

**ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA (CRA)
ADVISORY BOARD
Minutes of February 14, 2008**

A regular meeting of the Englewood Community Redevelopment Area Advisory Board was held on Thursday, February 14, 2008, at 1:00 p.m., at Lemon Bay Park, 570 Bay Park Blvd., Englewood, FL.

Members Present

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

Sarasota County Staff Present

Debbie Marks, CRA Coordinator
Jessi Pasternak, Admin. Assistant II CRA

Call to Order

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

Approval of Minutes

January 10, 2008

Chairman Radkins questioned if there were any changes to the January 10th minutes. Todd Tracy responded with some corrections beginning on page five, under the open to the public section, third paragraph. The second line should read, "...the CRA is filing and paying for the permits..." Another correction is under the Advisory Board Comments, first paragraph, the fourth line should state, "...towards the stormwater project management." Page five, third paragraph, second line should read, "There is going to be a special referendum which includes four separate comprehensive plan amendments..."

Ms. Diez also identified a correction on page five, under the Advisory Board Comments, third paragraph, the last word should read, discuss.

Mr. Colburn acknowledged that on page five under Open to the Public, line two should read, "...Gottfried Stewardship Village." Mr. Colburn also commented on the usage of the word "brief" in the same paragraph on line three. He requested that the word be deleted.

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

Open to the Public

Chairman Radkins commented that there were a number of individuals who requested to speak. Mr. Colburn interjected that he felt any individuals who wished to speak in regards to the Northern Anchor Project should wait until after he had an opportunity to discuss the topic. Chairman Radkins expressed that the Board has always allowed an open discussion in regards to agenda items.

Mr. Colburn elaborated on the Northern Anchor Project, before the public discussion. He discussed how it is improper for the CRA Advisory Board to have these kinds of matters come before them, because a petition for rezoning is going before the Board of County Commissioners. The County Commission is acting as a judging body, and since the CRA Advisory Board is controlled and directed by the judges, there is a conflict. The judge can not render assistance before the final hearing to either of the parties. Mr. Colburn urges the CRA Advisory Board to adopt a complete “hands off” approach to matters that are currently going before the Commission until the Board receives clear guidelines from the county attorney.

Ms. Diez suggested that in past instances the Advisory Board has taken a position of not endorsing or supporting a matter that is currently before the Board of County Commission. She then expressed that she did not see a problem with the individuals speaking today, as long as the CRA is not asked to endorse the matter. Mr. Colburn agreed.

Chairman Radkins invited Mr. John Fellin to speak. Mr. Fellin expressed how he felt that the Advisory Board should be aware of the comments that were expressed at the Planning Commission meeting. He explained how those who supported the denial commented that the development would be better suited in Venice or Sarasota, but not Englewood. Mr. Fellin continued to explain how he felt that those comments were insulting to Englewood and its residents.

Don Schilke requested to wait until the second Open to the Public.

Formation of Art-in-Public Spaces Committee

Mr. Colburn explained that he felt an Art-in-Public Spaces committee would benefit the area because it would allow for a procedure to be established. Mr. Colburn suggested having various community members, such as local artist, OEVA members and a CRA Advisory Board member. Mr. Colburn recommended Mary Ellen Diez as the committee chair.

Ms. Marks interjected that she would like to discuss this topic with the county attorney’s office, because she feels that it could be one portion of the current Store Front Grant Program. The entire board encouraged Ms. Marks to investigate the topic further with the county staff. Chairman Radkins asked the topic to be put on March’s meeting agenda.

Application Form for CRA Grants

Mr. Colburn expressed his concern for future CRA projects, and how he feels an application form should be submitted. Ms. Marks distributed a sample form to the board. The board made suggestions to Ms. Marks, including a spot on the form to note the date the application was received, the action taken by the board and where the money could come from. Mr. Colburn also commented that if the group is a 501C3 non-profit they should provide the appropriate documentation. Chairman Radkins also requested that the applications are submitted one to two weeks prior to the Advisory Board meeting so the board has time to prepare notes and questions.

Mr. Bill Tryder from the audience recommended including an additional notation under the *Proposal Information* to “attach additional information if needed.” Chairman Radkins agreed, and Ms. Marks assured the group that she would make the changes and bring the updated form to the next board meeting.

Northern Anchor Project

Mr. Colburn informed Chairman Radkins that he has already discussed what he wanted to in regards to this topic. However, Ms. Marks discussed that Sarasota County has a policy where Neighborhood Services/Englewood CRA is notified of applications that are filed to Planning Services. Then it becomes the CRA’s responsibility to inform the community of these meetings via e-mail or other means. Ms. Marks explained that the board is not asked to take a position or action on these applications, but it is part of their responsibility as the Advisory Board to be informed of these changes that may be taking place within the CRA.

Mr. Bill Tryder from the audience asked the Advisory Board for a point of clarification. His question was, as an advisory board shouldn’t the board be advising the Board of County Commissioners on what is taking place within the community? Wouldn’t the board need some input from the public? Mr. Colburn expressed again that the CRA is controlled by the Board of County Commissioners. Chairman Radkins elaborated that the CRA Advisory Board is only asked to advise the Board of County Commissioners on issues that are happening within the Englewood CRA. Discussion ensued, and Ms. Marks informed the board that she would speak to the county attorney and request specific details on the role of the CRA Advisory Board.

