

CRA Board Meeting
CITY HALL
QUINCY, FLORIDA

August 9, 2016
5:00 pm

The Quincy Community Redevelopment Agency Board met in regular session on Tuesday, August 9, 2016 with Chairman Elias presiding and the following **present**:

Board Member Daniel McMillan
Board Member Keith Dowdell

Also present:

CRA Manager Regina Davis

CRA Attorney Hubert Brown

Call to Order

Chairman Elias called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and stated that there is no official agenda as the proposed FY16-17 budget will be the only topic of discussion.

The Manager indicated that the Advisory Board meet last Tuesday to review the budget and this is the product of their input and approval. Board Member McMillan was also a part of that meeting. The Advisory Board reviewed the budget one line item at a time and expressed concern about the following items.

(Board Member Andy Gay enters)

Senior Energy Efficiency Program - The Advisory Board had lots of discussion based on the Manager's recommendation to reduce the amount from FY16 \$200,000 to FY17 \$100,000. Their concerns/comments included: ranged from spending money on houses with little value, to making repairs that only serve as a bandage to other issues, to the need to increase the budget to make a larger impact. May come back at a later date with suggestions for a different type of program; Why are funds aren't being spent as much; may or may not recommend that the type of program be changed.

Discussion:

Member Gay – some homes are in bad shape, better served looking at extended partnership with Habitat for Humanity to build new homes. Program is putting bandage on deeper issues.

Member Dowdell – Have you reviewed Housing Asst Plan with Advisory Board?
No but I have explained this is not the same type of project. Verified they understand the cap.

(Board Member Angela Sapp enters)

Manager Davis– May be a need to modify program to target something else to possibly increase prop value; \$100K is not the solution; rehab would be more like \$50k per home; there are lots of applicants but the \$10K is not enough at times to cover some of the needed repairs (roofs, plumbing, etc.)

Member McMillan – Not maximizing our projects or tax dollars; inspections at an avg cost of \$1000 per house; limited number of contractors which makes it difficult to complete projects within the year; consider roofing project larger impact, more efficient

Member Sapp – Asked for review of the process from start to finish, application process

Chair Elias – Not as concerned on how it's spent but if the \$100K is sufficient.

Member Dowdell – Suggested we partner with the Gadsden County Housing Program.

Manager Davis – Housing Program administrators are aware of SEEP Program and will work with us whenever possible. Approved on a first come, first serve basis. Being advertised via newspaper, word of mouth and WQTN.

The board agreed the \$100,000 is sufficient based on past usage.

Beautification Projects – Reduced from \$100k to \$75K next year. We have not received any applications on this project as of yet. The Advisory Board had mixed feelings on this also. We may be able to use reimbursement from the RD Edwards bldg. for other projects. This line item includes murals and tree replacement. Manager will work at reassuring possible applicants that funds are available. There will also be funds returned from the City for work on the RD Edwards building, and a decision will need to be made as to how those funds are allocated.

Discussion:

Chair Elias – If funds are not used are they rolled over for next year?

Manager Davis – Unused funds are not rolled over but reallocated unless they are earmarked for a specific project.

Chair Elias – Will the TIF Funds remain the same this year?

Manager Davis – Finance Director has projected there will be no change in TIF dollars received. The community is being reassured that the funds are available for disbursement.

Affordable Housing Purchase and Construction– This is \$50K again this year for the partnership with Habitat for Humanity. The draft agreement is that they will build one house per year in the CRA District. They have provided the plans but have not indicated if there is a waiting list. There is a correction to the information provided to the Advisory Board, the actual amount per house will be \$30K not \$10K.

Catalyst Project – New line item of \$200,000, funds set aside for the purchase of the North Adams infield property; currently in negotiations with property owner.

Tanyard Creek –

Chair Elias - As it relates to the overall Tanyard Creek, whatever we need to do to try to finalize the different phases of Tanyard Creek. How is this incorporated in the budget?

Discussion:

Manager Davis- Based on the attorney's opinion of the CRA paying for construction of City owned properties we would be prohibited from doing it. We can loan the City items

Atty Brown – Offered clarification that there are certain things that the CRA should not be responsible for such as Police Building, Administrative Buildings.

Chair Elias – That is not what I am referring to and we can come back to that. There were different phases in regards to the park, right off of GF & A Drive, there are certain phases that we had got monies from the state that here are certain things that we are supposed to be doing. We have a plan that we are to be going by. Do we have any funds set aside in this budget to continue that?

Manager Davis – No sir.

