

VERNON MYERS
MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

MARY LAWSON BROWN
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

ALLEGRA KITCHENS
COMMISSIONER

PHIL LEARY
COMMISSIONER

JAMES NORWOOD, JR.
COMMISSIONER



ELWIN C. "WOODY" BOYNTON, JR.
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
August 25, 2011; 4:00 p.m.

Proceedings of a regular meeting of the City of Palatka, Florida Community Redevelopment Agency held on the 25th day of August, 2011

Present: Vernon Myers Mayor
 Mary Lawson Brown Commissioner
 Allegra Kitchens Commissioner
 Vernon Myers Commissioner
 James Norwood, Jr. Commissioner
 Angela Murtagh President, Downtown Palatka, Inc.
 Chip Laibl Commissioner, BOCC

Also Present: City Manager Elwin C. Boynton, Jr.; City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers; Finance Director Matthew Reynolds; Assistant to the City Manager Jonathan Griffith; City Attorney Don Holmes; Police Chief Gary Getchell

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION - Commissioner James Norwood, Jr.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – City Attorney Don Holmes

- 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – June 9, 2011 – At The Clerk's request, this item was tabled by consensus.
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – There was none.
- 3. CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT:**
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW – Woody Boynton, CRA Director said he provided the CRA with a list of expenditures and balances. The CBD indicates there is about \$500,000.00 left in the fund; they have allocated around \$220,000 of that to various projects, including Façade and BIG Grant Programs, promotions campaign, etc. There is approximately \$280,000 remaining in the CRA for the fiscal year. Much of that was allocated to additional economic incentives, but there is no true definition of where that money will be allocated. They have short listed 7 people for interviews next week for the Main Street Manger position and hope to have this person in place by October 1st. That number will be defined. They will begin putting together the promotions

budget for the next fiscal year. The amount will be \$30 – 50 thousand on the Main Street Manager and promotions budget for the remainder of this fiscal year. Going into 2012, they will have around ½ million of unallocated, unspent funding they will be attempting to allocate. Mr. Reynolds said the CRA budget runs Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, but the fund is audited the same as the fiscal year for the City, which is October 1 through September 30. Mr. Boynton said the annual report is due in January for the calendar year, so when he allocates money he looks at a December time frame.

REPORT - 2011 Façade Grant Program Allocation – Mr. Boynton said at the last CRA meeting he reported on all the funding that had been set aside for the Façade Grant Funding. Of the 9 projects received, the entire \$60,000 of the set-aside was spent. The day after they allocated that money they received an additional application from Beef 'O' Brady's for signage and façade improvements for their new location at the Quality Inn. There is no time frame or cycle for Façade grants. The Main Street Board felt it appropriate to bring this back to the CRA to ask for further funding. Because the CRA program is set up to remove slum and blight, they feel they should increase the funding for the Façade Program. There is ample money left unallocated to provide an additional \$60,000 to the Façade Grant Program. They will re-advertise and re-promote the program. They believe they will receive other applications. If the money is not spent by the end of the fiscal year, they will carry that forward for the next fiscal year. His request is to allocate an additional \$60,000 for the Façade Grant Program so they can consider funding the Beef 'O' Brady's façade grant of \$10,000.

Commissioner Kitchens concurred on the request. Commissioner Laibl welcomed Beef 'O' Brady's to the Downtown. He asked why the CRA would wait to allocate money to this. Mr. Boynton said other larger applications may be on the horizon. They have received no additional applications but have three inquiries. Commissioner Norwood asked if there are any requirements or restrictions on the length of time applicants have to be in business downtown to receive the grant; Ms. Murtagh said there is not.

Mayor Myers welcomed Beef 'O' Brady's to the Downtown. Commissioner Brown said they are in the process of upgrading properties and are trying to entice people to stop in downtown; this is in an ideal location for that. Ms. Murtagh said Beef 'O' Brady's is a corporate business and that is what is needed downtown.

Commissioner Leary moved to approve allocation of an additional \$60,000 for the Façade Grant Program FY2011/12 and to fund Beef 'O' Brady's application. Commissioner Kitchens seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

REQUEST to allocate \$5,472.25 for Downtown Palatka Inc. Welcome Center Expense – Angela Murtagh recused herself from discussion and voting as she is President of Downtown Palatka and brings the request. Sam Deputy, 917 Carr Street, said the Welcome Center is open and they will hold a grand opening sometime in the future. This is exciting and will be great for the downtown. They have run into some expenses in getting the building up to Code. They invite all to come and visit the Center. They are requesting a reallocation of funds to cover these expenses. Ms. Murtagh said they are asking for \$5,472.25 additional. Mr. Boynton said there was an invoice included for furnishings; they do not include furniture in funding of grant programs. He's reduced the amount of the request by the amount of the furnishings invoice from Badcock's. This brings the requested amount to \$4,727.56. Comments included compliments on the Center. Commissioner Kitchens moved to allocate the funds minus the amount for the furnishings, bringing the total to \$4,727.56. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

Ms. Murtagh returned to the dais.

