

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Community Redevelopment Agency
West City Community Redevelopment Area Steering Committee
Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 9, 2025

The West City Community Redevelopment Area Steering Committee met in formal session Thursday, January 9, 2025, at 5:00 P.M. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Arthur Culbert at 5:00 P.M., and the following members were present:

1. Roll Call: Arthur Culbert, Chairperson
Dianya Markovits, Co-Chairperson
Brooke Bohall
BJ Kalaidi
Jeffrey Kempf
Jeanne Moeller
Wanda Sams

Absent: None

Staff Present: Jaime D. Perkins, Manager, Neighborhood Services and CRA
April Owen, Assistant City Attorney
Jill Collins, Administrative Coordinator, Neighborhood Services and CRA

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

a. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (November 14, 2024)

MOTION

Jeanne Moeller MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes from November 14, 2024, with identified corrections. The motion was SECONDED by BJ Kalaidi and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT OR COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS NOT REQUIRING SEPARATE COMMENT PERIOD

3 Minutes per Individual

The Board heard from the following members of the public:

Aurora Sanks said she was concerned about the traffic and safety on Davis Street, Leonardi Street and Mackey Lane in West City.

4. PRESENTATIONS & UPDATES

a. West City Land Acquisition Presentation

JB Miller, Land Development, presented highlights of recent land acquisitions in West City for the conservation program and future land use of those properties.

Arthur Culbert asked if the offer to purchase the land acquired near Avery Street in Ravenswood would be coordinated with the Ravenswood Neighborhood Association (N.A.), and if Mr. Miller would expound on the Spangler

Island conservation area to explain what it was and if there was a connection to land.

Mr. Miller replied that City could coordinate with Ravenswood N.A. regarding the land acquisition near Avery Street. He added at low tide you may be able to slog over to the island but it's mostly flat woods, salt marsh, and was truly an island.

Mr. Culbert asked if there were any plans to improve Zora Neale Hurston Park.

Ms. Perkins said that it was not in one of the special districts she managed; however, she was aware of the intention for park improvements after a King Street project was completed.

Mr. Culbert asked Mr. Miller when he mentioned "exotic plants", if that meant to bring it back to Florida native plants as much as possible.

Mr. Miller answered that because the area has been so severely disturbed, the City would like to get the highest ecological function out of the property by targeted removal of invasive, non-native species for improved quality of habitat.

b. WCCRA Draft Plan Presentation and Discussion

Jaime D. Perkins, Neighborhood Services and CRA Manager, presented an update to the latest draft of the West City Community Redevelopment Plan.

Ms. Kalaidi asked if a statement could be added to specifically state TIF funds would not be spent on the proposed parking garage at US1 and King Street, also known as the Broudy lot.

Ms. Perkins replied that the broad statement covered any prior project that could occur.

Mr. Culbert questioned the Strategic Goals and the 6-Point action Plan, Strategy 1, which was Community Stabilization through Housing Policy. He asked if a program such as St. Augustine Compassionate Village could be included and identified in that section of the Plan.

Ms. Perkins responded that she was not opposed to adding it into the Plan, and if it was not a legal issue, it could be added to additional stabilizations efforts. She added regardless, it would be known that St. Augustine Compassionate Village could be an additional effort we want to look into for implementation.

Mr. Culbert requested feedback on naming St. Augustine Compassionate Village specifically in the Plan.

Ms. Moeller stated she was in support of a program such as St. Augustine Compassionate Village for West City.

Ms. Kalaidi asked where the program would be located.

Mr. Culbert replied that the program kept residents in their homes and covered a large area of St. Johns County. He added Mayor Sikes-Kline was one of the first to join the Village.

Jeffrey Kempf wanted to clarify that this type of program would fall under community stabilization, which states "working on strategies to encourage vibrant aging in place...". He agreed the language should be kept broad as previously suggested.

There was Board consensus on keeping the language broad.

Ms. Perkins clarified that with the main line-item modification, it would read as "Strategic Goals and 6-Point action Plan, Strategy 1, Community Stabilization Through Housing Policy and Other Relative Stabilization Efforts" and could

allow for the exploration of other options for community stabilization.

Mr. Culbert asked who would make the decisions on what streets to modify for infrastructure improvements.

Ms. Perkins answered that it went back to the statement of project/program implementation identified in the Plan as public engagement through surveys and workshops, but ultimately, the data collected from public engagement efforts were required to go before the Agency with staff recommendations before moving forward on a specified project.

Mr. Kempf asked if the six strategies identified were in any type of order of prioritization and if not, could there be a statement identifying that.

Ms. Perkins answered that they were not listed in any priority and that statement would be included to clarify that.

Ms. Kalaidi asked Mr. Kempf if he had an idea of what he wanted prioritized.

Mr. Kempf answered he did not have a preference as long as the statement specifying it was not a prioritized list was included.

Ms. Perkins advised that there was an established timeline in the Plan which outlined which items would be addressed first and would be reviewed later in her presentation.

Ms. Kalaidi asked about restrooms being added to Oyster Creek Park and asked who originally designated and documented that Oyster Creek Park was historic.

Ms. Perkins answered that she would have to research who designated it as a historic park. She added that though improvements need to be made to the park space, it could be as minimal as improving a walking path.

Ms. Kalaidi asked if the acquired properties presented earlier would be included with future green space improvements.

Ms. Perkins answered that if they were within the West City special district boundaries, they were eligible to be improved.

Mr. Culbert asked what it took for a structure to be designated as a Historic Preservation structure.