Comments/Reports

Marketing Plan: Chairman Radkins invited Jessi Pasternak to update the board on the marketing plan. Ms. Pasternak expressed that the marketing plan is currently on auto pilot. Most of the publications that were committed to earlier in the year are self sufficient at this time. However, Ms. Pasternak is submitting new event specific advertisements each printing. Ms. Pasternak also expressed that she is working hard at highlighting the mural project and unveiling. Mary Ellen Diez suggested that the CRA try to have some television coverage of the unveiling. Ms. Pasternak expressed that she was working with her contacts at the various visitor bureaus to try to obtain interviews from the TV stations. She also informed the room that several travel writers have already committed to being at the unveiling and Wine Walk.

Status of Supreme Court Case: Ms. Marks informed the room that the Supreme Court heard more oral arguments last week, no decision has come down yet in regards to whether or not CRA's have to go to referendum in order to bond. There isn't a date set for a decision; however, they have suggested it would be in the spring at some point.

Mural Project: The artists are arriving in Englewood on Sunday, February 17 and will be staying at the Hermitage. A public viewing/open house has been planned at the Hermitage for Wednesday February 20, from 3-6pm. This will give the public the opportunity to witness the creation process. Refreshments will be served. The unveiling is scheduled for Saturday, February 23rd at 1pm beside Vino Loco.

Signage/Landscaping Project: Mr. Colburn updated the board that a committee has been created and is meeting regularly. Currently they are taking inventory of the signs that exist, exploring a grant program to help with the financial burden of signs, and a sign review committee. In March, the county enforcement officer will be meeting with the group to educate them. Chairman Radkins suggested having a way to assist businesses in getting the sign permits through the necessary county channels. Mr. Colburn elaborated that would be one of the responsibilities of the sign review committee.

Debbie Marks discussed the public restroom sign on Dearborn Street. She is exploring the possibility of putting a free standing sign in the right of way that would represent the design that Stantec created. Discussion ensued.

RCTOD/Code Changes: Ms. Marks explained that it was filed in the planning department on Tuesday. She will provide copies to the board once she receives a copy.

Waterfront Properties Update: Debbie Marks explained that the demolition of the Cherokee Street properties is moving forward. Currently Habitat for Humanity is on site removing usable materials. Then on February 26th, 67 Cherokee Street will be burned, and on March 3rd, 61 Cherokee will be burned.

Vice Chairman Davison informed the board that the CRA was approved for the West Coast Inland Navigational District (WCIND) funding. Plans are moving ahead to put in picnic shelters, restrooms, parking spaces and refurbishing the current dock at Cherokee Street. The possibility of expanding the dock at 10 Harbor Lane is also being explored.

Fund Raising Event for Kiwanis Park: Ms. Marks updated the board that the CRA office is working with the Englewood Environmental Learning Center to bring a fund raising circus and parade to West Dearborn Street and the Buchan Airport. Ms. Marks expressed the excitement for this event and how it is going to be a large community event including the local schools and other organizations. The Learning Center is currently working with the local Anastasini Family Circus, and they are actively seeking donors for the \$5,000 deposit. Ms. Marks requested the board to approve paying the deposit out of the marketing budget.

Mary Ellen Diez made a motion to participate in this event by paying the \$5,000 deposit from the CRA marketing budget if another donor could not be identified. John Mead seconded the motion. A discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously.

Open to the Public

Chairman John Radkins invited Don Schilke to speak. Mr. Schilke approached the board with a 3D scale model of the proposed Northern Anchor Project. Mr. Schilke discussed the background as to why OEVHA opposed the project.

Elaine Miller from the Olde Englewood Village Association updated the group on the future events that are taking place on and around Dearborn Street including the wine walk and Paws in the Park. Ms. Miller also wanted to publicly thank KIMCO Construction for all their help with the mural project.

John Fellin updated the room on the Planning Commission Meeting that took place on January 17th. Specifically, the modification to the commercial general mix use residential restrictions.

Bill Tryder, citizen, expressed his concern for the issue that Mr. Colburn raised earlier in the meeting. Since Englewood doesn't have a city government, there is no other forum for the public or petitioners to present their opinions.

John Fellin spoke again, and elaborated on Mr. Tryder's concern.

Tom Minnich, founder of the River Road Regional Task Force, informed the room of the River Road region and expressed what the task force is trying to accomplish. Mr. Minnich proposed to the Advisory Board that a 35 foot limit overlay on the entire CRA region.

Advisory Board Comments

Norman Caldwell questioned again about architectural and landscape guidelines in the CRA plan. Ms. Marks informed him that the architectural guidelines are in the amended plan that is moving forward. He also questioned the Veteran Memorial and congratulated John Davison on the waterfront projects.

Harry Colburn commented on the Northern Anchor Project.

Mary Ellen Diez updated the board on the Veteran Memorial Committee. She also congratulated Vice Chair John Davison on the WCIND funding. Ms. Diez also commented on how there needs to be the addition of benches at the public bus stops.

John Mead displayed the Stillwater newsletter, and commented on the OEVA calendar of events that is printed in the newsletter.

Todd Tracy expressed concern about creating an Art-in-Public Spaces Committee and the Northern Anchor Project.

John Davison thanked the public for presenting these projects to the Advisory Board. He appreciates being informed and feels that it effects the decisions that the CRA Advisory Board needs to make.

John Radkins expressed that the CRA Board's tradition of welcoming the public and community to the board meetings is one that he hopes they will be able to continue with. He recognizes that it is one of the only public forums in Englewood, and the discussions that take place are crucial to everything that happens within the CRA directly or indirectly.

Agenda Items

Ms. Marks reviewed that the March agenda would include the Veteran memorial garden update, the funding request form and the attorney findings.

Adjournment

Chairman Radkins adjourned the meeting at 2:43 pm.