

FINAL

**MINUTES
CITY OF COCOA
DIAMOND SQUARE CRA
SPECIAL MEETING
February 8, 2021**

The Special Meeting of the Cocoa Community Redevelopment Agency was held on February 8, 2021 at City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL, as publicly noted.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Tracy A. Moore	Chairperson
Delores Martin	Vice Chairperson
Sylvia Thomas	Agency Member
Ed Jones	Agency Member
Jackie Isom	Agency Member
Marilyn Ross Smith	Agency Member
Larry Brown	Agency Member
Joseph Colombo	Agency Attorney
Lori Chabot	Recording Secretary

PRESENT:

Tracy A. Moore	Chairperson
Jackie Isom	Agency Member
Sylvia Thomas	Agency Member
Marilyn Ross Smith	Agency Member
Larry Brown	Agency Member
Joseph G. Colombo	Agency Attorney
Lori Chabot	Recording Secretary

ABSENT:

Ed Jones	Agency Member
Delores Martin	Vice Chairperson

STAFF PRESENT:

Charlene Neuterman, Deputy Community Services Director, Councilman Goins, **Angela Essing**, Economic Development Manager.

Agency Member Smith provided the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

II. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes:**

AGENDA: Special Meeting February 8, 2021.

- * ***MOTION by Agency Member BROWN SECONDED by Agency Member THOMAS to approve the agenda for the February 8, 2021, Special Meeting as written.**

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5 -0)

MINUTES: Special Meeting of December 14, 2020.

- * ***MOTION by Agency Member BROWN; SECONDED by Agency Member ISOM to approve the minutes for the November 16, 2020, as written.**

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

III. **Delegations:** None

IV. **Presentations:** None

V. **Action Items:**

1. Staff requests Agency approval of a Resolution, Exemption to Competitive Bid, and a BAF in the amount of \$3,600 for cleaning, reconstructing and manufacturing signs in the DS CRA area.

Charlene Neuterman gave an overview on the item reminding Agency Members that the signs were installed in 2006, refurbished in 2010-2011 and are ready to be refurbished again. Mrs. Neuterman explained with improved technology, the signs should last longer. All of the signs will be removed prior to refurbishing. Two will be replaced, one will be relocated and the fourth needs to be replaced. Councilman Goins stated he may be able to help replace the 4th sign. Agency Member Brown asked about turn around time and Mrs. Neuterman replied 30-60 days. Chairperson Moore asked about a start date and Mrs. Neuterman replied as soon as we get the PO approved.

- * ***MOTION by Agency Member BROWN; SECONDED by Agency Member SMITH to Agency approve a Resolution, Exemption to Competitive Bid, and a BAF in the amount of \$3,600 for cleaning, reconstructing and manufacturing signs in the DS CRA area.**

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

2. Staff requests Agency direction on the Upstart Diamond Square Policies, Procedure and Conditions and collaboration with weVENTURE.

Charlene Neuterman gave a brief overview of Upstart Diamond Square and the partnership with weVenture and introduced presenter Angela Essing, Economic Development Manager. Ms. Neuterman stated Staff had previously been asked to look into a program that could be offered in DS to new business owners or existing business owners wishing to expand and to provide resources to enhance business success.

Ms. Essing described weVenture, a program offered by the Women's Business Center at Florida Tech and this established program is operated by Executive Director Kathryn Rudloff.

Ms. Essing continued the program is similar to one in Orlando. However, when that program began, it had less than 10% success rate. After adding an educational component, that rate went up to 90%.

The Upstart Cocoa program is designed to attract small minority businesses to the DS area, empower entrepreneurs to succeed, contribute to the economic vitality, cultivate a vibrant neighborhood through encouragement of small businesses.

This program is a loan forgiveness program for businesses with less than 10 employees. Applications will be open for about a month and a committee will review applicants. The review committee will be comprised of Economic Development Manager, Representative from weVenture and a representative from Diamond Square Redevelopment Agency.

Agency Member Brown asked how the committee will target applicants. Ms. Essing replied stating that is what the committee will do and asked the Agency to look at what type of business they think will fit or will be needed. Chairperson Moore added we need to look at what we want and what will survive. Agency Member Brown asked how many minority-owned businesses were already there? Ms. Essing replied she would get that information. Agency Member Brown asked if Paramore in Orlando had been looked at and what programs they had. Mrs. Neuterman responded there are programs there that have been successful and will look more into it. Ms. Essing told agency members the \$10,000 currently budgeted for Business Assistance in DS would serve one applicant and the City would sponsor a second. Mrs. Neuterman added that if DS wanted to add funding for more than one, they could decide to do that in the future.

weVenture Executive Director, Kathryn Rudloff was present and spoke explaining how the weVenture partnership works with FIT's program, adding education will be tailored to the businesses' specific needs, how the funding works, and other available resources outside the weVenture.

