

**VERNON MYERS**  
MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

**MARY LAWSON BROWN**  
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

**ALLEGRA KITCHENS**  
COMMISSIONER

**PHIL LEARY**  
COMMISSIONER

**JAMES NORWOOD, JR.**  
COMMISSIONER



**MICHAEL J. CZYMBOR**  
CITY MANAGER

**BETSY JORDAN DRIGGERS**  
CITY CLERK

**MATTHEW D. REYNOLDS**  
FINANCE DIRECTOR

**GARY S. GETCHELL**  
CHIEF OF POLICE

**MICHAEL LAMBERT**  
CHIEF FIRE DEPT.

**DONALD E. HOLMES**  
CITY ATTORNEY

*Regular meeting 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month at 6:00 p.m.*

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF PALATKA**  
**COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**  
February 13, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.

Proceedings of a regular meeting of the City of Palatka, Florida Community Redevelopment Agency held on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2014

**PRESENT:**

Vernon Myers	Mayor
Mary Lawson Brown	Commissioner
Allegra Kitchens	Commissioner
Phil Leary	Commissioner
James Norwood, Jr.	Commissioner
Karl N. Flagg	Commissioner, Putnam Co. BOCC

**ABSENT:** Alex Sharp President, Downtown Palatka, Inc.

Also Present: City Manager Michael J. Czymbor; City Attorney Donald E. Holmes; City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers; Assistant City Clerk Vicki Young; Finance Director Matthew Reynolds; Fire Chief Mike Lambert; Planning Director Thad Crowe; Main Street Manager Charles Rudd; Projects Manager Jonathan Griffith

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**INVOCATION** – The Reverend Commissioner Karl N. Flagg

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Commissioner Leary

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** 12/12/13 Regular Meeting – Tabled to next meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were none.

**1. CBD TAX INCREMENT FUND EXPENDITURES/BUSINESS:**

**PRESENTATION** – Potential TRIP Application SHNA - 300 South 9<sup>th</sup> Street - Jonathan Griffith, Grants Administrator said this will be more of a discussion than a presentation. Mr. Griffith said the City is in ownership of the house at 300 South 9<sup>th</sup> Street. He showed some pictures of the house; describing the condition of the house by saying it needs to be cleaned and basic

renovations done and the yard needs to be cleared. Mr. Griffith said they have explored some of the costs for renovation like the electrical, carpentry, and HVAC work. The range of market value of the house is around \$35,000.00 to \$50,000.00 and renovation costs would be around \$30,000.00 - \$45,000.00. The SHNA has presented an option to do a phased approach with a minimal investment and put it up for sale to see if there is any interest from a potential buyer. This house was a previous rental house that is now abandoned. The Police Department reported from 2004 – 2011 that there were six complaints filed ranging from battery to drugs at this house. The overall condition of the house is poor. A complete and thorough evaluation has not been done yet because the SHNA has not submitted a complete TRIP grant application yet, so he is looking for direction from the Board on how to proceed. Based upon the evaluation factors in the program, Staff believes that this project will contribute to the removal of slum and blight, which is a requirement for the use of TIFF dollars. It will further the goals and objectives of the CRA plan. It is undecided if the project is financially feasible as the cost of renovation is almost equal to the market value. The rehabilitation of this house, which is located in the South Historic District, would have a positive impact on the District. It is within an area of a small grouping of bungalow homes, so retaining that resource would be beneficial. One of the considerations is whether the project will act as a catalyst for future single family growth in a rural street area. There are two burnt out homes behind this house and the City is in the process of taking those down. The CRA might be able to facilitate single family homes in there in the future. The project is not budgeted in FY 2013/2014 so it may impact other efforts if funds are allocated for this project. It would be a very minimal increase to the tax increase to the CDBG - it is off the tax rolls and not valued at much, but something needs to be done regardless of the direction.

