

**ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA (CRA)
ADVISORY BOARD
Minutes of December 13, 2007**

A regular meeting of the Englewood Community Redevelopment Area Advisory Board was held on Thursday, December 13, 2007, at 1:00 p.m., at Lemon Bay Park, 570 Bay Park Blvd., Englewood, FL.

Members Present

John Radkins, Chairman
Harry Colburn
Norman Caldwell
John Davison, Vice-Chairman
John Mead
Todd Tracy

Sarasota County Staff Present

Debbie Marks, CRA Coordinator
Jessi Pasternak, Admin. Assistant II CRA
Laird Wreford, Manager, Natural Resources

Members Absent

Mary Ellen Diez

Call to Order

Chairman John Radkins called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Roll was taken and Harry Colburn, John Radkins, Todd Tracy, John Mead, John Davison and Norman Caldwell were all present. Board member Mary Ellen Diez was absent. There was a quorum.

Debbie Marks excused herself after roll was taken. She was expected at a Board of County Commissioners board retreat to make a presentation on the Cherokee Street properties. Jessi Pasternak, Administrative Assistant II, filled in during Ms. Marks absence.

Approval of Minutes

November 8, 2007

John Radkins asked if there were any changes to the November 8th minutes. Todd Tracy responded with one correction on page four under the "Open to the Public" section. The fourth sentence should begin with "interest". Mr. Tracy also commented that he recently heard on WENG 1530 the local radio station that a caller from Boca Grande was planning on attending a Dearborn Street event because they saw the CRA advertisement in the Boca Beacon.

Chairman Radkins asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Todd Tracy made the motion, and John Mead and Norm Caldwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Open to the Public

Bill Tryder, Arts Alliance of Lemon Bay, opted to wait until after the waterway development discussion to speak.

Special Presentations

Englewood Sidewalks: Jim Ballenger, Sarasota County Mobility/Road Program and Bill Nichols of DMK Associates presented a plan for future sidewalks in Englewood. Mr. Ballenger explained that DMK has the contract to do the design and permitting for Sarasota County. However, since they began designing there have been some additional suggestions for locations and sidewalk priority. Their reason for presenting to the CRA Advisory Board is to ask them for their help with prioritizing the current designs. Mr. Ballenger explained that currently there is money available for the design, however, there is not construction funding.

Chairman Radkins explained to Jim Ballenger and Bill Nichols that the Advisory Board prioritized their Capital Projects for the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Radkins went on to express that he does not see why the Board couldn't make suggestions to help prioritize the plans. Todd Tracy questioned where the current design funds came from, and Mr. Ballenger explained that they are county funds not CRA. Harry Colburn asked when they expect to obtain the construction funding. Mr. Ballenger stated that it is estimated for the year 2014, however, that is pending if projects are able to bond. Mr. Tracy questioned how long the design plan is good for; the presenters explained that the SWFWMD permit is valid for five years and then they can apply for a renewal. Todd Tracy elaborated on Chairman Radkins comments that the sidewalks are number thirty-two on the CRA Advisory Board five year priority list. Mr. Colburn commented that he feels it would be a waste of money to design sidewalks now that may not be constructed for at least seven years.

Bill Nichols explained that they are looking for continuity and networks in creating the sidewalk plan. There are a lot of things involved in creating pedestrian routes, and they are integrating their original design with Stantec's and the CRA Master Plan. Mr. Radkins asked how much of the design has been finished, and Mr. Nichols explained that currently sixty percent of the design has been completed.

John Mead questioned how much money the sidewalks are going to cost and Mr. Nichols explained that it is in the neighborhood of three to four million dollars. Todd Tracy directly asked Jim Ballenger and Bill Nicholas if they are continuing with the design no matter what, and they stated that, "yes that is their intention". Mr. Ballenger stated that their motivation for presenting today is to have their help with prioritizing the proposed sidewalks.

The Board agreed that the extension of the sidewalk near the Buchan Airport should be a top priority. Vice-Chairman Davison suggested that the roads near Englewood Elementary School should also be labeled high importance. Chairman Radkins asked if they could have a month to review the proposed plans, and then discuss their suggestions at the January meeting.

Chairman Radkins asked for a motion to table the prioritizing of the sidewalk design until January's board meeting. Norm Caldwell made the motion, seconded by John Mead. Motion carried unanimously.