Discussion continued as to the need for the program, participation length, costs, available mentoring, requirements, eligibility, business plan, community investment and community enrichment idea. Ms. Essing explained \$2,500 was for the weVenture services and the \$7,500 was the forgivable loan amount. Agency Attorney stated this was similar to other programs. Discussion continued regarding requirements for the forgivable loan. Agency Attorney asked if there was a personal guarantee requirement for the loan amount. Chairperson Moore asked if applicants have to have that amount of money to be eligible. Ms. Essing responded applications would need 10% to contribute to costs and stressed the education part of the program is the key. Ms. Rudloff added the program requires applicants to put "skin in the game" but giving them all the tools to be successful.

* ***MOTION by Agency Member THOMAS; SECONDED by Agency Member SMITH** to approve to move forward with a draft agreement between the DSCRA and weVenture for the next step in releasing the Diamond Square Upstart Cocoa Small Business Loan Program.

Ms. Neuterman added the next step will be for staff to confer with finance, agency attorney to draft policies and procedures, applications and how to promote/advertise. All of this will be brought back to the Agency.

Ms. Rudloff added she has weVenture brochures for the board and recommended they start talking about it. Additionally, there are programs available at no or low cost.

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VI. **Attorney's Report - None**

VII. **Updates and Staff Reports**

1.Information Item – Project Report. Mrs. Neuterman discussed the Project Update report beginning with the Façade Grant stating, there were no pending applications but staff is working to identify business that could benefit from the program. Additionally, Habitat had 1 person in the process.

Ms. Neuterman also reminded Agency Member that Habitat will be back at the March meeting as earlier promised to give an update on the project and their wishes moving forward.

Michael C. Blake was broadcast on January 12 and will expire later in the week. A report will be brought back in March. Chairperson Moore asked how many homes in this subdivision, Ms. Neuterman replied 22 homes.

Agency Member Brown asked about the notification board at Joe Lee Smith and if announcements could be added. Mrs. Neuterman replied it should be updated and will check on that. He would like to see the COVID shot added.

Mrs. Neuterman notified Agency Members that February 16 is the District Town Hall Meeting at Emma Jewel for Deputy Mayor Goins district. Agency Member Brown asked how its being advertised. Goins said they are going door to door and Mrs. Neuterman added it was in the water bill and the FYI notice that was mailed.

Deputy Mayor Goins added use town hall as a workshop to discuss what to use the old Joe L. Smith building for. He expressed the need for the community's input and asked Agency Members for their participation and input. Deputy Mayor Goins plans to put proposal out for the building to be used but wants to reflect the communities wishes in the RFP.

Deputy Mayor Goins thanked staff for the Upstart Program and expressed his support. He also would like to see the program expand to more than just two companies. He also thanked the board and staff for their hard work and decisions.

Deputy Mayor Goins reminded Agency Members the budget period was fast approaching.

Agency Member Brown asked for more fliers about the town hall. Deputy Mayor Goins said he would send that to him.

Deputy Mayor discussed that game night was held for community kids at Joe Lee Smith center. One hundred fifty-five kids showed up and was very successful. There will be another game night on January 27 from 6:30-9:30. He asked the board to attend and talk about the DS Agency to let the kids know what it is about.

VIII. **Next Meeting Date**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Diamond Square Community Redevelopment Agency will be on Monday, March 15, 2021 at 6 pm at the Cocoa City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, Florida, unless a business need arises earlier.

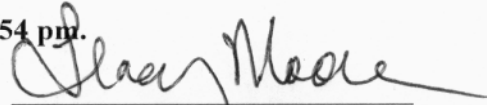
Adjournment

* ***MOTION by Agency Member THOMAS; SECONDED by Agency Member BROWN to adjourn the meeting.**

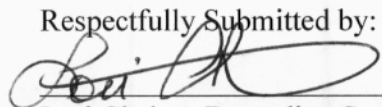
AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (6-0)

MEETING WAS ADJOURNED at 6:54 pm.



Tracy Moore, Chairperson

Respectfully Submitted by:


Lori Chabot, Recording Secretary