Chair Elias – Is there a reason?

Manager Davis – Well two reasons, first of all based on the attorney's legal opinion that CRA funds cannot be utilized for that specific purpose and second of all, it is her belief that the Capital Improvement plan/budget (not sure what's in the City's budget) would cover those line items or grants the City would apply for.

Chair Elias – Recaps, so let me make sure I understand, you are saying that it would be the City's responsibility to carry these items through instead of the CRA.

Manager Davis – That would be my recommendation, yes sir.

Chair Elias – Understanding that this is your recommendation where do we stand from a legal standpoint? Whose responsibility is it?

Attorney – There are two things here, as far as maintenance that is something TIF dollars should be utilized for. But as far as actual rehabbing, that is fine, if it is construction type project, CRA dollars could be used, but not for maintenance items such as lawn care, etc.

Manager Davis – This is for construction of bridges, walkways, fences....

Chair Elias – Part of the overall CRA plan when we said we were going to develop all of Tanyard Creek.

Attorney – Ok there has been a little miscommunication. I'm thinking maintenance, that kind of stuff but as far as building that is allowable.

Chair Elias – I'm just talking about all this property from the Communities Trust Fund monies and within that there were about 5 phases. And we got the park over here and it seems like we stopped. So my question is do we have any funds allocated in this budget to continue that overall project.

Manager Davis – No sir. I recommend that the City continue that project through grants or identifying funds within their budget.

Chair Elias – So why not CRA?

Manager Davis – My recommendation is based on the fact that it does not generate any TIF funds.

Member Dowdell – So we're referring to the project along GF & A, where there are supposed to be fences and bridges. I thought there was a deadline to complete all these phases and that we had money set aside for that.

Manager Davis – I'm not saying that we don't have to do the phases; I am saying that the CRA should not be responsible for paying for it.

Member Dowdell – But this grant was under the CRA.

Manager – No the grant was under the City and the ownership is under the City. CRA is just the manager, everything that is done has to be approved by and executed by the City.

Member Dowdell – Ok so Florida Trust Fund, we got all this money on your saying when we got all this work done, that was done under the City, not the CRA?

Manager Davis – The City is the Manager, the City is the landowner, the City is the one that DEP holds responsible.

Member Dowdell – We're in trouble. Do you think the state is going to come back and say City you didn't complete the Tanyard Creek project so you need to pay us our money back?

Manager Davis – I believe that the state might ask for the property back, I don't know legally if they can ask for the money back. That would be a question for the City Attorney.

Attorney – As far as I know right now, no.

Chair Elias – Going back in line with what you were talking about Mr. Attorney who was talking something about maintenance, there was also a component of the trust grant that said there would be money in an account for just that for maintenance. So that when we had events we could just go into this account in turn the park, the maintenance of the park up.

Attorney – repeated that his objection is with the use of CRA funds for maintenance, this has nothing to do with City dollars.

Chair Elias – so within our City's side budget I'm hearing that we should have an account established so when we have all these events, for the upkeep of the park, but these are not CRA funds.

Member Sapp – So in the City's budget there should be funds set aside for the park to be maintained, water covering of pipes, mowed, cultivated, mulched as it should be, the building the needs painting, there should be money somewhere for that. Is that what I'm hearing?

Attorney – Yes ma'am, from not CRA funds. TIF funds should not be used for maintenance. The CRA does not own that park, CRA funds they are designed to alleviate blight, slums and so it's more designed for building things, Attorney General more bricks and mortar type things not to maintain. There is also a regulation regarding if something has already been budgeted for like the City then those funds are not designed so they can then be shifted out of the City budget and replace it with CRA funds.

Chair Elias – Ok I just want to make sure as far as the upkeep and maintenance of the park that we have something allotted for that. I specifically remember that portion of the grant that says we have to have an account established for the upkeep, so that when we have activities those funds can go back into that account for the upkeep of the park.

Attorney – If I may respond that was funds from that grant not TIF funds.

Chair Elias – I understand.

Member Dowdell – We have contingency for Tanyard Creek that has been in the budget what was the purpose?

Manager Davis – Originally the purpose was to do exactly what you all said; however, based on the legal opinion, it not being legal, we cannot do that. Contingency was to finish out what needed to be done, the bridges, fences, construction.

Attorney – This is the miscommunication he referred to earlier I was thinking of maintenance cannot be done. If the actual budget was within three years of when it was originally allocated it can be used for bridges, etc. Even on City owned property. Cannot be done for Police, Fire or Administrative buildings.

