

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

Community Redevelopment Agency
Lincolnvile Community Redevelopment Area Steering Committee Regular Meeting
Thursday, October 21, 2024

The Lincolnvile Community Redevelopment Area Steering Committee met for its regularly scheduled meeting at 5:00 P.M., Monday, October 21, 2024, in the Alcazar Room, City Hall Building. The meeting was called to order by Mari Hayes, Co-Chairperson. The following Steering Committee members were present:

1. ROLL CALL

James St. George, Chairperson (arrived at 5:15pm)
Mari Hayes, Co-Chairperson
Dalonja Duncan
Ken McClain
Madeline Wise (arrived at 5:15pm)

Staff Present:

Jaime D. Perkins, Neighborhood Services & CRA Manager
April Owen, Assistant City Attorney
Jill Collins, Neighborhood Services & CRA Administrative Coordinator

2. a) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Ken McClain and seconded by Dalonja Duncan, July 15, 2024, meeting minutes were approved with any necessary corrections.

**b) APPROVAL OF 2025 LCRA
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
DATES AND LOCATION**

Co-Chair Mari Hayes opened discussion for the 2025 recommended LCRA Steering Committee meeting dates and relocating the meetings to the Alcazar Room at City Hall.

Madeline Wise stated she preferred the meetings to remain at the Galimore Center. Ms. Wise asked where the West City Steering Committee meetings are being held. Ms. Perkins answered that they meet in the Alcazar Room and public engagement is held

at various locations throughout West City which is the same process the LCRA would follow.

Dalonja Duncan stated she would like to keep the meetings at the Galimore but also said she saw the benefit of having the meetings recorded and available on the CRA website.

James St. George asked if there were any analytics to tell how often the community views the recorded meetings online. He asked Ms. Perkins to clarify if the LCRA Steering Committee meetings are the only lower board meeting not held in the Alcazar room. Mr. St. George also asked about resident parking discounts to attend meetings in the Alcazar Room. Ms. Perkins answered she can get the data for how often the meeting recordings are watched and added that she knew many people rely on watching recorded meetings since most of the lower board meetings are

scheduled during the workday. Ms. Perkins added that the recommendation today is only for the four publicly noticed steering committee meetings and any public outreach workshops will continue to be held at the Galimore Center and within the community. Ms. Perkins said the LCRA Steering Committee meeting is the only lower board meeting not held in the Alcazar Room. Ms. Perkins shared that residents can go on the City's website to apply for a Residential Parking Permit for a discounted parking rate.

Ken McClain said he sees the importance of having the meetings in the Alcazar Room so they can be recorded.

Chairperson St. George made a motion to approve the 2025 LCRA meeting dates as they are presented, Ken McClain seconded the motion. All were in favor with no one opposed.

Chairperson St. George made a motion to approve moving the 2025 LCRA Steering Committee meetings to the Alcazar Room, Ken McClain seconded the motion. Three were in favor. Dalonja Duncan and Madeline Wise were opposed. The motion was passed.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Cash McVay- 139 Washington Street. Voiced concerns over the pathway realignment at Hayling Park.

Blanche Valentine- Regarding senior citizens in Lincolntown, she feels it's more accessible for them to attend meetings at the Galimore Center.

4. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND UPDATES

a) Fix-It-Up Program Presentation

Jill Collins, Neighborhood Services and CRA Administrative Coordinator, presented an update of the 2024 Fix-It-Up Residential Repair Grant Program highlighting the purpose and updates of the program, the new application process, a financial update, an overview of three of the nine projects completed and the future of the program.

Ms. Wise asked if the Cerro St. home of the highlighted projects were up on a hill enough where it won't get flooded. Ms. Wise asked if the Duero St. home was approved to be raised up. Ms. Wise also asked if tree removal was something that could be addressed with Fix-It-Up grant funds. Ms. Collins replied that the Cerro St. home is at an elevation where it is not flood prone. Ms. Perkins answered that the Duero St. home would have to be raised through the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program, and we do not have the data on the FMA program to raise homes at this meeting and could find out that information. Ms. Perkins answered that tree removal must meet very strategic and critical criteria to qualify for grant funds.

Mr. McClain asked if additional funds could be used to raise a home that needed elevated for flood protection. He asked if the homes being highlighted are in a flood zone and if homeowners can use Fix-It-Up money to buy flood insurance. Ms. Perkins answered that the CRA has been in conversation with the Resiliency Officer, Jessica Beach, to utilize Fix-It-Up funds to raise homes, but at this time the criteria has not yet been solidified. Ms. Perkins answered that Fix-It-Up money is not authorized to purchase insurance.

Ms. Duncan asked if there was any feedback from the homeowners at 124 MLK Ave. or

103 Duero St. who received grant money for their homes. Ms. Duncan asked if the lien criteria could be reviewed. Ms. Collins replied that the MLK homeowner expressed much gratitude, especially for installing central heat and air that she previously did not have. Ms. Perkins clarified that a \$7k grant award does not require a lien, anything above \$10k requires a 10-year lien, but if a homeowner has an active lien with less than 5 years left on it, an additional 18-months for each additional \$10k received would be added to the lien. Ms. Perkins added that these amounts are amortized over time.