Ms. Perkins answered that several elements were considered, including the year it was built, if there was an event that took place there, and historic architectural contributions. She added that the Historic National Register could be used as a tool to help vet that out.

Ms. Kalaidi asked if there were other streets that could be added that were not identified in the draft for improvements.

Ms. Perkins replied that if a list of other streets were provided supplementary language could be added stating "...and additional streets identified through public engagement efforts".

Ms. Bohall asked for clarity about what could be included with a streetscape project.

Ms. Perkins replied that they can be broad or minimalistic such as underground utilities, lighting improvements, removing sign pollution or additional signage where needed, addressing drainage and stormwater issues, resurfacing streets, improving or adding sidewalks and pedestrian connectivity, widening sidewalks and travel lanes, and creating bike lanes.

Mr. Culbert asked who owned West King Street.

Ms. Perkins stated it was owned by the County, but the CRA/City could enter into

an interlocal agreement to make improvements to those streets.

Ms. Markovits asked if Palmer Street could be added to the streetscape improvement list.

Ms. Perkins said Palmer Street was owned by the County, but it could be added to the list with an asterisk that noted it would require an interlocal agreement or partnership with the County for improvements.

Mr. Kempf asked for clarification of the green horizontal lines on the map provided on page 38. He suggested for better legibility making all maps a full page.

Ms. Perkins said she would ask the consultant to add a legend to the map on page 38 and make all maps full page.

Ms. Kalaidi stated she had reservations and concerns about how the Oyster Creek Park area from Davis Street to Lewis Boulevard would be improved given the problems identified in past meetings.

Ms. Markovits asked how to prioritize community stabilization over streetscape improvements.

Ms. Perkins explained that the Plan identified community stabilization as its first goal but ultimately the prioritization effort would be established through community engagement and staff recommendations to the Agency who would make the final decision.

Ms. Kalaidi wanted to clarify the statement "assist with support for community events" since the CRA could not fund events.

Ms. Perkins clarified that the CRA could support events but could not host events. She said the word "events" could be changed to "efforts" if she preferred.

Mr. Culbert asked the board if they supported changing it to efforts.

Ms. Sams and Ms. Moeller were in favor of keeping the language as "events".

Ms. Markovits asked if phase one of the one-to-ten-year list of projected implementations would be more research-based implementations that do not involve public input until phase two.

Ms. Perkins said when looking at the TIF projections, there was an opportunity for implementation within the first ten years such as residential housing repair or wayfinding and there would be plenty of studies and data collection in that time as well.

Ms. Kalaidi said in reference to Oyster Creek Park, she felt improvements could create more work for City staff and could foster negative impacts on the quality of life in the area. She felt there needed to be more police presence in the West City area. She was very supportive of saving people's homes and noted that sanitary sewer systems should be a top priority from the steering committee. She stated there should not be any parking along West King Street.

Ms. Perkins said it was the goal of the CRA to make improvements to City-owned parks and properties in order to alleviate further dilapidation, but improvements would be based on feedback from residents.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE ITEMS

a. Other/New Business

Ms. Bohall said she wanted to add Eastman Street to the list of streetscape projects.

Ms. Sams asked if there could be an additional meeting in March for the steering committee.

Ms. Perkins suggested March 6, March 13, or March 27 for a final meeting.

Mr. Culbert asked about rescheduling the public engagement meeting that was previously cancelled.

Ms. Perkins explained that she would be happy to hold a public engagement meeting, but the process to develop the Plan had progressed with the vast data collected. She added that the public would have opportunities to engage up until the Plan was adopted tentatively in May.

There was a Board consensus that rescheduling the public workshop would not be necessary.

MOTION

Ms. Moeller MOVED to request the Commission waive the \$100k loan to West City by the City of St. Augustine. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Kempf.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: Moeller, Markovits, Culbert, Kempf, Sams, Bohall

NAYES: Kalaidi

Ms. Moeller said she wanted to strengthen communication between business owners in West City until programs were available to help support them.

Ms. Perkins said there could be opportunities through Neighborhood Services that could help West City business owners until programs are implemented. She said she had been in communication with the business owners since the West King Business association was formed.

Ms. Kalaidi asked what streets were designated to be resurfaced throughout West City, and if Madeore and Anderson Streets could be included. She added that

she was concerned about businesses in West City that had not followed ordinances.

Mr. Culbert commented there needed to be an ongoing neighborhood association to keep the conversation going and asked for guidance in that.

Ms. Markovits asked if the statement on page 54 addressed Mr. Culbert's concern, which was under the Community Stabilization/Local Business Development Action Strategy, the last bullet point stated, "to work on building capacity for a West City entity that can champion future implementation of the West City Community Redevelopment Plan".

Ms. Perkins stated that it meant working with any organization that was interested in the Plan implementation such as the newly established business association or an established independent community steering committee.

April Owens, Assistant City Attorney, stated that after the steering committee dissolved, the committee was no longer under Sunshine Law limitations.

6. ITEMS BY CITY ATTORNEY

Ms. Owens commented in response to the Oyster Creek issues brought up that the City's code has regulations around being in public parks after hours and it was non-criminal citation. She said that sleeping and camping in public had been enforced for over twenty years by City ordinance. The small police department had done the best they could to prioritize the calls that came in.

7. ITEMS BY CITY STAFF

(None)

8. NEXT MEETING DATE:

There was a Board consensus to hold another steering committee meeting.

MOTION

Ms. Moeller MOVED to hold a final meeting on March 27, 2025. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Kalaidi.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: Moeller, Markovits, Culbert, Kempf, Sams, Bohall, Kalaidi

NAYES: None

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 P.M.

Minutes Transcribed by: Jill Collins