West Coast Inland Navigational District – Waterway Development Program: Laird Wreford, Coastal Resource Manager for Sarasota County, introduced himself and explained how Commissioner Shannon Staub suggested that he meet with Debbie Marks to discuss possible funding for the CRA waterfront properties. West Coast Inland Navigational District (WCIND) is an independent district established in 1947. It is a taxing authority; every single person in the county that pays property tax has a line item that they pay, .05 mills, towards this fund. It is a four county member, Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota and Manatee. The money that is collected from these four counties is then placed in a pool to fund waterway management projects. Ninety percent of the money collected goes back to the county from where it came from. There is a board that oversees the district, with a Commissioner from each county sitting on the board. Commissioner Nora Patterson is Sarasota's representative.

Mr. Wreford explained how he met with Debbie Marks, Jessi Pasternak and Howard White from DMK Associates on site to discuss projects that would qualify for the WCIND money. The first location that was discussed were the two Cherokee Street properties. Mr. Wreford elaborated on some possible ideas such as renovating the existing dock into a fishing pier and constructing a new dock where one used to exist. He also explained developing a kayak and canoe launch, public restrooms, parking spaces and a three pole picnic shelter. The Harbor Lane property was the second site that was examined, and since the water is deeper, there is plenty of water for boat dockage. Some possible sea wall repair work and extending the current dock was discussed with the idea of adding a ferry boat in the future. The ferry could be an educational tool that would take visitors back and fourth from the barrier islands, Harbor Lane and the Cherokee Street properties. The Cherokee properties would make a great environmental learning center where visitors could then explore the shallow water ecosystem and mangroves. In addition, Mr. Wreford discussed rehabbing the current boat lift for use by a marine enforcement entity.

The Advisory Board questioned what the next step is to take advantage of the WCIND funding. Mr. Wreford suggested creating a mission statement and elaborating on the education resources that would benefit the public. He also explained the two processes of applying for the money. The first is the CNIF, County Navigation Improvement Fund, which is money set aside in reserve specifically for Sarasota County. Currently there is approximately two million dollars in funds available, but there is a lot of competition for this money. If the right project comes along and gets in line for the money, there is a good chance that it would be awarded the CNIF money. The second process is to put in a funding project application for a specific project, such as the Harbor Lane site. The application deadline is March 31, 2008 and then staff would review the application prior to it going before the Board of County Commissioners in June. This process is for projects to begin after October 2008, where as the CNIF does not have an application deadline. Laird expressed his commitment to actively participating with the CRA throughout the application process.

Todd Tracy questioned the current structures on the Cherokee sites, and if they are able to be saved. Specifically if the county could find a business to lease the structures, and have the business owner pay for the improvements to bring it to code. Mr. Tracy asked Howard White of DMK Associates to elaborate on the findings from the examination of the structures. Mr. White informed the group that in order to bring the buildings to code it would exceed the fifty percent

rule. Jessi Pasternak commented that Ms. Marks was currently at the Board of County Commissioners' Retreat reporting on DMK's findings, and that if Mr. Tracy wanted a copy of DMK's report she is sure Debbie Marks would be happy to provide him with one.

Chairman Radkins asked for a motion to request funding from WCIND. Norm Caldwell made the motion, seconded by Harry Colburn. Motion carried unanimously.

Laird Wreford asked the Board to excuse him since he was asked to attend the retreat with Debbie Marks. However, he knew that there was someone in the audience who had a comment about the waterfront properties. Chairman Radkins invited Bill Tryder of the Arts Alliance of Lemon Bay to speak now, so Mr. Wreford would be available for his comments.

Bill Tryder wanted to thank Laird Wreford and the Board for bringing this opportunity to community. Mr. Tryder expressed that the Arts Alliance's core mission is to educate. The Alliance has been in touch with Keith Wilson, a marine biologist, who agrees that the Cherokee Properties are the perfect location for an environmental learning center. Mr. Tryder offered that the center could be used for school field trips or home schooled students, and Keith Wilson would be willing to participate in presentations. Mr. Tryder offered himself or one of the Art Alliance Board members to sit on Vice-Chairman Davison's waterfront property committee.

