

# Englewood Redevelopment Area (CRA) Advisory Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes of Thursday, November 18, 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 1:02 p.m. on Thursday, November 18, 2010, at the CRA Office, 101 North Orange Street, Englewood, FL 34223.

## II. Roll Call

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

John Radkins arrived at 1:20 p.m.

### Sarasota County Staff Present

Debbie Marks, CRA Coordinator  
Joanne Jacobsen, Administrative Assistant

## III. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Chairman Davison asked for approval of the October 14, 2010 minutes.

**Motion:** To accept the October 14, 2010 minutes as written.

**Action:** Unanimously approved. **Moved by** Norman Caldwell. **Seconded by** Vice Chairman Todd Tracy.

## IV. Old Business

- Update of the budget for the Storm Water Retention Project introduced by Debbie Marks, CRA.
  - Project is now approaching the bid stage. On November 30, the final presentation will be made to the Sarasota County Board of Commissioners (BCC). Once their approval has been granted the bid process will begin.
  - The CRA will ask the BCC for approval to borrow up to \$4.5 million. Staff has applied for a \$3.0 grant from the Southwest Florida Water Management District and need to have \$3 million in order to match the grant. With a \$7.5 million projected budget Phase 1 project is slated to begin in June, 2011. This will include all bioswales, sidewalks, on street

parking, 10 Harbor Lane project, Veterans Memorial and Pavilion. Board gave their verbal approval.

- Debbie Marks, CRA announced the Neighborhood Workshop rezoning meeting to take place this evening at 6:00 p.m. at Lemon Bay Park. The meeting is designed as a community workshop to discuss the rezoning of 2 parcels and the continued planning of the waterfront park area.
- Debbie Marks presented an update on 2 town owned properties.
  - Cherokee Park permit process is moving ahead and she is hopeful that the permits will be issued before the end of the year.
  - The property at 800 W. Perry Street: a lease has been signed for two years; tenants will take occupancy on December 20.
- Events - an update was provided by Debbie Marks:
  - The Christmas Walk has been changed from November 26 to December 1 from 5 – 9 p.m., in order to attract more shoppers.

Board Chairman John Davison called a recess at 1:20 p.m.

Board Chairman John Davison reconvened the meeting at 1:37 p.m.

#### V. New Business:

##### **Election of Board Officers:**

Chairman John Davison asked the Board for a nominee for Board Chairperson. John Mead nominated Mary Ellen Diez for Board Chair.

**Motion:** To accept Mary Ellen Diez as CRA Board Chair. **Action: Unanimously approved. Moved by John Mead, Seconded by John Radkins.**

Chairman John Davison asked the Board for a nominee for the position of Vice Chair. Vice Chair Todd Tracy nominated Board Member Norman Caldwell. Board Member Caldwell declined the nomination. Chairman Davison nominated Board Member John Mead for the position.

**Motion:** To accept John Mead as CRA Board Vice-Chair. **Action: Unanimously approved. Moved by John Davison, Seconded by Norman Caldwell.**

## VI. Comments/Reports

Report: Chairperson Mary Ellen Diez introduced Jeff Maultsby, Manager of Business and Economic Development, from Sarasota County's Office of Financial Planning, who gave a special presentation to the Board and attendees concerning the economic incentives that are now available to new and existing businesses in order to stimulate the region's economy.

Highlights of Mr. Maultsby's presentation:

- The department has created an Economic Development Incentive Fund of \$2 million, derived from the sale of escheated lots in North Port, in order to attract new business and to encourage current businesses to expand.
- In order to compete for new and/or relocating businesses with counties around the country they found it necessary to offer tax abatement and use a regional approach with Manatee County.
- The BCC has authorized approximately \$7 million in incentives to 16 companies with their agreement to add 1000 jobs in the next 3 – 5 years with an average wage equal to the current MSA data.
  - Examples:
    - Sanborn Studios – a new company providing a diverse area of employment
    - METI: a medical education manufacturing company was incented to retain their facility
    - L3 Communications: also incented to retain their facility
    - A new light manufacturing company which produces airplane evacuation slides has targeted North Port for a new facility and will offer nearly 1000 jobs.
- There is a new publication available to the public in print and on the County website: *Sarasota Country FL Economic Development Incentive Programs*.
- These new efforts show that the County is growing and changing quickly and is diversifying.