Ms. Hayes asked what the difference is between new recipients vs. recurring recipients. Ms. Hayes asked if the issues around people reluctant to sign a lien have been overcome. Ms. Perkins answered that when the program increased from \$7,000 to \$20k and then \$20k to \$50k, the majority applicants were recurring. She said in a later presentation she will propose to look at the applications closer to give new applicants the opportunity to matriculate through the program if the funds are increased. Ms. Perkins added that the goal is to spread as much of the money throughout Lincolnvile. Ms. Collins replied that potential applicants are still reluctant to sign a lien.

Mr. St. George asked if the funds are being exhausted each year. Mr. St. George asked what efforts are taken to find new potential applicants. Mr. St. George asked why refinancing triggers payback of a lien. Ms. Perkins answered that in 2021 there weren't many applicants until the grant amount was increased, which created an influx of recurring applicants and this year we are looking at a waitlist for applicants. Ms. Perkins added there was not a large increase in grant funds budgeted because of other

allocations. Currently, the budget consists of \$200k of new money and \$108k of carryover for a total of \$308k for the 2025 fiscal year. Ms. Perkins said when she first came on with the City, she compiled a list of long-term residents and dilapidated homes in the Lincolnvile area, the challenge is getting residents to apply because of the lien opposition which will be addressed at the upcoming workshop in early 2025. Ms. Perkins said when a person refinances and cashes out equity it triggers a change of mortgage, and the lien must be paid off. She added if the homeowner refinanced to receive a lower interest rate, that would not trigger repayment since equity funds were not being pulled out.

b) Fix-It-Up Program Grant Award Increase Proposal

Jaime Perkins, Neighborhood Services and CRA Manager, presented a proposal to increase the grant award for the Fix-It-Up Residential Hosing Repair program from \$50k to \$100k.

Ken McClain asked if a home is passed down to a family member can the recipient opt to pay the lien off. Ms. Perkins answered that they can choose to pay the lien off but is not required in the instance of an inheritance.

Ms. Hayes asked if the criteria changes from gross to net are people being pushed out of the boundaries of low income. Ms. Perkins answered that it captures more recipients because it uses what they actually bring home.

Mr. St. George asked if it was a requirement to use the HUD numbers for income requirements. Mr. St. George asked if the persons per household and the income requirements apply to all persons living in

the house or who is on the deed. Ms. Perkins answered that there is no specific requirement to use HUD as an income guideline, but this is what the Commission is comfortable with using as our guideline criteria. Ms. Perkins clarified that the persons per household is for the people residing in the home and not who is on the deed.

Mr. St. George opened the floor to public comment about the Fix-It-Up program only.

Ms. Sancroft- 24 Lovett St. Question about the gross vs. net and wants to know if we are looking at what she invests in her IRA or to another savings account. Ms. Perkins answered that when the net is looked at, it shows what you brought home, and savings accounts do not affect the net. We can update the language to specify that if the board would like.

Aaron Jockers- 5 Palm Row- requested clarification in reference to inheritance when the homeowner passes away. Also, he asked if there is a way to use the money to maintain the residence if it is passed down and the family member who inherited the property does not live in the home. Ms. Perkins answered that the Fix-It-Up program is not designed to fix homes that are not owner-occupied as stated in the Redevelopment Plan. The guidelines for the program state if the property is passed down to a surviving family member, the lien is also passed down and does not trigger repayment assuming no money was exchanged.

Mr. St. George closed public comment. Ms. Duncan made a motion to approve the Fix-It-Up program change to net income from gross for income requirements and an increase in grant funds to \$100k and Ken

McClain seconded the motion. All were in favor, with none opposed.

c) **FY 2025 LCRA Budget Presentation**

Jaime Perkins, Neighborhood Services and CRA Manager, presented the 2025 LCRA adopted budget.

Mr. St. George asked if the total salary for staff is solely coming out of the LCRA budget. Ms. Perkins explained the salaries are distributed in the budget according to the time spent in a particular area. Lincolnvile takes up most of the staff time, which means most staff salaries are paid by the LCRA.

Mr. McClain expressed the importance of obtaining a vehicle for staff to use, he pointed out it is more professional and said the administrative fees from grants can help to fund these types of purchases. Mr. McClain asked if the CRA considered using a Public Housing Authority (PHA) to help address affordable housing. Ms. Perkins clarified that the grants obtained within the CRA typically do not provide administrative fees. She further explained that it depends on the type of grant whether administrative fees are allowed, and the grants the CRA currently has active do not provide administrative fees. Ms. Perkins continued that CRA projects are not allowed to pay management costs, we can pay for construction and architectural costs only. Ms. Perkins said the City does not have the authority to set up a PHA that would have to be done on a county level.

