

Call to Order

Chair Dowdell called the meeting to order at 5:06pm.

The Quincy Community Redevelopment Agency Meeting of the Regular Board met on Thursday, January 12, 2023, with the following present at roll call: Member Bass-Prieto, Member Canidate, Member Sapp

Motion by Member Sapp to excuse Member Harris, seconded by Member Bass-Prieto, motioned carries 4-0.

Also in attendance:

Manager Nixon, Attorney Brown, Admin Pam Tribue

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Member Sapp to approve the agenda for the January 12, 2023 board meeting, seconded by Member Canidate, motion carries 4-0.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Member Bass-Prieto to approve the December 27, 2022 Regular Board Meeting minutes, seconded by Member Canidate, motion carries 4-0.

Financial Report

The financial report was not available due to issues with technology. Manager Nixon requested a hard copy from the bank and will forward to the board via email tomorrow. He was however able to report the following: beginning balance \$307,345.18, ending balance \$565,962.91 which was due to the receipt of TIF funds from the City of Quincy. This will allow the board to move forward with projects including roof repairs and home repairs. Receipt of funds from the County are still pending.

Manager Nixon also cautioned the board to not open emails from their cell phones just in case it is one of those phishing emails.

CRA Manager Report

Homes in Extreme Distress

In December 2022, the CRA board approved four homes in extreme distress for repair, and the Manager asked for additional time to get additional quotes. Three of five contractors provided estimates in the allotted time frame. The Manager recommends the selection of Chariot Construction as the lowest bidding contractor. Member Canidate asked if there is work currently going on at the Ash residence? Manager Nixon isn't aware of any work but will go by to verify. Member Bass-Prieto expressed concerned on the \$40K cost for the Roberts residence versus the actual value of the home. There was a brief discussion on awarding one or maybe two houses to another bidder to increase the chances of a timely completion and to keep the bidder interested in bidding. Attorney Brown cautioned the board that awarding to the lowest bidder is in line with the City of Quincy's purchasing policy and there would have to be cause to not follow that policy. *Motion by Member Sapp to select Chariot Construction as the lowest bidding contractor and award the projects for completion, seconded by Member Bass-Prieto, motion carries 4-0.*

Gadsden County Development Council Membership

Manager Nixon feels that the CRA and City of Quincy must take a significantly more aggressive approach to supporting local businesses and spurring the economy. Recent downsizing by Trulieve makes it necessary to engage the expertise of partners to manage business recruitment and create expansion/retention programs. He recommends the Gadsden County Development Council as they were previously contracted by the City to coordinate a study of the City's Commercial Park and survey of local business leaders. An anticipated scope of work would include but not be limited to marketing buildings and sites within the District, project management support, conducting existing business surveys, assisting with economic development, grant applications for projects or infrastructure and coordinating existing business meetings for Quincy businesses. This would be at a cost of \$15,000.

Member Bass-Prieto is concerned that GCDC have not provided any reports/feedback for funds previously received. She has reached out to them out of concern that they only have three City of Quincy properties on their site. They also haven't reported back on the \$150K grant they worked on. Hesitant to give them additional funds when there are no reports from funds already received. Manager Nixon explained there are many parts to this situation, the first two years the City did not provide a lot of opportunities for them to look at, GCDC also made a presentation with DH Horton. The grant mentioned was turned in and it was successfully completed, a copy can be provided. The City and CRA have to make sure they are paying attention and following up as well as they are the stewards of the money.

Manager Nixon explained that the individual cities are taking a more active approach to economic development. The County has even decided to create an Economic Development Department to do their in-house economic development. He was not approached by GCDC but after having several conversations with the Executive Director felt this was/is a good idea. This is an effort to mitigate the loss caused by Trulieve.

Member Bass-Prieto mentioned taking the \$15K and funding a position so that there is someone there to develop our (City & CRA) economics. Even if the City contributed additional funds, the manager feels the fiscal impact for an employee with benefits is not realistic for this fiscal year. There was also a discussion why the Quincy exit on Interstate 10 has not seen the activity as the other exits in the County. Lack of infrastructure is the reason and the City needs to give incentives to certain types of development.

After a short discussion, the board decided to table this item until the next meeting to allow the Manager to provide additional options and complete a scope of services. To answer the question as to what the Chamber of Commerce's role, the manager explained the Chamber does start-up support, helps those persons who have no money and bad credit but great ideas with training and assistance to get them off the ground. The Big Bend CDC does community development to promote job creations.

Virginia Street Property

Manager Nixon presented a proposal from the Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce Foundation for the purchase of a parcel and associated property at 520 S. Virginia Street in Quincy (formerly Quincy Joist). Included are 4.11 acres and 3,800 square feet building. The building could be used for vehicle storage and sold at a later date. The asking purchase price is \$360,000 and a lease to purchase option is available. Building could be used for storage for vehicles and equipment, offices upstairs and put back on the market for a nice profit at some point.

Member Bass-Prieto and other members would like to visit the site. This item was tabled until the next meeting and Manager Nixon would set-up a tour in the interim.

CRA Manager

Attorney Brown reported that his research showed that there are several CRAs in Florida that have the City Manager serve as the CRA Manager as well. He also pointed out that Statute 163.356 Section C states: "An agency may employ an executive director, technical experts, and such other agents and employees, permanent and temporary, as it requires, and determine their qualifications, duties, and compensation." This did not mention any restrictions. He also could not find any legal issue with the same.

Member Bass-Prieto pointed out that four months of the CRA Manager's salary has gone unused as Manager Nixon does not receive a salary from the CRA, and that those funds for some form of economic development.

Member Sapp pointed out one of the advantages to having Mr. Nixon in both positions is he lives in Quincy, in Gadsden County and definitely understands our needs.

Chair Dowdell feels that the City Manager has other duties he should/needs to take care of that are not centered around the CRA.

CRA Attorney Comments

In response to Member Bass-Prieto's comment at the previous meeting regarding CRA Expansion, Attorney Brown will meet with former Commissioner Carolyn Ford to review the area. This will show data as to why the CRA needs to expand. Part of the process is to determine if it meets the criteria for Statute 16 regarding slum and blithe. He is also working on a Resolution that will be needed when all the necessary data is collected. Another option will be hiring a Land Planner that looks at different land for development and tells you whether or not the criteria they have what it could possibly be. This would be a means to show it meets the criteria for slum and blithe.

Manager Nixon shared that the Apalachee Regional Planning Council may be an option is Ms. Ford's response is not amenable. They have land planners available.

Attorney Brown also asked the board to renew its membership with the Florida Redevelopment Agency, they are a valuable resource. Manager Nixon will verify the membership hasn't been renewed and will take any action needed.

Board Member Comments

Member Bass-Prieto – Is concerned about the national businesses/chains that are not maintaining their property. The condition of the buildings and the surrounding land are terrible in some cases. Mold, gum and untidy lawns are some examples.

Member Candidate suggested having a system in place to allow for follow-up when needed.

Member Bass-Prieto suggested sending pics and videos up the corporate ladder and many of these locations are not owned locally.

Chair Dowdell said there may be a need to go door to door with the manager and maybe even the police. The board should then be prepared for a storm of attendees at the next commission meeting.

Manager Nixon needs to look at Code Enforcement and consider an increase in fines.

Member Sapp said there may be a need to look at current ordinances.

Member Candidate – None

Member Sapp – None

Chair Dowdell – None

Motion to adjourn by Member Sapp, seconded by Member Bass-Prieto, motion carries 4-0.

Meeting adjourns at 6:37pm.