FINAL

MINUTES
CITY OF COCOA
DIAMOND SQUARE CRA
SPECIAL MEETING
December 13, 2021

The Special Meeting of the Diamond Square Community Redevelopment Agency was held on December 13, 2021 at Cocoa City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL, as publicly noted.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order at 6:05 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
Marilyn Ross Smith	Agency Member
Larry Brown	Agency Member
Delores Martin	Vice Chairperson
Joseph G. Colombo	Agency Attorney
Lori Chabot	Recording Secretary

ABSENT:

Sylvia Thomas	Agency Member
Ed Jones	Agency Member

STAFF PRESENT:
Charlene Neuterman, Interim Community Services Director.

Vice Chairperson Martin 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 of December 13, 2021.

* ***MOTION by Vice Chairperson MARTIN; SECONDED by Agency Member BROWN to approve the agenda with amendments for the December 13, 2021, DS CRA Special Meeting. Amended Agenda to add a brief Presentation by Agency Attorney Colombo under Reports re: Sunshine Laws for Agency Members.**

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

MINUTES: Regular Meeting of November 15, 2021.

* ***MOTION by Vice Chairperson MARTIN; SECONDED by Agency Member BROWN to approve the minutes for the November 15, 2021, as amended. Page 3, bottom of the page, correct to AYES: 3, NAYS: 1 and on the last page, to correct the adjournment time to 7:20.**

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

III. **Delegations**-None

IV. **Presentations:** None

V. **Action Items:**

1. Staff is requesting Agency approval for an application for the agency's Beautification Grant Program in an amount not to exceed $500 for the property located at 451 Stone Street, Cocoa Fl and authorize the City Manager to execute a Beautification Program Agreement.

   Mrs. Neuterman explained this item has been brought back to the Agency with request for approval as it was previously withdrawn by the applicant. Agency Member Isom asked for clarification regarding the photos. Mrs. Neuterman responded with more details regarding the photos and adding colored mulch.

*   *MOTION by Agency Member ISOM; SECONDED by Agency Member SMITH to approve an application for the agency's Beautification Grant Program in an amount not to exceed $500 for the property located at 451 Stone Street, Cocoa Fl and authorize the City Manager to execute a Beautification Program Agreement.

AYES: 3

NAYS: 1

ABSTAIN: 1

MOTION PASSED (3-0)

Agency Member Brown voted NAY requested to clarify why. He doesn't like the word" blight". He requested the word be defined and if agency goes by that word, applicant should not be approved. Agency Member Brown also requested to re-visit with the Attorney the word. Chairperson Moore asked to work through the items and come back at the end.

2. Staff is requesting Agency approval for an application for the agency's Beautification Grant Program in an amount not to exceed $500 for the property located at 536 S. Varr Avenue, Cocoa Fl and authorize the City Manager to execute a Beautification Program Agreement.

   Mrs. Neuterman presented the request stating applicant had met the application requirements and photos are attached.

*   ***MOTION by Agency Member BROWN; SECONDED by Agency Member ISOM to approve** an application for the agency's Beautification Grant Program in an amount not to exceed $500 for the property located at 536 S. Varr Avenue, Cocoa Fl and authorize the City Manager to execute   a Beautification Program Agreement.

AYES: ALL
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

3. Staff is requesting Agency approval for an application for the agency's Paint Grant Program in an amount not to exceed $1,000 for the property located at 536 S. Varr Avenue, Cocoa Fl and authorize the City Manager to execute a Paint Program Agreement.

   Mrs. Neuterman presented the request stating applicant had met the application requirements. Agency Member Brown stated he had gone by the address and Motioned to Approve. Questions from agency members regarding the photos.

Chairperson Moore asked who takes the photos. Mrs. Neuterman replied the applicant takes the photos and submits them with their application, however Staff does drive by the location to verify the address. Agency Member Brown changed his original Motion and stated he would like to table the Item for the next meeting and have new photos. Mrs. Neuterman replied staff would take photos.

Chairperson Moore suggested members discuss the word "blight" before moving on. She began stating, the word "blight" is why they have the DS CRA board. It is the purpose for the CRA. She added, if the word is eliminated it would hurt the board overall and the Charter uses the same word "blight".

Attorney Colombo responded stating the term "urban blight" is a legal term used and the CRA's main goal is to eliminate it. If it is removed, it could be problematic. It is key in the Florida Statutes relating to CRA's and it should be kept.

Agency Member Brown asked Attorney Colombo if he saw the pictures for the beautification request. Attorney Colombo replied some areas have more landscaping, however the grant still creates an overall improvement in the neighborhood.

Agency Member Smith stated when using the word in documents, it is difficult to decide. Chairperson Moore stated the Board can say yes or no but she has a concern over removing the wording. She added it is up to interpretation for the board. Agency Member Isom agreed, she is ok with the words and wants to see people use the grant but she also wants to feel good about her decision. Agency Member Smith would like the board to have an understanding with regard to the request. Chairperson Moore added, no one is obligated to approve, it is a personal opinion.

Attorney Colombo stated the board can review the applications, each member decides for themselves. Staff cannot define for the board what is blight and what is not.

* ***MOTION by Agency Member BROWN; SECONDED by Vice Chairperson MARTIN to TABLE** an application for the agency's Beautification Grant Program in an amount not to exceed $500 for the property located at 536 S. Varr Avenue, and to provide better photographs for Agency Members at next meeting.