### Comments and Questions from the Board:

- John Radkins: expressed concern about the possible lack of skilled workers. Mr. Maultsby pointed out the supply will come from the educational facilities located in the County.
- Norman Caldwell: inquired about the Department's budget. Mr. Maultsby explained that though they do not have a specific budget, their efforts are combined with the Economic Development Council. Mr. Caldwell also inquired about the funding of a rowing park and the feasibility of reallocating some of those funds for a business incubator park. Mr. Maultsby explained that the rowing facility acts as both a recreational park and also attracts business owners and entrepreneurs as well. He has studied best practices in several countries and uses that information to stimulate new business. Mr. Caldwell extended an invitation to have Mr. Maultsby and interested parties to visit and view the

business incubator district with a training program in Auburn, Alabama to see the results of that successful project and the substantial affect that has had on the community.

- John Mead inquired about partnering with neighboring counties and asked if that was a result of completion. Mr. Maultsby responded that because Sarasota does not have the “critical mass” that other regions of Florida have, it was necessary to expand the scope of his economic development efforts to bordering counties and “get out of the silo mindset”. Mr. Mead also inquired about his efforts in Charlotte County. Mr. Maultsby said that he has been in talks with Charlotte, in particular regarding their Industrial Development Authority, to possibly include that model in his plans. He has also been to several other counties to discuss economic development and will be hosting an economic development summit in the future.
- Todd Tracy explained that the CRA was created to help revitalize Englewood, with a focus on Dearborn Street and the waterfront area. He asked if Mr. Maultsby had been involved in other community revitalization efforts. Mr. Maultsby answered that he had just recently attended a meeting with the Nokomis/Osprey group and advised them to remain unified with the Venice business groups to be more effective. Mr. Tracy asked about the tools to help attract businesses to downtown. Mr. Maultsby explained that they now have the ability to abate ad valorem taxes for businesses for up to 10 years and can help mitigate impact fees and these tools were available to small businesses in Englewood.
- John Davison: concurred that the rowing facility attracts high-end spenders who have the ability and capability to add to the business environment.
- Chairperson Mary Ellen Diez asked about a minimum size business that would be viewed as a viable candidate for economic development efforts. Mr. Maultsby replied that any size company would be viewed as viable as long as they met the concept of their target business, met the minimum salary requirements and was viewed as a qualified business partner.
- Debbie Marks of the CRA asked explained that the new CRA sponsored redevelopment plans will help mitigate the stormwater requirements and help stimulate business development in the downtown area. She inquired if there were any other tools available and can the CRA efforts been mentioned and recognized in the EDC Incentive Programs. Mr. Maultsby explained that the CRA Development Incentives are mentioned in the EDC booklet and that he would investigate other ways that his group can help CRA-Englewood’s efforts to revitalize the downtown area.

## **VII. Open to Public**

John Fellin asked about storefront grants and how the process worked. Debbie Marks, CRA, explained the process is normally a loan, but if the owner sells the business within 5 years then a portion of the grant is required to be paid back.

Elaine Miller of Suncoast Architects gave a reminder to all present that the Winter Fine Arts Festival, formerly sponsored by the Rotary Club but now sponsored by OEVA, will take place on Saturday and Sunday, December 4 & 5 on Dearborn Street.

## **Board Comments**

- a) Norman Caldwell: delighted with Jeff Maultsby presentation.
- b) John Radkins: glad to see two new Board Officers, John Mead and Mary Ellen Diez.
- c) John Davison: thanks to the Board for helping to get the downtown projects started and furthering the economic development of the area and providing more access to Lemon Bay.
- d) Todd Tracy: very pleased with the guest speaker, Jeff Maultsby and thanked Norm Caldwell for arranging the presentation. He also expressed the need to organize and publicize the economic incentives that are now available through the County.
- e) Vice-Chairman John Mead: thanked Elaine Miller for her presentation at an earlier meeting that day and thanked Todd Tracy for his participation last week's fund raiser.
- f) Debbie Marks, CRA: reminder all present that the final presentation to the Board of County Commissioners will take place Tuesday, November 30 at the R.L. Anderson Building in Venice.
- g) Chairperson Mary Ellen Diez : thanked the Board for electing her Board Chair and reminded all present of the next CRA Board Meeting on Thursday, December 9 at 1:00 p.m.

## **Adjournment**

Chairperson Diez adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

Non-Board member sign-in attendance count: 10