

Englewood Redevelopment Area (CRA) Advisory Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes of Thursday, December 9, 2010 1:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Mary Ellen Diez called to order the regular meeting of the Englewood Redevelopment Area (CRA) Advisory Board at 1:01 p.m. on Thursday, December 9, 2010, at the CRA Office, 101 North Orange Street, Englewood, FL 34223.

II. Roll Call

Present: Mary Ellen Diez – Chair, John Mead – Vice Chair, John Davison, Todd Tracy, Norman Caldwell and Don Landis.

John Radkins was absent

Sarasota County Staff Present

Debbie Marks, CRA Coordinator
Joanne Jacobsen, Administrative Assistant

III. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Chairperson Mary Ellen Diez asked for approval of the November 18, 2010 minutes.

Motion: To accept the November 18, 2010 minutes as written.

Action: Unanimously approved. **Moved by** Norman Caldwell. **Seconded by** Don Landis.

IV. Old Business

Comment from the Chairperson Mary Ellen Diez: she expressed her deepest thanks and appreciation to Commissioner Staub for pulling Englewood into the scope of things in Sarasota County.

Next Item:

- Outcome of the LID presentation to the Board of County Commissioners given by Debbie Marks, CRA.
 - On November 30, we made the final presentation to the Sarasota County Board of Commissioners (BCC) and received their approval. The next step is writing the grants, which will be done over the next 4 -6 months. The grants should be awarded by late summer. The SWFMD grant for \$3 million should be awarded by October 1, 2011. If full funding is not

received, some percentage of the funding may come from property owners. So she will work diligently to see that that does not happen or at least keep that as low as possible. The next step – the bid process will begin in the March – April timeframe. With the current fund of \$1.5 million the project will start with the Veterans' Memorial, 10 Harbor Lane, the bioswales, and stormwater management with a potential ground breaking in late summer or early fall.

- Questions from the Board:
 - Todd Tracy: questioned the proposed special assessment. Ms. Marks responded that she will revisit that proposal in mid-summer and will work diligently to prevent any major assessment but all was contingent on obtaining the grants. Meetings with property owners will be held if an assessment is needed.
 - John Davison: requested an update on the Harbor Lane paver project. Ms. Marks responded that a purchase order was in process for the winning bid from Butler Pavers of North Port, but the company needed to update their insurance first. Once that is obtained, then the project can start immediately.

V. **New Business:**

Funding of the LID Project:

Chairperson Mary Ellen Diez turned the floor over to Vice Chair John Mead who requested an update on the funding of the LID project. The consultant identified an enormous number of grants that may be available for this project. He asked Debbie Marks for an update. Consultants have identified 61 grants that may be used for this project and completing the applications for the grants will begin shortly. Ms. Diez asked if professional help for writing the grants will be required. Ms. Marks responded that she has enlisted Kathy Cevolli as a volunteer for her expertise, assistance and guidance. Possible compensation for Ms. Cevolli will be discussed at a later date.

- Debbie Marks presented an update on 2 town owned properties.
 - Update on the rezoning on Dearborn Street: Ms. Marks, the rezoning petition of the 200 block of Dearborn Street is intended to help those property owners who are now located in that area and are now considered “non-conforming” to current standards to have the ability to improve their storefronts. She informed the Board that she is applying for the rezoning at present and hopes that she will have results by the February – March timeframe.
 - Update on the Cherokee property: she will meet next Tuesday with Chuck Listowski of the West Coast Inland Navigational Water District (WCIND) and Sam Johnson, engineer working with WCIND and hopes to have the answer by next week. Todd Tracy asked if the dock will be required to be four feet or eight feet wide? Ms. Marks explained that she has asked the

engineers to redraw the design according to requested standards and the new size was to comply with ADA requirements even though there are very few docks on Sarasota County properties that currently adhere to that standard. Mr. Mead asked if she was getting a lot of resistance from the State on this issue. She replied that they just need more information to make the decision and get the permit. Mr. Davison asked when will they get approval for the docking. She responded that with the new drawings she hoped to get that approved next week as well.

- The property at 800 W. Perry Street: a lease has been signed for two years; tenants will take occupancy on December 10th. The rent for 2011 is \$2,000 per month and \$2,100 per month in 2012.
- Events:
 - Debbie Marks gave an update on the upcoming events for this month, which include the SHORE Old Fashion Cookout at Indian Mound Park on Saturday, December 11. And the next event would be in February 2011, the History Week and Cracker Fair and the Wine Walk on February 26th, which will benefit the Arts Alliance. Debbie commented that Joyce Colmar of Vino Loco, who spearheaded that event, suggested that they should chose a different beneficiary for the proceeds from the Walk each year.
 - Todd Tracy asked what happened to the Englewood Music Festival? Ms Marks explained that Jack Gray was working on relocating that event, possibly to the Morris Industrial Park. It was suggested possibly moving it to Charlotte County or to later in the season, perhaps summer. Mr. Tracy commented that he considered it important to maintain the festival as an event that is important for the community. He also asked what happened to the FAME concert? Ms. Marks responded that many downtown merchants complained to the commissioners that it was a detriment to their business because the street was closed off for three days. She suggested moving it to the Englewood Sports Park, but no definite location had been named yet. Though the promoters did well, parking was the main issue.
 - John Davison asked for feedback on the recent Art Festival. Elaine Miller from Suncoast Architects responded that it was a huge success with over 3500 attendees. OEVA had taken over as the sponsoring agency since the Rotary had not stepped up as the promoter this year. The funds from the festival were donated to the OEVA coffers and would be used to help sponsor more events and to fund their website. Mr. Davison was very pleased with how well the festival was managed and with the quality of the artists. Ms. Miller recognized Janet Landis as the person “who made it happen” with her contacts, optimism and enthusiasm. Debbie Marks noted that there was one issue – that of the venders who

were setting up too early. Ms. Miller explained that at a post-event meeting that issue has since been resolved for next year.

Comments/Reports

- Debbie Marks of the CRA announced that this coming Saturday Nite Live will feature a recording artist from the Hermitage, John Bertles, that plays instruments made out of recycled materials.
- She also asked permission of the Board to order four large barricades, priced at a total of \$1,440, to be used at many public events. The Board agreed to the purchase.
- Ms. Marks also asked permission of the Board to approve the renewal of the contract for the large Dearborn Street billboard on Route 776. The Board approved the renewal.

VI. Open to Public

- Betty Nugent presented an update on the homeless situation in Englewood. She reported that there are two shelters, one which is currently occupied, and one that charges nominal rent. When the temperature approaches 30 degrees, the Red Cross comes down and sets up cots at St. David's Church. The Masonic Lodge donates money and food. The Four Squares Church serves breakfast and lunch daily and dinner on last Saturday of the month.

Board Comments

- a) Norman Caldwell: has had several conversations with Jeff Maultsby of the Sarasota Economic Development group since his presentation at the Board's last meeting in November. The University of South Florida has patented a new product which can convert any window into a solar panel and can be retro-fitted into every building. The name of the company that is manufacturing this product is New Energy Technologies (NENE on the stock market). He is trying to promote the product and sees this technology as a way of producing more jobs in Southwest Florida.
- b) John Davison: asked for help from the County Commissioners with getting the CRA projects expedited and approved. He cited that has taken over 4 years to get approval for the docking at Harbor Lane and other projects have taken the same course of many years. These are for the benefit of the local people and have languished in the process. Reply from Commissioner Staub: understands the nature of the delays saying that this is typical and will ask County Administrator Jim Ley for assistance.
- c) Vice Chair John Mead: Thanked Commissioners Mason and Staub for coming to the meeting and was very happy to see them.
- d) Don Landis: commented that his company has been involved in business with counties and cities all over the country and Sarasota County is no different than any other government agency.

- e) Todd Tracy: Welcomed Don Landis to the Board, who has been instrumental in the LID project as a volunteer. He asked if the Board would add a budget update to the meeting agenda on a rotational basis so that they will not get caught without a buffer. He also commented in the last 5 years that it was refreshing to see all the events on Dearborn Street, which he sees as acting to turn around the economy with Saturday Nite Live and other closed street events. He commented that the CRA needs to support and nurture the musical festivals as well other events and sees those “as a signature thing that will help grow the town”.
- f) Debbie Marks, CRA: was pleased that outgoing Commissioner Shannon Staub has promised to remain involved in the economic redevelopment efforts in the South County. Ms. Staub commented that the Englewood CRA was the best she’s ever known.
- g) Chairperson Mary Ellen Diez: Thanked the commissioners and other attendees for coming to the meeting.

Other comments from the attendees:

Jim Pollard: commented that one reason that the FAME event had become a problem was the fact that alcohol was served in the street. He believed that only the restaurants should be allowed to serve alcohol.

Adjournment

Chairperson Diez adjourned the meeting at 1:51 p.m.

Non-Board member sign-in attendance count: 11