

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Community Redevelopment Agency  
Special Budget Meeting  
August 19, 2021

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) met in formal session Thursday, August 19, 2021 at 8:30 A.M. in the Alcazar Room. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tracy Upchurch, and the following were present:

**1. Roll Call:** Tracy Upchurch, Chairman  
Nancy Sikes-Kline  
Roxanne Horvath  
Barbara Blonder

Absent: John Valdes

John Regan, City Manager  
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney  
Darlene Galambos, City Clerk  
Meredith Breidenstein, Assistant City Manager  
Mark Simpson, Director, Financial Services  
Greg Johnson, Deputy Director, Financial Services  
David Birchim, Director, Planning & Building  
Todd Grant, Director, Public Works  
Reuben Franklin, Director, Public Works  
Jim Piggot, Director, General Services  
Jaime Perkins, CRA Administrator  
Jennifer Michaux, Chief of Police  
Melissa Wissel, Communications Director  
Laura Morse, Recording Secretary

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**2. General Public Comment**

Public hearing was opened; however, there was no response.

Public comment was closed.

**3. Agenda**

**3.A. Community Redevelopment Agency Audit Presentation (Mark Simpson)**

Mark Simpson, Director, Financial Services, summated the fiscal year-end September 30, 2020 Audit Report for the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) performed by Masters, Smith & Wisby, P.A. He advised Mayor Upchurch the report would be sent to

the Audit Review Committee and he highlighted the following:

- First time the State required this independent report
- In the future, Report would be presented with the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)
- Auditors expressed an unqualified opinion which meant there were no material misstatements
- Report encompassed both the Historic Area CRA and the Lincolnville CRA
- CRA ending net position was \$1.456 million at fiscal year-end September 2020
- No major economic factors affecting next years' budget

- Total assets of \$1.47 million on the balance sheet
- Change in net position for the year was \$660,000
- Historic Area CRA transferred all its cash to the Visitor Information Center (VIC) to pay debt service
- Lincolnville CRA had cash at \$1.47 million with a similar fund balance, all classified as governmental funds
- Transferred \$1.2 million from the Historic Area CRA to pay for the debt service at the VIC garage
- Lincolnville CRA did not have large amount of activity because this was last fiscal year
- Half the revenue was from the County portion of the incremental revenue
- CRAs were tax increment financing; therefore, increased parking revenues would be seen as VIC parking revenue in the City's Operating Budget
- Compliance letters from independent auditors showed nothing to note, no findings, and no issues, and Finance intended to keep it this way

#### **MOTION**

**Commissioner Sikes-Kline MOVED to accept the audit. The motion was SECONDED by Mayor Upchurch.**

#### **VOTE ON MOTION**

**AYES: Sikes-Kline, Upchurch, Horvath, Blonder**

**NAYES: None**

**MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **3.B. LCRA Architectural Overlay District Discussion (Jaime D. Perkins)**

Jaime Perkins, CRA Administrator, advised the presentation had a request to approve recommendations to move forward with two applications received for the Institutional Rehabilitation Grant Program. She stated the discussion was not to authorize a design standard, but for approval to move forward

with strategic development, and to re-visit conversations previously discussed regarding the Architectural Overlay District in Lincolnville.

Ms. Perkins reviewed the following:

- Lincolnville was a designated community on the National Register of Historic Places
- In 2017 strategic planning conducted focus groups and workshops within Lincolnville which determined an interest to place an Architectural Overlay District to preserve those historic structures, which came second to affordable housing
- The focus groups discussed the importance of preserving historic structures in Lincolnville, and they wanted assurance that new construction conformed to the historic look
- Received multiple phone calls and emails from residents and lay members of boards inquiring about the goals for preserving Lincolnville's structures
- Importance of addressing concerns and challenges faced with implementing the design standard, future costs, and the impact to the area's low-income residents
- Challenge from resident pushback who saw this as an opportunity for regulations or bigger government; development of criteria should benefit and be fair to historic preservation and to the residents
- Idea originated from residents reaching out, Ms. Perkins' 'dive' into the plan amendment, conversations with LCRA steering committee members, and the Historic Preservation Society in Lincolnville who brought this to attention
- \$75,000 was in the budget to hire a consultant, and Jenny Wolfe, Historic Preservation Officer assisted with ideas
- Goal was to preserve specific neighborhood architectural features, not a conservation overlay
- Maintenance of the historic structures was solidified in the current programs

and projects for the Institutional Rehab Program and the Fix It Up program; therefore, residents who experienced property maintenance issues could use the Fix It Up program if they qualified, and ways were sought to broaden the program for other residents

- Fix It Up Program aligned with the Secretary of Interior standards

Ms. Perkins requested Commission approval to explore opportunities and continue engagement with the public, City staff, and professional consultants, and she reiterated this was not a design standard implementation.

Commissioner Sikes-Kline was amiable to the plan and noted a good consultant could work with the community for preservation for specifically new construction, which was the primary issue.

Commissioner Horvath expressed her full support.

Commissioner Blonder expressed her full support. She noted concern with new construction in Lincolnville having different character, she requested a placeholder regarding flooding and the move forward with FEMA, and she noted the architectural design criteria should enable responses to resiliency efforts in protecting the historic buildings and character and architectural heritage and history.

