

# DRAFT



## CITY OF FORT PIERCE CRA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### CRA Advisory Committee Minutes

**OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE FORT PIERCE CITY CRA ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, **JULY 19, 2017**, IN FORT PIERCE 2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, 100 NORTH US HIGHWAY 1, FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA.**

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

#### 2. ROLL CALL

Present: Hoyt Murphy, Jr.; Junette Raymond; Cindi O'Connell; Michael Brown, Jr.; Plythe Freedman; Al Johnson; Allan Reed; Kristina Gibbons; Chair Charlie Frank Matthews

Staff Present: Nicholas Mimms, City Manager  
Rebecca Grohall, Planning Director  
Frank Amandro, Deputy Chief, Fort Pierce Police  
Elizabeth Woodruff, Manager, Grants Administration Division  
Jose Maldonado, Fort Pierce Police Officer  
Vennis Gilmore, Planning Analyst  
Caleta Scott, Deputy City Clerk  
Alicia Rosenthal, Executive Assistant

#### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### a. Minutes from the June 21, 2017 meeting

Motion was made by Cindi O'Connell, and seconded by Plythe Freedman to approve the minutes from the June 21, 2017 meeting.

AYE: Plythe Freedman, Al Johnson, Allan Reed, Kristina Gibbons, Hoyt Murphy, Jr., Junette Raymond, Cindi O'Connell, Michael Brown, Jr., Chair Charlie Frank Matthews

Passed

#### 4. CHAIRMAN VIEWPOINTS

Chairman Matthews welcomed all the professional guests. He encouraged committee members to bring forth their ideas on city owned properties and he hoped the members enjoyed last months trolley ride and are encouraged with what the city is doing for re-development.

#### 5. OLD BUSINESS

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Update on 414 Avenue D - Nicholas Mimms**

Mr. Mimms provided an update on 414 Avenue D, also known as The Kings Inn. He stated the city received a proposal to purchase the property but it did not pan out. Mr. Mimms said the city did put a little bit of money into trying to preserve the building by putting a membrane on top of the roof. Mr. Mimms stated the city needs to look at demolition because there are no additional offers on the building, there is no future for the building, there is no parking, the building is a surplus property and the building does not contribute to the overall improvement of the community. Mr. Mimms stated the city may get a better value out of the property without the building there.

Mr. Mimms stated that if a solid recommendation to demolish the property is received by the CRA committee then hopefully it can go to the October FPRA meeting.

Pat Murphy, Jr. said the value of the building lies in being part of an assemblage with the front portion and it is big enough for a national build to suit tenant.

The Board commented that the building is embarrassing and removing the building will be eliminating the blight in the city. The Board also discussed reaching out to the fire department and possibly IRSC for demolition training.

Motion was made by Hoyt Murphy, Jr., and seconded by Plythe Freedman to recommend demolition of 414 Avenue D, recommend having the fire school use the building to burn, recommend getting estimates for the demolition and recommend expedition as quick as possible.

AYE: Hoyt Murphy, Jr., Junette Raymond, Cindi O'Connell, Michael Brown, Jr., Plythe Freedman, Al Johnson, Allan Reed, Kristina Gibbons, Chair Charlie Frank Matthews  
Passed

**b. Update on Homelessness - Deputy Chief Frank Amandro, Nicholas Mimms**

Deputy Chief Frank Amandro provided an update on homelessness. He stated officer Jose Maldonado is now the designated downtown police officer and homeless liaison officer and hopefully he can expedite the complaints that are being received. Deputy Chief Amandro explained that business owners and residents need to be educated that feeding and clothing the homeless creates an attraction. He went on to say that chronic homeless usually have dependency or mental health issues. He said the Salvation Army has secured a property, owned by the housing authority, on N. 7th Street, that is being built as a shelter and will be operating as a "Stop" station for the police. Deputy Chief Amandro said the shelter will allow the officers to get back on the street quickly compared to the time spent sending the homeless to a hospital or jail, which is also very expensive. Deputy Chief Amandro said that a couple of groups are testing jurisdictions on how they treat the homeless. He also stated to call 911 when a homeless problem arises

Mr. Mimms explained there is a diverse population of homeless and the issues need to be addressed as a community through education and homeless resources.

The Board discussed removing the picnic table at Seaway Drive and Indian River Drive due to the homeless being fed at the picnic. The Board addressed concerns with the location of the homeless, loss to business owners, growing number of homeless in Fort Pierce, shelter location and treating the homeless with humanity. The Board requested the police department

get in contact with Gene Sereg, a retired Fort Pierce police officer, who did great things to aggressively address the homeless issue by being more visible. The Board mentioned Graceway Village was looking at transitional living facility for families but there was no funding to move forward.

Jose Maldonado introduced himself to the Board and stated he has been with the Fort Pierce Police department for 11 years and he is very happy to get the assignment of the downtown officer.