Manager Davis – Although there is that clarification she would still not recommend that this board do that. Because I believe that \$90,000 could be better utilized in an area where TIF funds are created, generated and increased.

Chair Elias – When we got those dollars and had a timeline to get those things, we were even granted an extension cause they were getting ready to call us to task, so what I'm hearing now is it's not the responsibility to address that issue but that the City should be addressing that issue.

Manager Davis – Sites an example there are \$2,870 and some there were some contractual services that we used for the design of and development of or continuation of phases that needed to be finished. The CRA received the bids, presented them to the City, presented the changes that DEP wanted to have for the zoning and yet nothing has been done. The CRA's hands are tied when it comes to this. This is a City project and I believe again that the City needs to take ownership of it, I believe that the City take management and so how or another begin writing grants for it. We've written grants for them, we wrote the grant for the invasive species but then again it's all contingent upon their maintenance schedule. Not something the CRA has control over.

Sapp – I have the same line of questions, talking about the invasive species grant, they are cutting down to the ground but not digging the roots up. What will happen when they grow back up?

Manager Davis – This was actually a DEP grant, they bid it out, and they paid for it. I'll have to ask them that question.

Member Gay – The Florida Trust grant for Tanyard Creek has been managed by the CRA, we relied on the CRA to manage it, and we relied on the CRA to budget money towards its completion. This is probably a whole other meeting or a whole other workshop but at some point we need to sort this out. As Member Dowdell stated we are now under the gun and we are being held accountable for that property, so what the City to going to do moving forward we need to figure it out. We have a plan in place.

Chair Elias – That being said in relation to the budget were there any comments from the Advisory board of anything you all wanted to see or anything else we needed to address.

Special Events–

Member Dowdell asked why this is showing \$0. The attorney explained that social events, i.e. concerts, etc. are not an allowable expense.

Discussion

Member Gay – It was the Attorney General's opinion on this as far as CRAs not spending money, this came up several years ago. I think you can spend money

to market your CRAs through certain events. Should be careful there is a fine line.

Attorney – the AG tried to have it both ways, in my opinion you're walking a real fine line. While the courts do recognize AG as the highest legal authority in Florida I would recommend not testing the waters.

Extra Personnel Costs –

Chair Elias – Asked for clarification on the \$2,703 budgeted amount vs the \$8,750 actual. Manager indicated these are administrative services cost associated with the RD Edwards building which should have come out of contractual services. It's in the wrong line item, will get with the Finance Department to correct.

Personnel Costs Rollover– This \$17,000 was a rollover from the previous year's budget, where we have to identify areas where we needed to place rollover funds. Next fiscal year 2017, the budget is \$0.

Gadsden Arts Center - There was discussion as to whether the \$10K allocated could be collapsed into the "Beautification Projects". It was noted that funds have been allocated for Padgett and Stewart Appliance mural projects as well as other projects. The manager will collapse these funds bring the total in Beautification Projects to \$85,000 and earmarking \$10K for the Gadsden Arts Center project.

Board Comments

Member Gay – Ask for clarification as to whether CRA funds could be used in the revitalization of the RD Edwards. The attorney explained that using TIF funds (CRA) for Police, Fire and administrative buildings is strictly prohibited.

Member Dowdell – A lot of this stuff that we are taking away from the CRA Director and putting it on the city, the question is always going to be asked, "Why are we paying the Director \$64,000, to do what?" Because the CRA it seems like they throwing everything on the City. I don't want to put the CRA Director out of a job. So that question is going to be asked, if you taking everything away from the CRA and giving it on the City why we paying the Director \$64,000. The Manager responded things that we are taking things that are not generating TIF funds away from the CRA and giving it to the City so

that at the CRA can actually focus on things leading to economic development, reduction of slum and blight and housing, which is its true mission.

Attorney – Clarified that not only the County but we would have to get the City's approval as well, to spend money, it's all taxing authorities.

Chair Elias – Instructed the attorney to get with the City attorney regards to this overall Tanyard Creek project, to see who has authority over that, who's responsible for it. Because we're calling that the CRA District, that's how we got the CRA going. Because again we have those grant dollars out there and I think we have already gone over our extension and at any time they can come in and call us to task. So we need to be prepared for that.

Member McMillan – Asked the attorney, if DEP decided to come back and take back over would they be going after funds or property? Asked if he could get an opinion back to the board. Obviously a workshop needs to be scheduled to discuss these two issues.

Adjournment - Meeting was adjourned at 5:55pm.