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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, **MARCH 20, 2019**, IN FORT PIERCE 2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, 100 NORTH US HIGHWAY 1, FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Lillian Jimenez; Hoyt Murphy, Jr.; Kristina Gibbons; Jon Neprud; Chair Charlie Frank Matthews

Absent: Plythe Freedman; Al Johnson; Allan Reed; Michael Brown, Jr.

Staff Present: Vennis Gilmore, Planning Analyst
Alicia Rosenthal, Executive Assistant

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Minutes from the February 20, 2019 meeting

Motion was made by Lillian Jimenez, and seconded by Jon Neprud to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2019 meeting.

AYE: Hoyt Murphy, Jr., Kristina Gibbons, Jon Neprud, Lillian Jimenez, Chair Charlie Frank Matthews

Passed

4. CHAIRMAN VIEWPOINTS

Chairman Matthews asked the committee to bring ideas that are matched with funding, and he would like the committee to make either a positive or negative action on old abandoned properties. Chairman Matthews stated money is needed to help eliminate some of the homeless problems. The Chairman mentioned three projects that are being worked on in the northwest section of town: Lincoln Park Theater, Zora Neale Hurston property and the Agape House. Chairman Matthews stated the Agape House will be awarded to the Veterans by St. Lucie County in April.

5. OLD BUSINESS

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. **Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council - Louise Hubbard**

Louse Hubbard, Executive Director of the Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, provided Low Income Housing Data for three different Fort Pierce zip codes, 2019 Point in Time Homeless Count and Racial Disparities handouts to the committee. Ms. Hubbard explained the Point in Time Count did slightly go down for 2019. Ms. Hubbard said the issue in Fort Pierce is poverty because the citizens don't make enough money and end up in the streets. She also said that the Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council does not feed the homeless or operate shelters, they only put people into housing. Ms. Hubbard stated that St. Lucie County and Indian River County are neck in neck for the number of homeless people and Martin County is low.

Ms. Hubbard answered questions from the committee and Anita Cocoves, Grant Program Coordinator for the City of Fort Pierce, provided additional information on the grants received by the Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council and reasons HUD does not provide homeless shelters anymore.

b. **Discussion regarding properties:**
707 N. 7th Street
Zora Neale Hurston House - 1734 Avenue L

The Chairman stated 707 N. 7th Street is being tabled for more research.

Ms. Arlena Lee, the oldest daughter of Dr. Clem Benton, spoke about the Zora Neale Hurston House. Ms. Lee explained that her father gave Zora a place to live when she got sick and Zora would have dinner with her family on Sunday's and talk about writing books. Ms. Lee explained that the property that the house was originally located on was sold to the School Board and the house was moved 500 feet away so it would not be destroyed. Ms. Lee said that have recently started charging people \$5.00 to come and look at the house and they are looking at bringing back the Zora Neale Hurston festival. Ms. Lee stated there are a number of improvements that are needed on the house.

Chairman Matthews suggested the committee take a trolley ride to tour the Zora Neale Hurston house.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Hubbard, Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, stated the city needs to be clear of what they want and that the employment pool is an issue along with absentee landlords. Ms. Hubbard suggested that the city works with businesses and people who have money and an interest in the community.

Kris Einstein, Business Owner, stated her project in the city has been experiencing delays since 2017 and it is been very costly to her.

8. STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Murphy stated it is important to get the income and tax base up. Mr. Murphy complained about the permitting and red tape businesses have to go through with the city.

Ms. Gibbons asked the Chairman for the visions of the CRA.

Mr. Neprud inquired about getting a building demolition list for the city. Chairman Matthews thought it would be a good idea to invite Code Enforcement to the next meeting to talk about how buildings end up on the demolition list.

Mr. Gilmore suggested that new businesses hire a percentage of people who live in the city and a working wage be put in place.

9. ADJOURNMENT