Per the question, Mr. Griffith said the City owns this property. He said the SHNA has facilitated TIFF programs in the past. This would be an extension of their administrative efforts, and would be a partnership between City staff and SHNA to do this as cost effectively as possible. This objective is to get this home back on the market as a single family home. Mayor Myers asked if the SHNA was supportive of this and Mr. Griffith said that they are.

Commissioner Kitchens asked how the City became in possession of this property. Mr. Holmes said there was an abatement or foreclosure, he couldn't remember which, but it wasn't a tax deed. No one made an offer to buy this on the courthouse steps so the City got it for \$100.00. Commissioner Kitchens said she believes there are back taxes owed on this property, probably several thousand dollars, which would be a liability for the City. She asked Mr. Griffith if he had looked at the cost of demolition as opposed to the cost of renovation. Mr. Griffith said there was a preliminary investigation as to the cost to renovate, but they have not yet looked at the cost of demolition. Commissioner Kitchens said the City owns the property and can make the ultimate decision on what to do with it. If the City doesn't go into partnership with the SHNA to renovate it, it would cost considerably less to demolish it, especially as it is a wooden structure and not concrete block. Mr. Griffith said it would be considerably less because the City would be partnering with the County on the demolition and removal.

Commissioner Brown said she favors renovation over demolition. In places like Tampa and St. Pete, they help their police and fire personnel, school teachers and others with down payments on homes. She knows that the City can't do that, but they could get it back on the tax rolls, and this may help by putting an affordable home on the market. As to partnerships on the renovation, Mr. Griffith said the phased approach he spoke of is to secure the home, clean it up, put it up for sale, and see if there is anyone interested in purchasing it that might be willing to help finance the rest of the improvements.

Commissioner Flagg said instead of committing funds to do a full-fledged rehabilitation of the project, it might be preferable to do as Mr. Griffith suggested, secure it, clean it up and then sell it via a marketing campaign so that no funds are committed to the project. Commissioner Leary asked if the two burnt out properties behind this house are also in the South Historic District? He concurred that cleaning it up and securing it is a priority. Mr. Griffith said that the South Historic District does cross over S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and includes those two burnt out properties.

Commissioner Norwood said he favors rehabilitating the entire property and selling it for market value. Per Commissioner Norwood's question, it was determined that the City's expenses to date on this property consist of the \$100.00 the city paid for the property, and the cost of a Master lock.

As to back taxes on the property, Mr. Holmes said one could apply for a tax deed after a couple of years; he believes the taxes are around \$2,000.00. Mr. Czymbor said the Transportation and Redevelopment Improvement Program (TRIP) was created for projects just like this. This is an opportunity to go from securing the property to doing a little more work on it, then marketing it as a fixer upper. The other option is to utilize the prison crew or city workers and CRA funds, renovate it into a very nice home in the \$40 to \$50 thousand dollar price range, and this would have a domino impact on adjacent properties. The two burnt homes are being removed. This would be an opportunity to maximize those dollars. This meets the definition of removal of blight and improvement of that District. He highly recommends the CRA direct Staff to bring back some alternatives.

Commissioner Flagg said it would be more promising if there was an investor or investor/builder that used their funds and their resources to turn this around. A model project is going to require a lot of in-kind services. If you put City work crews on this project, other projects will be put on hold. A general contractor could make an investment in this property, and then get a return on their investment. This would be the best partnership and would stimulate the economy. They could stipulate a time certain for having the property market-ready. This is preferable to using municipal time and money on the project.

Commissioner Kitchens concurred with Commissioners Leary and Flagg, and somewhat concurred with Commissioner Norwood. She believes that cleaning it up and marketing it as a fixer-upper might be the way to go. Another possibility is that the PHA might be contacted about purchasing it with NSP-3 funds, as they did a house in her neighborhood, which was completely rehabilitated, inside and out, and it could then be occupied by a family.

Commissioner Brown said local people in need of housing may be willing to help rehabilitate it or purchase it after it has been renovated. She would rather see it rehabilitated and occupied rather than torn down. People complain that they can't find adequate housing; if they have nice housing, more people would live here.

Mayor Myers noted the consensus seems to be they at least want to clean it up and look at a marketing strategy. Mr. Griffith said if an application is filed by the SNHA for TRIP, they will bring back multiple scenarios so that the best decision can be made.

Commissioner Leary inquired about the timeframe for demolishing those two houses and another house in his neighborhood. Mr. Czymbor said they are working with Don Jacobovitz with the County, who has pledged to help the City get those burned houses cleaned up in the

next couple of months. Commissioner Kitchens said with regard to the blue house that Commissioner Leary is referring to, the PD informed her there is a contractor that is removing salvageable pieces from the house. When that is finished it can be demolished.

Commissioner Leary moved to clean up the property at 300 South 9<sup>th</sup> Street and move forward to see how successful the City can be at stimulating/generating any interest in the property. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kitchens. Motion passed unopposed.

**VERBAL UPDATE** - Riverfront Redevelopment Projects - Jonathan Griffith

**Hampton Inn** – Mr. Griffith said that he and Mr. Czymbor have a meeting with Mr. Patel tomorrow morning to go over the Covenants and Restrictions and closing details. Mr. Holmes advised he has talked to Mr. Patel’s attorney, who stated he was not aware that the Covenants and Restrictions were already included in the contract; he would go back and review it and if he found that everything was already in the contract, then Mr. Patel would be obligated to those. Mr. Holmes said he has no plans to change anything at this time; at any rate they wouldn’t make any changes unless the City Commission voted to do so.

Mr. Griffith said they will be meeting with Mr. Patel on an additional survey ordered on Phase 2 development of the property, which is the retail portion on St. Johns Avenue, so that they will be prepared if Mr. Patel doesn’t develop that property and it reverts back to the City. The baseline is also being established on the Exhibit that will be recorded. They will also be discussing the potable water and sanitary needs and some minor engineering issues on site. Mr. Czymbor said after two years of obtaining the certificate of occupancy on the hotel, if Mr. Patel has not developed the retail portion, the City has the right to buy it back at cost so that the City could develop it or remarket it. It was noted that the deal needs to be closed expeditiously.

**Wetlands Education Center (working title)** – Mr. Griffith said LeHuu, Project Architects, are working to get the plan to 60% to bring before the Advisory Committee and City Commission for approval in March. The site plan has been developed and passed on to the civil engineer to confirm that it complies with the existing stormwater permit. Things are moving along pretty quickly. Terry Hadaway will provide an update regarding the exhibit and curriculum at the March 27 meeting. The timeframe for the groundbreaking has been pushed back and should occur sometime in August.

**Southern Riverfront Improvements** – Mr. Griffith said that this is a large project with multiple components and multiple funding sources. The City just received confirmation of a time extension from FWC extending the timeframe to December 2014 because the construction window was pushed to June. They expect to go out to bid by the end of March. The funding agencies have to review the bid packages before they go out. Plans have to be ready to submit with the CDBG application up for approval by the City Commission on February 27th. Mayor Myers noted this is the boat ramp improvements, new concession, restrooms, and terminal facility. Mr. Griffith said it also includes parking and stormwater improvements as well as general park enhancements and landscapes. The floating docks are included.

Commissioner Leary asked if the Fish sculpture could be moved to a more visible area for eye appeal and aesthetics, like Memorial and Reid Streets. Mr. Griffith said the current proposed location has been consistently confirmed throughout the grant process. If the location is changed it would have to be at the direction of the CRA and the City Commission. Currently it is to be located in a plaza area between the proposed terminal building and concession building,

which are separate adjacent structures. They wanted to leave the plaza area open for seating and pedestrian traffic. There are other more highly visible locations it could be located.

Mr. Czymbor said the conceptual and preliminary site plan renderings will go before the Historic Preservation board at its February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Griffith said he will distribute that package to the CRA. It is going before the Historic Preservation Board due to the building elevations.

#### **4. CBD, NHD, SHD, TAX INCREMENT FUND EXPENDITURES/BUSINESS:**

**Community Greenprinting Scope and Fee Proposal** – Casussex, Hewett & Walpole - not to exceed \$3,150 -- Mr. Griffith said in late 2012 the CRA and City contracted with University of Florida Masters of Landscaping Architecture Department to develop a Greenprint Master Plan. This was an extensive process that involved multiple workshops involving Mr. Crowe, Mr. Rudd, himself and other community stake holders. They have gone to UF to sit in the design studio and provide feedback on their plan several times. A link was available to view the document – it was essentially 4 or 5 master plans and a lot to consider. They didn't provide a synthesized plan, which was acceptable to the community at large, the CRA, and the Commission. For the past six months a Main Street committee has participated in a process wherein they've looked at an aerial view for downtown and adjacent residential areas and talked about a vision for those areas. He and Mr. Rudd are developing that master plan. This was his area of study in college, but he does not have the time to develop the Greenprint Master Plan. He advises they pay someone else to do it and move forward. They are going to keep missing opportunities if they don't put a master plan in place. If they had a plan in place they could sit down with FDOT representatives to have streetscape conceptual plans included in their 5-year Capital Improvement plan for Reid Street. Reid Street is set to come up for resurfacing in the next 5 – 10 years. They will do as much of this in-house as they can, in order to save as much money on capital improvements as possible, but waiting any longer will set them back. The City has had a tremendous amount of success on the Riverfront improvements because a plan is in place. When the Riverfront improvements are in place, they will need to shift focus to the downtown.

He was approached by representatives of Casussex, Hewett & Walpole. They have landscape architects, planners and engineers on staff, which is essential for this type of project. They need to keep cost in mind when planning Capital Improvement Projects. They plan to hold five community workshops in order to further vet the Greenprint recommendations, after which CHW can develop a Plan. Those workshops would include one for each prospective district and one for the community at large. These are public workshops. After the workshops a presentation will be made to the CRA and City Commission.

Funding will be split evenly between all three districts and would come out of the contingency fund, which would not impact any other efforts that are planned for this year. As to the area, covered by the Plan, the downtown and historic districts will be covered; their master planning will "spider" out from there. They need to be cognizant of those connections that are not within the CRA. Commissioner Kitchens said that the citizens need to be aware that a master plan may be put on their neighborhood. Mr. Griffith said the workshops will be well advertised.

Elizabeth van Rensburg, 310 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, representing the Northside Historic District Association, said that this is a great project and a very small cost. She noted that Mr. Griffith said the cost would be split equally between the districts. She asked the Commission to consider that the CDB and South Districts are quite large compared to the North Historic District, which is one-third the size of the South Historic District. It is not equal, nor is it fair, to

split the cost equally amongst the districts. Mr. Griffith agreed to her point and said in the past they did this by pro-rata share, based upon a percentage.

Commissioner Norwood said they need to work on this plan until it is in place and once it is in place, it should not be set aside. They worked on putting a plan together for the Riverfront and all assumed it was the Master Plan. Then they just accepted the concept and did not ratify it as a master plan. They need to give staff direction on what to work on. As things come up, Staff shouldn't have to come before the commission to ask permission again. Staff should keep the Commission informed as it its progress and what has been done.

Commissioner Kitchens, said the Commission reserved to right as elected officials to approve each portion of the riverfront improvements as they come up, as not everyone was in agreement on all the modules. No Master Plan is carved in stone. The community does not want Staff making all the decisions. She has no problem accepting a Master Plan in concept, but as money becomes available to put the components of the plan into action, they need to approve and take input on each component. These ultimate decisions need to be made by the Commission. Commissioner Norwood said it is his point that when CH&W comes up with the plan, the CRA should vet that plan. They need to say this is what they want those districts and areas to look like and then actively implement it. He doesn't like asking staff to put together a plan, then setting it aside and only picking out certain pieces to implement. The Plan should be used as a model; there will certainly be changes.

