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

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Ms. Gibbons entered the meeting at 2:08 PM.

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

Absent: Al Johnson; Michael Brown, Jr.

Staff Present: Nicholas Mimms, City Manager
Linda Cox, City Clerk
Jennifer Hofmeister, Planning Director
Paul Thomas, Chief Building Official
Alicia Rosenthal, Executive Assistant

Attendees: Capt. Paul Langel, St. Lucie County Fire District
Charlene Adair, Code Enforcement Volunteer

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Minutes from the September 18, 2019 meeting

Motion was made by Hoyt Murphy, Jr., and seconded by Jon Neprud to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2019 meeting.

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

Passed

4. CHAIRMAN VIEWPOINTS

Chairman Matthews noted that the Florida Redevelopment Conference in Tampa was a rewarding experience and the City of Fort Pierce had the most people in attendance. Chairman Matthews said he would like to have an update on the progress of the Lincoln Park theater at the January 2020 CRA meeting, and he wants to elect a permanent CRA member to attend the monthly Homeless Coalition meeting in Vero.

5. OLD BUSINESS

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Vacation and Dwelling Rental Discussion

Fort Pierce Planning
Fort Pierce Building
St. Lucie County Fire
Fort Pierce City Clerk
Fort Pierce Code Enforcement

Ms. Hofmeister, representing Fort Pierce Planning department, explained that short term rentals require Conditional Use approval in the residential zones and is permitted in the C4 and C5 zones. She explained that rentals less than 31 days are treated as a commercial use; therefore parking, lighting, and ADA accessibility is required.

Mr. Thomas, representing the Fort Pierce Building department, explained that transient or short term rental is the regulation tipping point. Mr. Thomas stated that an apartment or house that is being rented for more than 31 days does not require a change in use but a rental of 30 days or less is considered transient use, which is similar to a hotel. Mr. Thomas said that transient use requires sprinklers, handicap parking, and ADA accessibility in order to make it safe for the public. Mr. Thomas noted that the regulations are a Florida Building Code requirement and not a City of Fort Pierce requirement. Mr. Thomas highlighted the Florida Building Codes focus is life safety and not to make money, and that the standards need to be addressed at the state level.

Mr. Murphy mentioned that three historic homes on a bad street were restored in the Peacock Arts District and are being used for short term rentals. He explained that short term rentals is the only way to motivate people to fix up homes in these particular neighborhoods. Mr. Murphy stated there is a crying need to help struggling neighborhoods, and he asked if an overlay district could be created to make it easier and less red tape for short term rentals.

Ms. Hofmeister noted that short term rentals are a national topic. She said in single family neighborhoods short term rentals can possibly change the nature of the neighborhood from owner occupied to transient rental. Ms. Hofmeister stated the city has addressed that by requiring property managers on site.

Mr. Curtis Johnson asked how the short term rentals are monitored.

Captain Langel, representing the St. Lucie County Fire department, explained that the fire department works in conjunction with the building department, and enforces the fire prevention code. Captain Langel explained that when the building official deems a use is transient, sprinklers are required. Captain Langel is bound by what the building official deems for safety.

Ms. Cox, representing the City Clerk's office, provided requirements needed for Business Tax receipts on rentals of more than 31 days and 30 days or less. Ms. Cox explained that a rental greater than 30 days is a simple registration and application fee that is used to register the

property manager. Ms. Cox noted that a rental under 31 days has an annual fee of \$41.80 along with a \$5.00 renewal fee each year. Ms. Cox answered questions from the Board on transient boat rentals and the city receiving any of the collected tourist development tax.

Committee discussion ensued on talking with the local state representative about making standardized changes to the Florida Building Code regarding vacation rentals and researching other small town vacation rentals to see how they are interpreting the Florida Building code.

Both Mr. Thomas and Mr. Langel explained that the next Florida Building Code cycle change is supposed to be in 2020 and the state needs to make the standards very clear. Mr. Thomas answered questions from the Board on the process used for vacation rental requirements on historic homes.

Charlene Adair, a volunteer for the City of Fort Pierce Code Enforcement department, stated her research began because of an outcry from the citizens on short term rentals. Ms. Adair explained that in 2016 a full report was done on how other waterfront communities manage short term rentals. Ms. Adair noted that 176 properties were being rented illegally in Fort Pierce but the recent Planning department requirement to add the business tax license to all advertisements has helped. Ms. Adair stated that the proper commercial districts and Planned Unit Developments like Harbour Isle do not require Conditional Use approval but do require a Business Tax Receipt. Ms Adair said that citizen outcry comes from both sides and enforcement comes from illegal advertising and neighbors talking to renters.

Mr. Mimms stated the CRA is a large region comprised of several short term rentals, and he asked the committee to think CRA wide and not just the beach and downtown.

Motion was made by Hoyt Murphy, Jr., and seconded by Kristina Gibbons to forward a recommendation to FPRA to look into finding a more streamline, easier way to permit short term vacation rentals in certain mainland neighborhoods, whether it be an overlay district, such as the Peacock Arts District, to encourage renovation of depressed housing stock in those neighborhoods.

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

Passed

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kris Einstein spoke about the strict FPUA requirements and not all departments being on board.

Michelle Longarzo said getting approval for a vacation rental should not be so hard. She complained that the building department requirements have made it difficult to move forward with her vacation rental.

Michael Broderick stated the Planning Board spends hours debating short term and vacation rental code issues. He told the CRA committee to tread cautiously because of the many things that come into play. Mr. Broderick noted that a 10 bedroom transient vacation rental only requires 1.6 parking spots, even within neighborhoods that do not have on street parking.

8. STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

The committee asked that the results from the Fisherman's Wharf survey be presented at the December CRA meeting.

Ms. Gibbons asked that the December CRA meeting agenda include updating the mission statement, coming up with a vision and annual idea as well as refreshing the brand.

Chairman Matthews said he would like to invite the local state representative, along with the building and fire department to the January 2020 meeting to discuss the state requirements for vacation rentals.

Mr. Neprud stated he is currently attending the monthly Homeless Coalition meetings in Vero.

Motion was made by Hoyt Murphy, Jr., and seconded by Curtis Johnson to elect Mr. Neprud to attend the monthly Homeless Coalition meeting in Vero for the next year.

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

Passed

9. ADJOURNMENT