Ms. Duncan said back in the 80's the Commission obtained a block grant that went through Lincolnvile and repaired 20-30 homes and the homes that couldn't be repaired were torn down and re-built. She asked if there was a possibility of using land by the Community Garden behind the Galimore Center to build tiny homes. Ms. Perkins said

recreational spaces cannot be used as residential because of zoning, however, tiny houses through the CRA in Lincolnvile are something that can be investigated and is being discussed in great length.

Ms. Wise asked why St. Mary's is not in the LCRA. Ms. Perkins replied that she discovered St. Mary's is in the Historic Area Community Redevelopment Area (HACRA) special district boundaries, the commission adopted a special project for the Greater St. Mary's project that is being paid for by the HACRA.

d) LCRA Projects Update Presentation

Jaime Perkins, Neighborhood Services and CRA Manager, presented an overview of current projects in the Lincolnvile area, then highlighted the LCRA Institutional Rehabilitation projects and neighborhood beautification projects.

Mr. St. George asked how much the county contributed to the Eddie Vickers Sports Courts project. He asked what their jurisdiction is, if there is a monetary exchange and how the county became involved in the park. Mr. St. George asked if the City owns any property or parcels within the Lincolnvile area. Mr. St. George asked if the \$748k for the MLK Streetscape project is for design and inclusive of construction. He asked when it is anticipated to begin construction. Mr. St. George asked when the City self-performs for work at Lincolnvile Park if it is included in the budget and how much has been spent on constructing Lincolnvile Park. Mr. St. George asked if there would be storage facilities for kayaks for residents to store them. Mr. St. George asked what the use of the Elks Lodge will be once the project is completed. Mr. St. George asked if the Trinity bell tower will be taken down and rebuilt brick-by-brick. Ms. Perkins answered the county contributed \$220k to the Sports Courts project and St. Johns County maintains and operates the baseball field and sports courts. There have been

internal conversations with the county to modify our interlocal agreements to make sure we have the proper maintenance agreements in place to make sure the sports courts last. She further explained that the county maintains many other parks within the city through interlocal agreements because we are a small city that has a lot of parks and limited staff which is why the city entered into an interlocal agreement to operate and maintain these parks. Ms. Perkins said the budget for the MLK Streetscape project builds every year because it is a \$7M project. The project doesn't have a set date, but it is anticipated to start construction in 2026 with 18 months to 2-years to complete. Ms. Perkins added that to pay for the project it is likely the CRA will have to pursue grant funding or get a loan, which is why the CRA is building up funds in case we need to match a grant. Ms. Perkins continued the CRA is currently in the process of trying to establish some type of grant and the design consultant has a grant division that has helped with previous streetscape projects. Ms. Perkins said the City has to pay other departments for work performed on projects such as Lincolnvile Park, the CRA has to show where that money is going and originally \$110k was allocated, but the project is currently at about \$150k right now. Ms. Perkins answered that in the future there is a plan to add storage for kayaks and possibly rentals. Ms. Perkins answered that the Elks Lodge will continue to have the same use as it has for the last 75 years, it will be a member only facility, but they do host many community events and have not been able to because of the state of the building so it is an important project to help them begin hosting their community events again. Ms. Perkins said the Trinity bell tower would be taken down and rebuilt brick-by-brick.

Ms. Wise asked where the fishing pier was located. Ms. Wise brought up a discussion regarding the pavilion at Eddie Vickers Park pointing out that at 5:pm every weekend it is reserved to feed the homeless and residents are not allowed to reserve it for their use. Ms. Perkins answered that the fishing pier is marked on the plans as part of the kayak launch. Ms. Perkins said she is happy to share the interlocal agreement

with the board and it specifies in the Eddie Vickers Park line item the pavilion is not to be reserved, Ms. Perkins also added she would be happy to look into the concern about the reservation of the Eddie Vickers Pavilion.

Ms. Duncan asked if there was a dedication date set for the completion of Lincolnville Park. Ms. Perkins said there is not a date set yet for the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Lincolnville Park but she will send out an announcement as soon as it's available so the steering committee can be a part of the ceremony.

Mr. McClain asked what is being done about the homeless that tend to occupy the Eddie Vickers Park area. Mr. McClain asked who the owner of Trinity Independent Methodist Church is. Ms. Perkins said there are very few things the City can do to remove people from a public park but one thing she pointed out is that the more well maintained and used the parks are, the more it deters the homeless from loitering in those

spaces. Ms. Owen added that in the code, there are designated hours for public parks and if they are there outside of those hours they can be asked to leave. Ms. Owens added there is also a no camping ordinance and a no public sleeping ordinance from 10:pm-6:am and it is a criminal offense if they are caught. Ms. Perkins said the owner of Trinity Independent Methodist Church and the applicant is Pastor Craig Anderson.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ITEMS/DISCUSSION

None

6. CITY STAFF ITEM

Ms. Perkins informed the board that the CRA will be receiving an award at the Florida Redevelopment Association (FRA) conference for establishing a third CRA area in West City and is the first FRA award for the CRA.

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

Monday, January 6, 2025.

8. ADJORNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by
Chairperson, James St. George at 7:48 PM.

Minutes Transcribed by: Jill Collins