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MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

MARY LAWSON BROWN
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

RUFUS J. BOROM
COMMISSIONER

JUSTIN R. CAMPBELL
COMMISSIONER

JAMES NORWOOD, JR.
COMMISSIONER



MICHAEL J. CZYMBOR
CITY MANAGER

BETSY JORDAN DRIGGERS
CITY CLERK

MATTHEW D. REYNOLDS
FINANCE DIRECTOR

JAMES A. GRIFFITH
INTERIM 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
October 23, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.

Proceedings of a Rescheduled Regular Meeting of the Palatka Community Redevelopment Agency, Palatka, Florida, held on October 23, 2014

PRESENT:

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

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; Police Chief Gary Getchell; 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. and read the meeting call, which was issued on October 17, 2014:

TO CRA MEMBERS: MARY LAWSON BROWN, ALLEGRA KITCHENS, PHIL LEARY, JAMES NORWOOD, Jr., KATHY GRIFFIN, AND KARL N. FLAGG:

You are hereby notified that the date of the regular October 9, 2014 meeting of the Palatka Community Redevelopment Agency is rescheduled and called to be held on October 23, 2014 beginning at 5:00 p.m. The regular meeting place at City Hall, City Commission Chambers, 201 N. 2nd Street, Palatka, has not changed.

Please govern yourselves accordingly.

/s/ Vernon Myers

Vernon Myers, MAYOR/Chairman

The following CRA Members acknowledged receipt of a copy of the foregoing notice of meeting time change on issued on the 17th day of October, 2014.

/s/ Mary Lawson Brown
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Allegra Kitchens
COMMISSIONER

/s/ James Norwood, Jr.
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Phil Leary
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Kathy Griffin
REPRESENTATIVE
DOWNTOWN PALATKA, Inc.

/s/ Karl N. Flagg
PUTNAM COUNTY BOCC
DISTRICT 3 COMMISSIONER

INVOCATION: Commissioner Karl Flagg

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Myers

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 9/11/2014 - Commissioner Brown moved to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Kitchens seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were none.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS – FY 2104-15 Tax Increment Fund – Jonathan Griffith, Project Manager/Grants Administrator (PM/GA) briefly discussed the presented budget amendments. Commissioner Norwood asked if maintenance was a consideration in the TIFF budget. Mr. Griffith replied that the only maintenance that could be done would be above and beyond the normal standard operation; the CRA Board could consider it, but staff would need direction from the Board. Staff will present some maintenance options for consideration at the next meeting. Commissioner Leary moved to recommend the City Commission adopt proposed City Commission Resolution Number 2014-10-126, amending the FY 2014-15 Tax Increment Fund Budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kitchens and passed unopposed.

PUBLIC PARK LEASE AGREEMENT with A1A Rentals, Inc. to Build a Public Pocket Park at 712 St. Johns Avenue – Jonathan Griffith, PM/GA, presented a draft lease agreement between the CRA and A1A Rentals. He said one of the concepts outlined in the adopted CRA Plan is the addition of pocket parks between the riverfront and RR tracks. The Main Street Design Committee discussed contacting the owner of this property to determine if the owner would be willing to sell this property to the City. They did so and found that the owner is willing to lease the property to the City for use as a pocket park. As to benefits of lease versus purchase of the property, Mr. Griffith said leasing provides the CRA with the ability to “back out” of the lease should they need to. This is an annually renewable lease in which both parties have to agree. If the CRA/City purchased the property and the CRA decided not to pursue the pocket park, the property would have to be surplussed and disposed of accordingly. The CRA can proactively seek the redevelopment of the property while it’s under lease. As to the lease price of payment of the annual property taxes, Mr. Griffith said the City is essentially paying itself; the taxes are \$591.00 annually. Commissioner Leary suggested a staff analysis of overall downtown parking. Mr. Griffith said there have been two downtown parking studies done, and he can present those results again. Commissioner Leary moved to recommend to the City Commission adoption of a proposed Resolution entering into a Public Park Lease Agreement with AIA Rentals for the property at 712 St. Johns Avenue, noting a correction to the Lessor’s name. Commissioner Flagg seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT GRANT APPLICATION – 700 St. Johns Avenue; Barbara Farr, Owner/Applicant – Jonathan Griffith, PM/GA, Jimmy Morris and Goldie Vickers approached him a month ago stating they are interested in opening a soul food restaurant at 700 St. Johns Avenue and were working with the owners regarding the building. Mr. Griffith said at the time there was a lack of funds available for financial assistance; however, there was a corrective budget amendment line item in the amount of \$18,375.00 of unexpended incentive dollars that was reallocated to this year's incentive line. He contacted Mr. Morris and Ms. Vickers and advised them to apply for the funds through the Business Recruitment Grant program, which they did. The evaluation committee met and scheduled an inspection with the building official and fire marshal to make sure their scope of work included all necessary items to bring their building up to a state of certificate of occupancy. The CBO and FM have both confirmed that, if completed, the building would pass inspection and could be opened for business. A reference check was performed by Mr. Rudd, who contacted the Health Department in Albany, NY, where the applicants previously had a restaurant, and found there were no code issues reported.