John Regan, City Manager, stated that approximately 10-15 years ago a policy was developed where neighborhoods could initiate overlay zoning that was neighborhood specific, a workbook was generated, and the Commission adopted a policy that was still in effect, and at that time it was award winning within the planning industry. He stated there were few efforts to use the program to initiate overlay zoning, there was a lot to it, and all should be aware of what was involved since neighborhoods change and embrace for different reasons.

## MOTION

**Commissioner Horvath MOVED to support staffs' further research of this issue. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Blonder and approved by UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.**

### **3.C. Presentation and Discussion Regarding FY 2022 Proposed Budget for HACRA and LCRA (Mark Simpson/ Jaime D. Perkins)**

Ms. Perkins stated this was a preliminary budget explanation in layman's terms to discuss the funds allocated to each CRA, which took into consideration prior fiscal years, recommendations outlined in the LCRA plan amendment, and the Historic Transportation Community Redevelopment Area community parking plan. She had collaborated with City staff to determine the earmark fund amounts for each project, and she noted nothing changed with the Historic Architecture Community Redevelopment Agency (HACRA) and the funds that came in went to the debt service for the VIC garage.

Mr. Simpson reviewed the HACRA figures:

- Two components of revenue; the County's portion expected for FY2022 totaled \$528,460 and the transfer in from the City totaled \$851,678
- General fund millage rate for the County was increasing
- All budgeted as a transfer out as debt service in the amount of \$1.376 million
- This year \$3,385 was added to the transfer into the LCRA from the HACRA to cover CRA operating costs, but the transfer was the only difference

Ms. Perkins reviewed the proposed budget for the LCRA. She noted the revenue from St. Johns County was \$455,118, City transfers were \$733,477 for the upcoming fiscal year, and expenditures were operating costs which totaled \$3,385 to assist with shared expenses.

In response to Commissioner Blonder's inquiry regarding administrative costs, examples of an annual report and publications, Ms. Perkins noted annual reports required preparation through annual legislation, and in some cases were placed on the website, sent to the County and mailed to residents or constituents, and the annual audit was included in those costs. She stated other publications were mailed newsletters, the LCRA quarterly newsletter, and print materials, which were the best way to communicate with Lincolnville residents.

Ms. Perkins reviewed the three main goals requiring focus in the upcoming fiscal year and the associated budget implications; Retain long-term residents with the Fix It Up program, Preserve Lincolnville's Historic Character and Improve Neighborhood Infrastructure and Beautification.<sup>1</sup>

Ms. Perkins indicated the success of the Institutional Rehabilitation Program with two large projects taken care of at one time. She said with the City implemented Property Acquisition and Development program, funds could roll over through budget years to establish a program where properties could be purchased, or real property developed in the Lincolnville area.

#### **MOTION**

**Mayor Upchurch MOVED to approve the CRA budget. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Sikes-Kline.**

**AYES: Upchurch, Sikes-Kline, Blonder, Horvath**

**NAYES: None**

**MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

**3.D. LCRA Institutional Rehab Update and Future Project Recommendation (Jaime D. Perkins)**

Ms. Perkins reviewed the applicants for the LCRA Institutional Rehabilitation Program (Program):

- Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church and the Fountain of Youth Elk's Lodge both applied and had exceptional historic contributions and were historic structures in the Lincolnville community
- Applications were reviewed by the Application Review Committee comprised of City staff; Ms. Perkins, Ms. Wolfe and Reuben Franklin, Director, Public Works
- Once approved, the applications moved to the Lincolnville Steering Committee for approval
- Each applicant was represented at both meetings and members discussed repair needs which combined estimates were over \$1 million
- Money allocated for the Program would not cover all of the required work, but the funds could go towards initiating a preliminary design and an architect development strategy to start the projects
- Ms. Perkins sought other opportunities to leverage funding for the Program: bonds, grants and loan opportunities

Ms. Perkins requested Commission approval to move forward with both applications.

#### **MOTION**

**Commissioner Sikes-Kline MOVED to approve moving forward with the applications. The motion was SECONDED by Mayor Upchurch.**

**AYES: Sikes-Kline, Upchurch, Blonder, Horvath**

**NAYES: None**

**MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **4. Items by Mayor and Commissioners**

Mr. Regan requested that the record reflect there was an important strategy for the

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<sup>1</sup> Included with original Agency packet

coming year to evaluate the Downtown Historic CRA in three ways; extend life of the CRA, update the plan, and evaluate whether there should be changes in the definition of the CRA polygon. He stressed the importance of this topic and requested Commission consensus on the strategy.

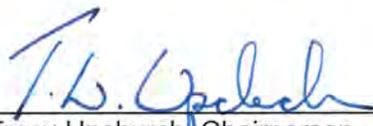
There was Commission consensus for Mr. Regan's request.

**5. Items by City Staff**

(None)

**6. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 A.M.<sup>2</sup>

  
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Tracy Upchurch, Chairperson

  
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Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK



<sup>2</sup> Transcribed by Laura Morse