Comments/Reports

Marketing Plan: Chairman Radkins asked Jessi Pasternak to give the marketing update. Ms. Pasternak elaborated that the lease was signed for both billboards, and the lease begins January 1, 2008. The marketing committee took into account the suggestions of the Board and public from the November meeting, and finalized the art work for the signs with the Art Alliances help. Ms. Pasternak went on to discuss the various publications that the committee has committed to, and currently their advertisements are running in the Boca Beacon and the Venice Gulf Coast Living magazine highlighting specific events on Dearborn Street. The Dearborn Street event card was also created and produced. Since the CRA is producing it in house, Ms. Pasternak asked for everyone to send her event information so she could update the card.

Under new business, Ms. Pasternak discussed leasing a website banner advertisement on the Sarasota Convention and Visitor's Bureau website. The marketing committee is asking the Board to approve \$825 to purchase this lease from the visitors' bureau. Although it hasn't been determined yet, the committee is looking at having the banner placed on the "Things to Do" or "Shopping" page. The visitor bureau's website receives over 6,500 visits per-day, and the banner will have a direct hyper link to the OEVA website. Plus, the CRA is able to obtain solid statistics and change the advertisement out as often as is necessary to promote specific events. Per the Advisory Board recommendations, the committee did explore local publications and are looking at advertising in the Englewood Review. The committee has committed to advertising in the Englewood Sun Herald Discover Guide 2008 for a 1/4page ad at a cost of \$187.50 to the CRA.

John Davison made the motion to allocate the \$825 for a year's banner advertisement lease on the Sarasota Convention and Visitor's Bureau website, seconded by Norm Caldwell. After some discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Signage/Landscaping Project: Jessi Pasternak informed the room that on Friday, December 14th at 2:30 pm the CRA is coordinating a community planting project at the new "Welcome to Englewood" sign on East Dearborn Street. All are invited.

Ms. Pasternak commented that the RCTOD/Code Changes and Waterfront Properties Update agenda items were a mistake and should be ignored.

Open to the Public

Russ Kyper wanted to give an update on the Buchan Fly-In. He announced that October 11, 2008 will be the date of the next Fly-In. Mr. Kyper also wanted to comment on Harry Colburn's recent article in the newspaper. Russ Kyper also mentioned that over a year ago he proposed the idea of a solar powered watercraft, and when the time arrives he has information on it.

Bill Tryder reminded the room about the Arts Alliance of Lemon Bay Chair Auction. It is going to be held on Saturday, December 15th, viewing begins at 6pm. Mr. Tryder also wanted to elaborate on the Englewood sidewalks; he echoed Vice-Chairman John Davison's opinion that the children and school sidewalks should be a priority. He also asked the Board to look at the Arts Overlay District when reviewing the proposed sidewalks.

Advisory Board Comments

Norman Caldwell concluded that the meeting was very productive, and that he is very excited about the waterfront possibilities.

Harry Colburn discussed that he feels in the future the waterfront acquisitions are going to be viewed as one of the best things that happened under this Board.

John Mead questioned Taylor Meals if he had an update on the SR 776 banner. Mr. Meals expressed that he provided Debbie Marks with that information and that she is pursuing it. John Fellin offered his assistance since he was one of the original people who coordinated the banner. Also, Mr. Mead asked the Board if they could have a working lunch meeting sometime soon, similar to the Englewood Area Planning Advisory Board's December board meeting at Bootleggers. Chairman Radkins encouraged Mr. Mead to follow up with Debbie Marks and Jessi Pasternak after the EAPAB's meeting to determine how it was received, and if the CRA Advisory Board could have a meeting too.

Todd Tracy thanked Bill Tryder for his help and final billboard design. He also encouraged the audience to pick up a copy of the sidewalk map and to review it as well. Mr. Tracy asked the room if anyone had any comments in regards to the Englewood sidewalks, and Taylor Meals discussed how he felt that pursuing design and permitting now is not a good use of county money. However, he did agree special attention should be paid near the schools.

John Davison commented on the letter to Chairman John Radkins from Jim Ley, County Administrator. Mr. Davison felt that it was very negative and discouraging.

John Radkins shared his enthusiasm about the WCIND and offered his help to Vice-Chairman Davison and the waterfront property committee.

Adjournment

Chairman Radkins asked for a motion to adjourn. John Mead made the motion, seconded by Norm Caldwell. Meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.