation on when the State started testing and how long they will continue, this will work in our favor for a potential buyer.

2. Water park – All agreed that this is a great idea and a viable project. The City could also benefit when water/sewer lines are extended to this area. TIF dollars are allowed to be used for pipes also. Additional funding/assistance from the Gadsden County Development Council was also discussed. This would be a great partnership opportunity for the CRA, City, County and private entity.

Infrastructure and the restructuring of the façade grant program would be the secondary focus

After discussing the priorities, Chair Nixon pointed out the need to get a list of projects and priorities from the City to not only be informed but to ensure that CRA projects don't compete with yet compliment their objectives.

Manager recommends above ground projects unless we are helping the City on a specific project.

Motion to charge the manager to develop correspondence to the city manager requesting a meeting to determine what the current projects/priorities of the City are and also requesting that we engage in discussions with the appropriate department heads. Motion seconded by Member Price. Motion passes with unanimous vote.

Attorney pointed out that any time the board meets there will need to be notice as of that meeting. So once the meeting is set up noticed to avoid violation of open meetings law.

The priorities list will remain at the two items discussed and hopefully we can add the third after the meetings with City staff.

Chair Nixon recommends a three step process to provide the manager with the support she needs when taking ideas to the regular board.

The first step would be the development of a five year plan for the CRA. The next step would be the creation of 3 to 4 focus groups/meetings to engage the community; get specific input from businesses in CRA district. This will also build some consensus from the community by letting them know what's going on. Finally would be garnering input from business owners and private community through surveys. A draft business owner survey was provided. It was motioned by Member Bass-Prieto to direct the Manager to convene a minimum of 4 focus groups and initiate a survey after review/approval from the board. Seconded by Member Hannigon. Motion passes unanimously.

The survey will be made available on the website and notification in the local papers.

Member Bass-Prieto had the following comments:

- * would like to see a list of available properties
- * recommends that the CRA start showcasing their accomplishments so the public is well aware of how their CRA dollars are at work

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by F. Bass-Prieto, seconded by D. Milton-Jackson. Meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.

The next meeting is September 20, 2016 at 6:00pm.