PRESENTATION – Downtown Palatka Billboards & Commercial – Angela Murtagh thanked the CRA for the allocation for the billboard, which is up on I-95. She distributed a color copy of the billboard. It talks about the Welcome Center and murals. She said the commercial is a one minute commercial being run throughout NE Florida; it is a one-minute commercial which talks about the history and why we love being in Putnam County. The commercial was shown.

4. **NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT**

REQUEST to allocate \$5,000.00 for NHD Signage, Wayfinding, Logo Design and Kiosk Construction – Elizabeth Van Rensburg, 310 N. 3rd Street, said they are in a position that they have some money left from their TIF HIP allocation, and would like to improve their signage program in the neighborhood. They'd like to purchase new professionally done signs, and have come up with a new historical designation for the neighborhood, which was formerly known as Reid's Garden. They have made this their logo and have t-shirts available. The first part of the request is to allocate \$5,000 for this purpose. Commissioner Leary asked where the signs will be located. Mrs. Van Rensburg said the first wave of signs will include a kiosk for the Northside, which should be planted in front of the Larimer. The second wave is smaller signs that will be at the front of each of the numbered streets that designate historic homes. They will not be putting the current owners' names on the kiosk, only the historic family name associated with the properties.

Mr. Boynton said the CBD is also doing a signage program. He asked that they work with Mr. Griffith for continuity of sign shapes, design and colors for uniform transition. Commissioner Kitchens said they will need sign permits from the building department.

Christy Sanford, 312 Dodge Street, said the Larimer Arts Center is a national register sight, and if the kiosk is going to be fixed. The Larimer is a very important building and doesn't need to be upstaged. Mrs. Van Rensburg said the sign is permanent, extremely durable and very attractive. Commissioner Kitchens asked if they have to check with national historic registry since it's on the registry. Mrs. Van Rensburg said she will check into that.

Commissioner Leary moved to approve the NHD request for \$5,000.00 to be allocated for signage and wayfinding. Ms. Murtagh seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

Mrs. Van Rensburg said their neighborhood association sent a letter to the City asking that the CRA lines be matched up with the neighborhood districts and historic districts. The CRA ends in the middle of Madison Street. The properties to the North are in the NHD and those to the South are in the CBD. These homes are historic but don't qualify for the HIP. The neighborhood association feels strongly these homes should be addressed. They've put a lot of money into the neighborhood and it has improved greatly; the block between Madison and Reid St. is actually in the CBD and the homeowners would like a TIF-HIP program to benefit them. Based on the NHD HIP, the average per-home improvement amount is \$12,000, and there are only 10 homes in the CBD that are affected. These homes have nowhere to go to get these benefits. She and her husband will volunteer to assist on the CBD HIP program if the CRA will allocate \$80,000 to go towards these homes this year, and consider an allocation next year to finish the homes.

Mr. Boynton said he will place this on the next CRA agenda. This has already been discussed and there are significantly more homes in the South District that fall into the CBD. They understand the need and this has been discussed at the Main Street level. They can't just limit this to 12 homes in the NHD; they'd have to open this up to all homes in the CBD also. Until he is comfortable the TIF is going to be continued through 2012, he doesn't want to expend money from the CBD for residential homes, as the money is earmarked for commercial development. This is the reason he did not include this as an agenda item.

Mrs. Van Rensburg said they are promoting a living history weekend at the Bronson Mulholland House in September through a war reenactment. Commissioner Kitchens said she noticed the Union Camp will be going on at the same time as services at St. Marks Church. Mrs. Van Rensburg said St. Marks has been involved in the planning and the Reverend Dorn will be opening Sunday ceremonies with a blessing.