Mr. Griffith said this building has been vacant for years and has been vandalized. The scope of work includes an a/c and hood, and other minor repairs. Their match includes equipment costs and furniture costs, totaling around \$16,000.00; the grant is for \$10,000.00. Staff believes that this is a good project and is what the program was designed for. Commissioner Brown said when a match is required, sometimes applicants have trouble coming up with enough money to make the project worthwhile. Sometimes there are unforeseen repairs and there isn't enough money left to make the project work. Discussion ensued regarding matches and ratios. Commissioner Kitchens said there needs to be an assurance that the vendors are paid and she'd like to see the Agreements recorded. Commissioner Norwood stated he was concerned about the sustainability of businesses in Palatka.

Commissioner Flagg moved to recommend approval of the Business Recruitment Grant for 700 St. Johns Avenue. Commissioner Leary seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

VACANT SPACE INCENTIVE PROGRAM – Jonathan Griffith noted that this item carries over to the next item. The CRA has invested \$698,000.00 in the Central Business District and \$815,000.00 in the North and South TIF Districts through the home improvement program. They track matches as well as in-kind contributions. When the majority of these awards were made, many of the buildings were unoccupied. Staff is asking to advertise for Letters of Interest from interested property owners for vacant spaces (buildings and property) located within the CRA's three districts. The purpose of the Vacant Space Incentive Program is to create a useable space fit for occupancy. Once the LOI's are received the CRA will rank the projects to determine priority, and shortlist those for negotiation with property owners.

Mr. Rudd noted there are 15 vacant buildings downtown which need to be brought to a state of occupancy. The City needs to adopt an action plan to get all buildings downtown ready for occupancy which takes a more active approach at getting them occupied. Commissioner Leary said he has discussed this with Staff in depth and agrees there needs to be an incentive to bring more businesses downtown. Mr. Rudd suggested starting with the smaller buildings and working up to the larger spaces. Discussion ensued on how to approach property owners. Mr. Griffith said this program is fairly clear-cut. Staff is defining the problem, but the owners have to voluntarily come to and participate in the program.

Commissioner Flagg moved to recommend the City Commission adopt the Vacant Space Incentive Program. Commissioner Norwood seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

CRA REDEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM REVISIONS – Due to time constraints, this item was postponed until the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION of 2015 Blue Crab Festival – Charles Rudd, Main Street Manager, presented an update on the Blue Crab Festival Committee’s proposal to move the festival to the East Palatka Fairgrounds for 2015 due to the on-going construction at the riverfront. Mr. Rudd said Palatka Main Street is ready to put on a festival the same weekend as the Blue Crab Festival at the riverfront, but would require financial assistance from the City. Commissioner Kitchens said she thinks the Blue Crab Committee’s reasoning for moving the 2015 Festival off of the Riverfront due to liability factors created by the ongoing construction was a good idea. Visitors will know the festival has moved by looking at the website. Commissioner Flagg said the comments he has received express concern as to whether this move is only for 2015, or if this is a permanent move.

CJ Morris, 104 Woodpecker Trail; Buddy Thompson, 135 Pine Tree Lane; and Renée Vaughn, 2015 Prosper Street, appeared on behalf of Blue Crab Festival. Ms. Morris said they are only looking at moving to the Fairgrounds for the 2015 Festival at this time, and would like to relocate back to the Riverfront in 2016 upon completion of construction. Ms. Morris stated that they have not yet applied to use the fairgrounds for the festival. She stated the Committee could not promise if that if they did move that they would come back to the riverfront in 2016. Mayor Myers said the commission is looking for assurance that their plans are to come back to the riverfront if they move to the fairgrounds for 2015. Ms. Morris said their plan is to come back to the riverfront in 2016 as that is their home. Commissioner Leary said he sees no reason why there can’t be two festivals in Putnam County on that weekend so that something is happening on the riverfront on Memorial Day weekend 2015. Commissioner Brown said that Palatka is struggling and it looks like parameters could be re-set to move the Festival area further downtown to accommodate everyone’s needs. This festival’s purpose is to promote Palatka. Ms. Morris said one of the Festival’s issues is there are not enough power outlets downtown due to the current construction. Commissioner Flagg said all of the issues can be resolved and suggesting tabling the item so that discussion between all parties could take place with a goal or working out the logistics.

CRA MEETING DATE/TIME: Commissioner Flagg requested that the CRA consider moving its meetings to a date and/or time to allow time to hear all items on the Agenda. On more than one occasion the CRA has run out of meeting time and the people who are present to give reports are not allowed to do so.

REPORTS – Small Business Development Center, North Historic (PHNNA) and South Historic (SHNA) District Neighborhood Associations -- this item was postponed until the next meeting.

ADJOURN – There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 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

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES REQUIRING ACCOMMODATIONS IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AT 329-0100 AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS.