

Englewood Redevelopment Area (CRA) Advisory Board Meeting

Draft Meeting Minutes of Thursday, August 19, 2010 1:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

Chairman John Davison called to order the regular meeting of the Englewood Redevelopment Area (CRA) Advisory Board at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 19, 2010, at the CRA Office, 101 North Orange Street, Englewood, FL 34223.

II. Roll Call

Present: John Davison, Chairman, Todd Tracy, Vice Chairman, John Mead, John Radkins, Norman Caldwell and Mary Ellen Diez.

Absent/Excused: Harry Colburn

Sarasota County Staff Present

Debbie Marks, CRA Coordinator
Wayne Blythe, Administrative Specialist

III. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Chairman Davison asked for approval of the July 8, 2010 minutes.

Motion: To accept the July 8, 2010 minutes as written. **Action:** Unanimously Approve.
Moved by John Radkins. **Seconded by** Vice Chairman Todd Tracy.

Abstained: Mary Ellen Diez.

IV. Old Business

- Request for Advertising

James Abraham, editor of Dearborn Street Literary Magazine, spoke to the members about the success of his book festival last year in Englewood and stated that there was a large untapped market of readers and writers in the Englewood area. Because of this market, he started a literary magazine to feature writings of writers and authors who would not otherwise be published. Mr. Abraham requested that the CRA fund an ad in his literary magazine, which would also aid in his promotion of another book festival.

Mr. Abraham stated that his magazine highlighted literacy and cultural ideals and fostered the CRA's mission of community growth; further, his magazine spoke to the local history of people and phenomena.

Mr. Abraham addressed questions from the Board members. When asked, he stated that his office was in Port Charlotte, and this was determined by the Members not to be an obstacle for approving the funding for an ad.

Chairman Davison stated that he was on an informal committee with merchants on Dearborn Street that considered the distribution of advertising dollars. He added that one of those members, Peter Matson, was out of the country and had asked the Board to postpone any consideration of use of advertising dollars until he returned. The Chairman brought this forward for the Members to consider in their final determination of approving funding for Mr. Abraham.

Vice Chairman Tracy stated that he had put up a “roadblock” at the previous meeting for funding an ad in the literary magazine; primarily, he said, because other requests had previously been granted, the shortage of funds, and the fact that the magazine had already been approved for funding for its upcoming book festival. Vice Chairman Tracy confirmed his endorsement of the book festival because of its promotion of community involvement on the street, but questioned the value of an ad with the magazine.

Mr. Abraham answered that he was offering a great bargain, and any support for an ad in his magazine would help to ensure its likelihood of being around next year. He added that his reading audience was unique and offered a good market for advertising; also, that his circulation was 500 issues each month.

In response to Mary Ellen Diez, Mr. Abraham stated that there was no charge to writers whose pieces appeared in his magazine, that authors had placed ads as well, and that the magazine was in its second issue of print. He reiterated that the magazine was printed once a month, that the book festival was held once a year, and that the rate of \$600 for one-year of advertising in the literary magazine was his best “home-boy” special.

Vice Chairman Todd asked for the Chairman’s approval to get the public’s input on the issue; however, the Chairman disapproved, saying the Board had to do this on its own. Debbie Marks reminded the Chairman that, as a way to get public input on the issue, the merchant’s committee for Dearborn Street could be involved.

Mr. Abraham asked that the librarian from the Elsie Quirk Library be allowed to speak on behalf of his funding request, and Jennifer Perry addressed the Board, noting the public support and demand for the literary magazine when it was offered in the library. She also mentioned the success of the book festival and that the library had a table there to promote reading.

John Mead stated that he felt the ad was cost-effective and very reasonable.

Motion: Approve funding in the amount of \$600 to advertise in the Dearborn Street Literary Magazine with a half-page ad. **Action:** Approve. **Moved by** John Radkins, **Seconded by** John Mead.

Mary Ellen asked for discussion; she commented on the benefit of saturation in advertising and inquired of Debbie Marks as to how many publications CRA was using to advertise each month. Debbie responded that there were ten.

Yes: Norman Caldwell and Marry Ellen Diez.

No: Chairman John Davison and Vice Chairman Todd Tracy.

- Update on LID Project

Elaine Miller presented technical drawings to the Board to illustrate the progress on the Veterans Memorial and the Freedom Pavilion at Harbor Drive. She reiterated that the project site was an aggregate of three parcels; two adjacent properties on the water, and one rectangular parcel across the street. Elaine discussed the goal of having an open-aired pavilion, along with a sheltered picnic area created from an existing house on Harbor Drive; she discussed parking availability and landscaping for the project. She also discussed pavers, maintaining the view and the placement of flags for the Veterans Memorial.

Elaine addressed questions from Vice Chairman Todd concerning making the existing structure into a non-residential, open area facility; she also responded to his concerns about potential abuse of the fireplace in the existing structure.

Elaine also responded to questions from the public. The neighbor adjacent to the proposed pavilion expressed her concerns about the proposed area creating an invitation to homeless people. The need for security cameras, monitoring by law enforcement and fencing were highlighted, and further discussion ensued.

Motion: To recognize Elaine Miller's efforts with thanks and gratitude. **Action:** Unanimously Approve. **Moved by** Norman Caldwell, **Seconded by** Todd Tracy, Vice Chairman.

Vice Chairman Todd Tracy pointed out that the option was available, after the five-year spending period (50% Rule) had elapsed, to again alter the renovated existing structure by getting rid of storage areas and opening it up to full visibility from the street.

V. New Business

- Jeff Maultsby presentation

Debbie Marks stated that Mr. Maultsby was unable to attend and discuss the industrial park possibilities, and that Mr. Maultsby wanted to attend the Board's October meeting.

VI. Comments/Reports

- Sustainable Learning Center

Eric Phelps stated that the center was just approved by the Sarasota chapter, which has allowed the Center to start moving ahead with shaping its goals. He noted that the Center is trying to reach out to the public and offer a variety of learning objectives dealing with sustainability of any sort. He said that "sustainability" is becoming the new buzz-word; the Center will facilitate answers to the people of Englewood about sustainability, and it will not be a business-oriented focus.

Elaine Miller and Eric responded to questions from the Board about the Sustainability Center sustaining itself, and reiterated its goal to be self-sufficient as an organization with its own budget, business plan, area maintenance, et cetera.

- Status of Rezoning on Dearborn Street

Debbie Marks stated that Steve Kirk had finished with drawings and there would be a pre-application meeting with the development review staff on August 31st. She said that a neighborhood meeting would be scheduled two weeks later if the pre-application meeting went well, to make ready for submission of the rezoning paperwork.

- Cherokee/Harbor Properties

Debbie Marks noted that there was a response from the Environmental Agency (EPA) regarding the Cherokee Street property; there were requests for a valid warranty deed, the notification to owners of surrounding properties, and other issues. The one big issue was that the EPA wanted CRA to reduce the size of the fishing pier in order to protect sea grass.

Regarding the Harbor Lane property, Debbie said she was still awaiting a response from the local environmental protection office concerning Englewood's compliance with the Manatee Protection Act guidelines for the number of boat slips and tie-off's.

Chairman John Davison stated that he had a copy of the Manatee Protection Act on hand, that he had read it, and noted that Sarasota County had volunteered to be part of the protection plan. Chairman Davison said that all of Lemon Bay was part of a manatee protection area, with no exceptions; however, the manual does not address public landings and it would appear, therefore, that Englewood would not be adding to the boat traffic of Lemon Bay if it utilized a public landing area. Chairman Davison added that he would pursue this matter with the County.

Debbie Marks announced that she would contact the supervisor at the Natural Resources Department and get a determination from them in writing regarding the guidelines for public landing areas.

Chairman Davison noted that signs were posted on the pilings at the Harbor property which prohibited the docking of boats, in spite of the effort and money expended to make it a public landing area. Debbie Marks responded that WCIND had posted the signs at the direction of Environmental Services of Sarasota County, and that it would hopefully be a temporary situation.

Debbie Marks said that the Perry Street property was almost ready to be rented out, with a few improvements to be made as yet. Within six to eight weeks, she stated, there should be a tenant in the house.

- Events

Debbie Marks added a new announcement about the Fire Department coming to Englewood on September 27th, in promotion of its breast cancer awareness campaign.

In response to Vice Chairman Tracy's inquiry about the marketing budget, Debbie stated that there was a total of \$107,000 in this year's budget because she had moved money from Professional Services into Marketing.

Debbie noted that Eric and his committee had been working on the Pioneer Day festivities, and that CRA would set up a booth where information would be provided about the Low Impact Design project. Eric discussed the Pioneer Day festivities with the Board members.

Discussion ensued about the CRA-funded float, which would have a shade tree as its theme to signify the growing community of Englewood.

VII. Open to Public

A representative from the Encore RV Resorts, "Wild Bill" Soss, presented the visitor's guidebook from Ramblers Rest Resort. Bill stated that there was a circulation of 5,000 of these booklets each year to aid the RV park visitors in getting around the local area; he offered advertising space in the Rambler's Rest visitor's guide for a fee of \$399 per year.

Discussion ensued among the members concerning advertising in the Rambler's Rest visitor's guide.

Motion: To place an advertisement in the Rambler's Rest visitor guidebook for \$399, contingent on the inclusion of the full stretch of Dearborn Street in the featured street map. **Action:** Unanimously Approve. **Moved by** John Mead, **Seconded by** Todd Tracy, Vice Chairman.

Yes: John Davison, Chairman, Norman Caldwell, John Radkins and Mary Ellen Diez.

Eric Phelps commented on the need to monitor the results of advertising; that is, determine the origins of people and customers who patronize area businesses. He added that the limited amount of parking spaces at the Cherokee park area would be a problem in the future. Eric suggested that the different groups that represent businesses on Dearborn Street could evaluate their activities and marketing plans to negate any duplication of efforts.

When asked about collecting data about origins of patrons, Eric responded that active participation from the staff at local stores in communicating with their customers would be necessary. Debbie Marks added that the Marketing Committee had discussed the use of checklist data sheets, where vendors would offer these for customer surveys.

Dawn Moore announced her candidacy for the Charter Review Board, stating that she lived in Englewood.

Board Comments

- a) Norman Caldwell – The Veterans Memorial will be a tremendous draw and its economic impact has been ignored.
- b) Vice-Chairman Todd Tracy – Thanks to everyone for attending and for their input. Hoped that there could be more audience participation during the meeting about issues before the Board, but that is not going to happen for awhile.
- c) John Mead – Really looking forward to the Veterans Memorial being completed and being a part of the community.
- d) Chairman John Davison – Also looking forward to the Veterans Memorial where I can go to reflect on my service. It is another reason why we want the availability for boats to have a landing in that area, to bring business and recognition for our merchants. What they are doing to us in prohibiting boats to dock is sad and unreasonable.
- e) John Radkins – I do not have anything to add.
- f) Harry Colburn – Absent.
- g) Mary Ellen Diez – With the Veterans Memorial, we hope to honor the veterans of the area and have a place for local people with events and ceremonies. Hope to have a ground-breaking this year.

Agenda for September 9, 2010

FY2011 Budget

Adjournment

Chairman Davison adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

Non-Board member sign-in attendance count: 13