AYES: ALL
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

4. Request Agency Approval for the 2022 Diamond Square CRA Meeting Schedule.

Mrs. Neuterman presented the Item explaining the third Monday in January and February are holidays and therefore, a meeting was scheduled between the two as has been done in the past. The next meeting will be January 31, 2022.

* ***MOTION by Agency Member BROWN; SECONDED by Agency Member ISOM to approve** the 2022 Diamond Square CRA Meeting Schedule.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)
AYES: ALL

VI. **<u>Attorney's Report</u>** – Agency Attorney Colombo gave a brief overview of the Sunshine Laws for Agency Member explaining Sunshine Law mandates apply to any Government Meeting held to the Public including Council and Boards. Notice is given to the Public as to when Meetings held. Any violations can result in removal from position or possibly criminal charges. He continued, if agency members are together in a situation other than a noticed meeting, to avoid discussion regarding DSCRA topics or meeting matters. Any thoughts, suggestions should wait for the public forum. Agency Chairperson Moore asked about emails, or replies to an email and Attorney Colombo stated you can say thank you but no discussion. He added to remember public records requests are many including emails. Agency Member Smith stated Attorney Colombo's presentation was helpful to her and Chairperson Moore agreed stating if members had questions to call staff. Mrs. Neuterman stated with new members on the board, this was something they would try to do annually. Chairperson Moore it is always good to hear again. Chairperson Moore asked the question, is it ok to talk about something if the Motion is done and Attorney Colombo stated you never know if it will come back again, if questing it, don't discuss. Agency Member Isom thanked the attorney. Mrs. Neuterman gave an example about the Façade Grants, they are a 5-year living document and anything can occur during that time. Chairperson Moore reiterated it is best to bring to the meeting.

Agency Member Brown asked about Mr. Hernandez in the audience and if he had anything to present. Chairperson Moore responded, yes under updates.

VII. **<u>Updates and Staff Report</u>** –

Agency Member Brown asked if staff gets many façade grant requests. Mrs. Neuterman replied no as there is not as many businesses.

Mrs. Neuterman stated on January 31, 2022, Agency Members Jones and Thomas board appointments would expire. Mr. Jones is eligible for a reappointment however Member Thomas has completed her 2nd term and is not. The Clerk may already have applications for Ms. Thomas seat.

Mrs. Neuterman told Agency Members the updated brochures were being printed and yard signs were being made for completed paint and landscape grantees.

Agency Member Brown asked for an update on WeVenture. Mrs. Neuterman stated it was going well and in Phase 1. The grantee is in the mentoring and training process. She had not received any funds yet and won't until the course is completed.

Agency Member Brown asked about the projects in 2022. Mrs. Neuterman replied the budget process will begin in March.

Agency Member Smith requested to invite Chase Bank representation to a meeting, adding they are not putting money in the CRA. She also would like to ask Wells Fargo. Mrs. Neuterman responded staff can invite each bank adding the CRA cannot get loans due to the interlocal agreement. The CRA expires in 7 years and cannot take on any loans.

Mr. Hernandez from the Cocoa Housing Authority gave an update. The 327-unit Public Housing is complete. They are in the process of planning future housing opportunities, but have to go where the money is. He added there is a new law that could provide funds for low income housing. Agency Member Brown asked they were planning to build on the 2 lots, and he replied they were too small to build, may use for a park.

Agency Member Brown asked about crime and if it was going down. Mr. Hernandez replied yes, it was and they had a good partnership with the Cocoa PD.

Captain Hook from the audience asked to speak. He stated he had two items to bring up. He began asking about the property along US1 just west and why those businesses are not in the DSCRA. It would increase their tax funds. Mrs. Neuterman replied that property is in the Cocoa CRA. Mr. Hernandez suggested the DS petition to change the boundaries.

Captain Hook also asked about Bright Line and if the agency members have had any communication with them to discuss the Stone Street Crossing. Chairperson Moore replied they had not and asked Staff to check into it.

Captain Hook stated the business district businesses along Stone Street are being forced to close because of unwarranted actions against them. The board could help them. Chairperson Moore replied they agree and discussed the WeVenture program and the current recipient. She also discussed the agency is looking at rezoning in the area. Captain Hook asked to keep trying, the community needs their help.

Agency Member Brown asked about the west boundaries for the DS CRA and who drew those boundaries. Mrs. Neuterman replied the boundaries for the Cocoa CRA were drawn in 1981 and DS CRA in 1996. Mrs. Neuterman explained the process for such a change and Agency Attorney Colombo added it was about the lay of the land at the time (1981) and said it would be highly unlikely the boundaries would change. He also added Stone Street and rezoning were a different story.

VIII. **Next Meeting Date**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Diamond Square Community Redevelopment Agency will be in January 31, 2022, 6 pm at Cocoa City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, Florida, unless a business need arises earlier.

IX. **Adjournment**

* ***MOTION by Vice Chairperson Martin; SECONDED by Agency Member Brown to adjourn the meeting.**

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

MEETING WAS ADJOURNED at 7:43 pm.

Tracy Moore, Chairperson

Respectfully Submitted by:

Lori Chabot, Recording Secretary