Commissioner Leary said he supports Commissioner Norwood's statement. A plan is something that changes. A blueprint goes into construction. They don't want to lose the concept of a master plan. He is familiar with this firm, they do have some incredible planners and architects and he believes they should move forward with this. These are time consuming projects. The plan can and will be modified as they move forward based on engineering and construction.

Commissioner Leary made a motion to approve Casussex, Hewett & Walpole's Fee Proposal not to exceed \$3,150.00 to development a Community Greenprint Master Plan. Commissioner Flagg seconded the motion with the understanding that the fees will be prorated amongst the Districts according to size. Mayor Myers said they will be distributed prorata. There being no further discussion, the question was called and the motion was voted upon and passed unopposed.

## **5. OTHER BUSINESS/REPORTS**

- a. Concur on Appointment of Art Leary to CRA as DPI, Inc. Representative (City Commission appointment) – This item was pulled from the Agenda.
- b. Small Business Development Center 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter/Annual Report – Cheryl Lynch, Director, 1100 Reid Street, presented her report (filed). On February 11<sup>th</sup> the Annual Survey was distributed by the State office, and there should be results available on real, true impact numbers at the next meeting. On February 25<sup>th</sup> there will be an Exporting Essentials Workshop with IFAS on Yelvington Road. The objective is to attempt to get some business owners to start exporting goods. There's a lot of initiative coming from the White House, Congress and other agencies pushing exporting more goods as a means of improving the economy. She has received her Global Business Professional Certification. Commissioner Brown asked how many businesses were started within the City. Ms. Lynch replied that half

the businesses shown in her report were in the City – she will verify that. Mayor Myers said they need to get the word out that this service is available. Ms. Lynch said it is not only for business startup, but also existing businesses that are looking to hire new staff, move, expand, or anything of that nature.

- c. North Historic District Update – Coenraad van Rensburg, President, PHNNA – Elizabeth van Rensburg, 310 Third Street, reported Mandy Tucker is the newly elected president of the North Historical Neighborhood Association. She has been in the neighborhood for two years and has agreed to take Coenraad’s presidency for the remainder of Coenraad’s term as he has agreed to take the helm of the Putnam County Historical Society. He felt that he really couldn’t do both. The Putnam County Historical Society is moving forward to purchase a historical marker for the Bronson-Mulholland House, one of the big, gorgeous, expensive metal ones. They have approached the Northside Association about co-funding this project. The Northside is very happy with the renovations and changes at the Bronson Mulholland House. They recently voted to donate \$600 of their funds and to ask that \$600 in CRA/TIF funds be committed to help pay for this marker. The other half will come from the Historical Society.

Mrs. Van Rensburg said they have been obtaining prices on the street sign upgrades and would like this expenditure to come from CRA funds. There are 8 stop signs that are actually in the Central Business District, although they are in the North Historic District. If the Central Business District would agree to pay for the historic poles, they would very much appreciate it; however, the neighborhood would be willing to use its TIF funds to pay for this if this is not acceptable to the CBD. She asked for direction on this.

Mrs. Van Rensburg said the North Historic District has been working with St. Marks Episcopal Church to save The James House. This is ongoing. They hope the church will deed the house with a small piece of property on the corner of Main and Third, which the Neighborhood Association would move the house onto. If this happens the Neighborhood Association will put in an application for funds for renovation through the TRIP program. The James House is a very historic Civil War-era property and saving it has been an ongoing effort for the Northside and the St. Marks Church. The property has been blighted for many years. They would like to make it beautiful and sell it as a single family home.

There was consensus to agenda the request for \$600 for the Bronson House Historic Marker on the April 10 CRA meeting agenda.

- d. South Historic District Update – Michael Gagnon, President, SHNA – There was no one present to provide an update.
6. **ADJOURN** – There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m. upon a motion by Commissioner Kitchens.

ANY PERSON WISHING TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT SUCH MEETING WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE MAY NEED TO INSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. FS 286.105