

City of Fort Pierce, Florida
Communitywide Council Advisory Board Meeting
August 20, 2014

MINUTES

Chairperson Eric Seibenick called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Eric Seibenick, Edward Cox, Al Maige, Ellen Mancini, Leon Porter, Hassie Russ, Irene Szedlmayer

Members Absent: None

Staff in Attendance: Nick Mimms, Deputy City Manager; Libby Woodruff, Grants Administrator; Margaret Arraiz, Code Compliance Manager

Visitors: Bob Burge, 1302 Nebraska Avenue, #1C, Fort Pierce; Margaret A. Benton, Esq., 800 Virginia Avenue, #10, Fort Pierce; Rick Reed, 3301 Bent Pine Drive, Fort Pierce; Reverend John Lee, 1204 Avenue K, Fort Pierce; Marian C. Matthews, Fort Pierce; Cleaver Hayling, Fort Pierce; Hazel Hoylman, In the Image of Christ, Fort Pierce; and Marjorie Harrell, Life Gets Better, Fort Pierce.

Approval of Minutes. Ed Cox made a motion to accept the minutes of the July 9 meeting; seconded by Hassie Russ; minutes approved.

1. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Libby Woodruff, Grants Administrator distributed information to the Board and visitors as follows:

- City maps divided by US Census blocks that showed population, poverty rates and median family income per area;
- A breakout of proposed 2014-2015 CDBG funding allocations to low to moderate income (LMI) individuals, areas and programs and the percentage of the funds that go toward LMI. Ms. Woodruff stated that HUD does require that at least 70% of the City's CDBG allocation go toward LMI areas, individuals or programs, and, according to the City's proposed 2014-2015 CDBG funds distribution, about 82% of the funds will go toward LMI;
- A copy of the City's CDBG 5-Year Plan (2011-2015) Objectives that are followed as each 1-year Action Plan is created; and
- Lincoln Park and Fort Pierce Main Street Organizations' Work Plans for 2014-2015 that lists the types of activities that will be dedicated to LMI Business Owners and LMI individuals and for LMI areas, using the City's CDBG funds.

Mr. Nick Mimms stated that some of tonight's attendees were here because they received a personal invitation from the City Manager's office to attend because they commented during the 2014-2015 CDBG Action Plan Public Hearings at recent City Commission meetings.

Bob Burge, 1302 Nebraska Avenue, #1C, Fort Pierce – Mr. Burge spoke on behalf of the jogging trail at McCarty Middle School.

Margaret A. Benton, Esq., 800 Virginia Avenue, #10 – Ms. Benton thanked the Communitywide Council for the work they are doing and talked about the recent Florida Legislature allocation for funding to improve the façade and signage on the

Lincoln Park Theatre. She showed an artist rendering of the renovated theatre and gave an overview of the proposed improvements.

Rick Reed, 3301 Big Pine Drive – Mr. Reed talked about the number of citizens in the City below the poverty level; 2014-2015 Action Plan allocations including roll-over funds; Code Enforcement; Infrastructure; and Grant Administration.

Reverend John Lee, 1204 Avenue K – Reverend Lee talked about problems in the City and with City officials.

Mr. Marion Matthews – Fort Pierce Northwest Project – Mr. Matthews talked about 2014-2015 Action Plan allocations to Code Enforcement, the Dan McCarty Track, the needy in Fort Pierce, the homeless, and asked questions on micro-enterprise funding. Ms. Woodruff explained the Fort Pierce Authentic Tours program and stated that the program is expanding to provide advertising and promotion for all businesses that provide services to travelers, including hotels, restaurants, shopping, and entertainment. Mr. Mimms added that the Economic Development Committee is working to bring additional jobs to Fort Pierce as well. Mr. Matthews talked about the Mad Dads organization and Ms. Woodruff stated that Mad Dads has not applied for a public service grant in the past two years and stated that the next public service agency grant opportunities will be available in October.

Cleaver Hayling – North West Fort Pierce Project – Mr. Hayling thanked the Communitywide Council and Mr. Mimms for inviting the guests to speak and the willingness to put the 2014-2015 CDBG allocations back on the table to revisit and asked the Communitywide Council to reconsider the Code Enforcement allocation, micro-enterprise and commercial façade funding and encouraged us to start planning and developing for the future.

Hazel Hoylman, Executive Director of In the Image of Christ, Inc., Jack's Food Pantry – Ms. Hoylman thanked the Communitywide Council for approving the 2013-2014 public service grant award and explained the services that they provide and the difference the grant made in their offerings.

Majorie Harrell – Life Gets Better – Ms. Harrell stated that she was there to support the community and the Communitywide Council and stated that she is interested in cleaning up her neighborhood. She encouraged people to take a bus tour to see the hopelessness. She wants to help people to clean up their neighborhoods by starting with getting them to pick up their garbage cans and move the cans back from the road. She spoke in favor of the micro-business program and encouraged it to go forward and also in favor of the Dan McCarty Track improvements.

Mr. Mimms thanked everyone for the comments and stated that he recognized the strong concern for Code Enforcement expenditures in the 2014-2015 Action Plan.

Mr. Mimms also gave a brief overview of Code Enforcement work toward taking care of properties that 'slum lords' in the City do not address and introduced Ms. Arraiz, Code Compliance Manager who answered questions pertaining to the work of the Code Enforcement officers.

Ms. Arraiz explained that the money from CDBG that goes to Code Officer salaries and affords the City to use the previously-designated salary funds for Code Enforcement operations including lot clearings, boarding up of derelict structures and cleanups. Without the CDBG Code Enforcement allocation, there would not be money for lot clearings, etc. She stated that most of the \$100,000 has gone to the northwest section of Fort Pierce.

Mr. Hayling, Mr. Reed spoke against using CDBG funding for Code Enforcement; Mr. Burge spoke in favor of keeping the funding to address code issues. Ms. Harrell spoke in

favor of educating people about the benefits of keeping their neighborhoods clean. Mr. Matthews spoke in favor of hiring local nonprofits to keep lots mowed and clean.

2. COMMITTEE AND STAFF DISCUSSION

Ms. Szedlmayer stated that the CWC should be open and listen to what was said at the meeting today and also said that the CWC should not jump and react to anything in a hasty manner and if they want to reconsider any of the allocations it should be done in a thoughtful manner and stated that her concern is with the funding allocated to the Main Street organizations, and also commercial façade grants.

Mr. Porter stated that the CWC should have a general discussion about the allocations. He said he does not necessarily support commercial façade grants and also said that some of CDBG allocations should potentially be reallocated and suggested that this be discussed at a future meeting.

Adjournment

Ms. Mancini motioned for the May CWC meeting be adjourned; Al Maige seconded; **motioned carried**. The meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.