Mr. Mimms tasked the CRA committee with looking into homeless solutions and recommendations for the entire CRA.

Ex. Mayor Benton stated the police department is going to have to push the limit on the homeless issues. Mr. Benton said a team effort is needed and he suggested to invite the state attorney, sheriffs department and the elected officials to help with the problem. Mr. Benton stated the homeless need hope and he mentioned Gene Sereg, a retired Fort Pierce police officer, helped the homeless find jobs. Mr. Benton suggested Code Enforcement needs to clean up the lots in the CRA.

Anna Bennett, member of the public, stated her neighbor at Indian River Place cooks food out of her home and walks it across the street to the bridge club everyday to feed the homeless. Ms. Bennett states she gets panhandled and approached by the homeless and she is scared.

Ms. Raymond made a recommendation that a CRA meeting be committed to discussing solutions, as the City Manager has requested, and during which meeting some humanely and community perspective operating agreements are put in place without taking away from the quality of life for everyone else. Ms. Raymond stated the homeless need to know the rules of the road as well.

Brian Stone from Kraaz and Kraaz Finance, stated the homeless problem has grown over the past 10 or 11 years and the problem has aspirated. Mr. Stone said they are finding needles on the ground and homeless camped out behind the four story building and employees do not want to enter the building. Mr. Stone stated he wanted to offer his assistance to Officer Maldonado to facilitate communications between the police and the property owners and if Officer Maldonado needs an office downtown, he received Hans's approval to donate an office.

Holly Theuns, member of the public, commented that a panhandler propositioned her mother, while using her walker, along with her caregiver in front of her home and her mother is afraid to leave Ms. Theuns' home in Edgartown. Ms. Theuns also stated that she works at the Backus Museum and the first thing the employees do when they come to work at the museum is to put on a pair of plastic gloves, walk the perimeter of the building and fill a trash bag with beer cans, abandoned clothing, and sleeping bags.

Libby Woodruff stated four years ago the city contacted the Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council in Vero Beach, which is the homeless coalition for Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties and they receive the majority of all the federal funds for homeless activities. Ms. Woodruff said when the Treasure Coast Homeless coalition came to a meeting, they said the money will stay in Indian River County, even though every year they are required to provide a point and time count to the Federal government and they use St. Lucie County homeless numbers. Ms. Woodruff went on to say the numbers play an intricate part in increasing there funding from the Federal government. Ms. Woodruff stated two other times the director was brought back to talk with the city manager and staff and the director said the city can bring the homeless to Indian River County. Ms Woodruff explained that the city is not ignoring the problem, the city is trying to go through the right channels. Ms. Woodruff communicated that a 5 year consolidated plan was presented to HUD and no response was received. The city petitioned

HUD to start its own continuum of care so the city can have homeless services funding and be a separate entity and HUD has not responded. Ms. Woodruff stated that between 2015 and 2016 there was a 185% increase in homeless children in St. Lucie County.

Motion was made by Hoyt Murphy, Jr., and seconded by Cindi O'Connell to remove the picnic table located at Seaway Drive and Indian River Drive.

AYE: Michael Brown, Jr., Plythe Freedman, Al Johnson, Allan Reed, Kristina Gibbons, Hoyt Murphy, Jr., Cindi O'Connell, Chair Charlie Frank Matthews

NAY: Junette Raymond

Passed

Motion was made by Al Johnson, and seconded by Cindi O'Connell for the CRA to take on the homeless situation as a group.

AYE: Michael Brown, Jr., Plythe Freedman, Al Johnson, Allan Reed, Kristina Gibbons, Hoyt Murphy, Jr., Junette Raymond, Cindi O'Connell, Chair Charlie Frank Matthews

Passed

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

## **8. STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Chairman Matthews stated there is a need to be involved in some kind of continuous preventative program that includes all parties, including the county government and sheriff and also the school system. Chairman Matthews said the city needs the leadership of the churches to have a church adoption program that will tackle some of the homeless. Chairman Matthews suggested the police department develop a homeless leadership team, where the best five or six homeless people are educated at one time and they pass the information on to other homeless individuals. Chairman Matthews said the CRA Board needs to invite the Treasure Coast Coalition to a CRA meeting to let them know the city has a homeless problem and that the money received needs to put in St. Lucie County as well.

Mr. Reed stated before the CRA committee comes up with solutions, the committee needs to receive data that explains the increase in the number of homeless.

Mr. Mimms stated the homeless issue is becoming more noticeable and he suggested to contact the School Board, since they deal with the homeless issue everyday.

Motion was made by Al Johnson, and seconded by Kristina Gibbons to take on the homeless situation as a group and integrate the ideas and means of enforcement for the problem.

AYE: Junette Raymond, Cindi O'Connell, Michael Brown, Jr., Plythe Freedman, Al Johnson, Allan Reed, Kristina Gibbons, Hoyt Murphy, Jr., Chair Charlie Frank Matthews

Passed

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**