5. **SOUTH HISTORIC DISTRICT:**

REQUEST TO IMPLEMENT Live Here/Work Here program – Mike Gagnon, 703 Emmett St., said he met with Commissioner Kitchens regarding her concerns at the last meeting. Commissioner Kitchens said her concerns have been resolved. Mr. Holmes said this program was drafted after a program Kissimmee was using and he spoke with their assistant city attorney in this regard. There are some significant program changes. The program is one that will allow for funding for the purchase of homes by someone who will work or be self-employed in the district at issue. It provides for a lien on the property, so that if the applicant vacated the home within 3 yrs, the loan would be repaid on a pro rata basis. The Kissimmee program was five years, and contained a clause that if the home changed hands, it could not be to a family member of someone who received the grant. This seems like a wise provision. It also provides that if the home within the five years at issue is sold to someone that won't be occupying the home, the full grant will be repaid. If the person will occupy it within the five years after the grant is issued, it is still repaid to the City within on a pro rata basis. The administration feels the 5-yr time frame is a positive. Mr. Gagnon said they picked three years because it is consistent with other grant programs within the City. He doesn't know if he could write this to cover every possible example. It is extremely tough to get people to move here. If someone defaults on any grant, and they can be recorded, he's not sure they can actually get that money as this lien will be in default. Commissioner Kitchens said Kissimmee's program is very successful; she asked why the family member requirement was left out. Mr. Gagnon said he found that too long to be included. She asked if that was the reason he omitted this, was it because it was too long to type. The purpose of this is obvious. She asked if he objected to adding this to the program. Mr. Gagnon said they are trying to bring people in. The purpose is to make it easy for people to come into Palatka. This is an effort to work with those people. There are other provisions in this that are not in the Kissimmee program; this one is tighter. They are trying to entice people from St. Augustine and close communities. Commissioner Kitchens said she appreciates this, but Kissimmee wants to bring in people also. Ms. Murtagh concurred and agreed they need to do this right and protect the taxpayer's investment. Five years is not a long time to ask for a commitment, and the clauses regarding family members are extremely important. Commissioner Kitchens said she has no objection to either the five or three years. Commissioner Leary said he supports the three year clause; he grew up in the neighborhood and believes that unless they revitalize this neighborhood, the downtown will never come back. Commissioner Brown said when they did CDBG house renovations, these were people who could not afford a home. They need to look at a five year period. They moved a person into a home who just sold the home, took the money and left.

Mr. Holmes said this was a clause that was in the Kissimmee program; it's a total of nine lines. Without a family prohibition clause, a husband can transfer the house to his wife, and she can apply for grant funds through the program. They could be reading about that in the newspaper. This is an example of why the prohibition is in the Kissimmee program.

Commissioner Norwood moved to amend the program to add the family restriction clause from the Kissimmee plan. Commissioner Leary seconded the motion. Mayor Myers concurred and said they are doing 3 yr. thresholds on Façade and BIG Grants. There being no further discussion, the motion passed unopposed.

Commissioner Leary moved to approve the Live Here/Work Here program as amended. Commissioner Kitchens seconded the motion. Mr. Boynton said in the annual report they did

fund the program for \$220,000, so there is money set aside for this; this requires no additional vote to fund it. This will be sent to the City Commission for approval. There being no further discussion, the motion passed unopposed.

OTHER BUSINESS – Mr. Boynton said earlier they voted to have Ms. Diettrich look at extending the CRA timeframe. They've met with Putnam County Administrator Rick Leary who has sent a memorandum to the County Commissioner's about moving forward with this extension. As of this date they've received no negative responses. Ms. Diettrich is going to have a draft of that proposal ready next week and hopes to have this ready for the October meeting.

Commissioner Norwood asked if they are looking at moving forward with any programs for the Riverfront development. Mr. Boynton said they are moving forward with the interactive water Park foundation, the interactive playground and moving the Clock Tower. He will have an update at the September City Commission meeting. They will have solid numbers by the end of August.

Commissioner Leary said they didn't get the grant from Fish and Wildlife, but they are applying for another grant he feels confident they will receive. This will provide money to expand the boat ramps and build new bathrooms. Commissioner Norwood said if they do a tax incentive program, this will affect the CRA. He'd like to start discussion on a tax incentive program to give people a reason to improve their properties, as taxes will double or triple on improved properties. They want individual to fix up their properties. People need an incentive to reinvest in their businesses.

Mr. Boynton said Main Street is taking another look at the proposal that was brought to the Board and Legislature in 2005. At the December meeting at the latest, that report will be available.

Ms. Murtagh asked Mr. Boynton for an update on the St. Johns Avenue drainage problem in the 600 – 900 blocks. Mr. Boynton said design drawings were submitted to FEMA last week; they've requested expedited approvals. This will cost around \$200,000 and FEMA is looking at 75% funding. He hopes to have an answer by next meeting. It is unlikely anything will happen construction-wise this season given the amount of construction and funding needed. This is all predicated upon FEMA approval and funding of Phase II of this drainage project.

Commissioner Brown said they need to talk to the County and School Board about tax abatement, too, as their taxes are the largest part of the tax bill. Everyone needs to be included in the mix. Mr. Boynton said ADG had done an exploratory paper on the tax abatement process. Commissioner Laibl said prior to 2005 property values were escalating; if they look at this model now, there will be a whole other model. Ms. Murtagh asked if they can backtrack on buildings that have already made those improvements. Commissioner Kitchens said you cannot.

6. **ADJOURN** – There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. upon a motion by Commissioner Norwood.