FINAL

MINUTES
CITY OF COCOA
DIAMOND SQUARE CRA
REGULAR MEETING
October 18, 2021

The Special Meeting of the Cocoa Community Redevelopment Agency was held on October 18, 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 6:01 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
Delores Martin	Vice Chairperson
Sylvia Thomas	Agency Member *arrived 6:10 pm*
Jackie Isom	Agency Member
Marilyn Ross Smith	Agency Member
Larry Brown	Agency Member
Ed Jones	Agency Member *arrived at 6:10 pm*
Lori Chabot	Recording Secretary

ABSENT:

Joseph G. Colombo	Agency Attorney

STAFF PRESENT:
Charlene Neuterman, Interim Community Services Director.

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

II. **<u>Approval of Agenda and Minutes:</u>**

<u>AGENDA</u>: Regular Meeting of October 18, 2021.

* ***MOTION by Vice Chairperson MARTIN; SECONDED by Agency Member BROWN to approve the agenda as written for the October 18, 2021, Regular Meeting.**

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

Agency Member Thomas Arrived 6:10 pm

Agency Member Jones Arrived 6:10 pm

<u>MINUTES</u>: Special Meeting of September 20, 2021.

* ***MOTION by Agency Member SMITH; SECONDED by Vice Chairperson MARTIN to approve the minutes for the September 20, 2021, as written.**

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0)

III. **<u>Delegations</u>**- None

IV. **<u>Presentations:</u>** - Delores McLaughlin of Alliance for Neighborhood Restoration gave a quick review of her previous presentation covering the activities and progress of the prior year as well as challenges and needs. She began with a video of activities and provided hand outs to agency members. Ms. McLaughlin discussed the handout which explained costs associated with the programs and events as well as the savings provided to families.

Chairperson Moore thanked Ms. McLaughlin for her many years of service and tremendous successes even through covid. She appreciated the cost sheet showing the number of participants and asked about the areas of concerns and difficulties.

Ms. McLaughlin replied she would like to expand services however, there are not enough Staff even with volunteers. Adding, more volunteers include more training. Ms. McLaughlin stated she would like to have a round table discussion with all local agencies who provide same or similar services and discuss how to better work in support of each other and not in competition. She also discussed the need to address mental health and cultural health.

Ms. McLaughlin continued she would like to add specialized tutoring programs. I.e., Math and English assistance for the higher levels.

Chairperson Moore reiterated the need for working with those who are more specialized brings success to the program and thanked her for making the funding go so far citing the benefits of that. Chairperson Moore stated the agency would work to assist with efforts to bring other organizations together. Mrs. Neuterman added that bringing groups/partners together is a part / goal of the DS Plan.

Ms. McLaughlin notified the agency of an event coming up on October 28 at the Dr. Joe Lee Smith Center and will be shining a light on what they do.

Vice Chairperson Martin shared her appreciation for the work and the programs adding Ms. McLaughlin does miracles putting it all together and applauded her. Agency Member Thomas affirmed her sentiment.

V. **Action Items:**

1. **Staff requests Agency Approval of a BAF and Resolution for the amount of $1,600.00 for an additional Agency Member to attend the Florida Redevelopment Conference October 26, 2021 through October29, 2021.**

Mrs. Netherman gave background information stating that with 3 new agency members and not having the conference available last year. There are more members wanting to attend the Conference. Chairperson Moore discussed her experience at a previous Conference stating it is a great opportunity to meet others doing same or similar things and the workshops very informative.

* ***MOTION by Vice Chairperson MARTIN; SECONDED by Agency Member ISOM to approve** a BAF and Resolution for the amount of $1,600.00 for an additional Agency Member to attend the Florida Redevelopment Conference October 26, 2021 through October 29, 2021.

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0)

2. **Agency approval of the revised Diamond Square CRA Logo for use on Publications and other similar materials.**

Mrs. Neuterman stated the logo has been used, however has not been formally adopted adding staff is in the process of creating new flyers for DS and would like to use this logo in the fliers.

* ***MOTION by Agency Member THOMAS; SECONDED by Agency Member JONES to** approve the revised Diamond Square CRA Logo for use on Publications and other similar materials.

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0)

Agency Member Jones suggested decals to pass out to business in DS. Chairperson Moore agreed that is exactly what their vision is with the logo and publications. Directed Staff to purchase them.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE TABLED AT THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

3. **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 607 Aurora Street, Cocoa Fl and authorize the City Manager to execute a Beautification Program Agreement.**

Mrs. Neuterman read the agenda item and briefly described the applicant's photographs and asked if applicant was available for questions. She was not present.

Chairperson Moore stated she would like to review these agenda items one at a time and give applicants a chance to answers any questions the agency may have. Mrs. Neuterman read the agenda and stated this and the next two items were returned from the previous months' meeting. These items were tabled due to questions agency members had about the landscaping that was shown in the pictures provided by the applicant.

Discussion also ensued as to what the intent was of the grant. Agency Attorney stated the grant is written such that the CRA has the prerogative to approve or dis-approve an applicant.

Agency Member Brown stated the photographs look like the yards have a lot of brush, adding the concerns that came up at the previous meeting were about the amount of landscaping already in the yards. Vice Chairperson Martin also added the grant requires the requested landscaping to be in the front of the home and visible from the street. Chairperson Moore was describing what she saw in the photographs and was not clear where the new landscaping would go. Chairperson Moore stated she wished the applicant was available to help with their questions.

Agency Members discussed the requirements of the grant and grant documents adding they wanted to be fair with the process. Chairperson Moore stated there are only so many dollars for the grant and Vice Chairperson Martin asked about the attorney's review. Mrs. Neuterman replied the attorney was not able to be at the meeting due to court attendance but sent a statement that it is at the discretion of the CRA board. A question was raised as to whether applicants could qualify for both grants in one year. Some discussion continued as to whether applicants could apply for both grants. If not stated presently, Chairperson Moore would like to revisit that. She recalls a discussion about allowing applicants one grant and that way the DSCRA could help more homes. Mrs. Neuterman replied that so far applicants have been allowed to apply for both, if board want to adjust that it possible. However, to date those that have applied for both will be eligible. Chairperson Moore added her delight over the programs and that people are taking advantage of them. A Motion was made to deny the grant application at 607 Aurora Street due the belief the property had a great deal of brush. Question was asked as to whether the applicant could be available at a later meeting and discussion ensued. The Motion to deny was withdrawn.

Chairperson Moore reiterated the intent was to "reduce blight and improve aesthetics" and the attorney has stated the board has the discretion and what is the need. After additional discussion it was decided to table 607 Aurora St. and ask the applicant to come to the next meeting to answer questions. Chairperson Moore asked if it was the desire of the Board to hear from the applicant. Agency Member Thomas confirmed that was her wish.

* ***MOTION by Agency Member BROWN; SECONDED by Agency Member JONES** to TABLE the application for the agency's Residential Beautification Grant Program in an amount not to exceed $500 for the property located at 607 Aurora Street, Cocoa Fl and request applicant attend the next meeting.

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0)

Councilman Goins stated this applicant or another may not need bushes or plants and that may be what Agency Member Brown was seeing, but may need other things applicable to the grant, like mulch. Chairperson Moore agreed.

4. **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 701 Aurora Street, Cocoa Fl and authorize the City Manager to execute a Beautification Program Agreement.**

   Mrs. Neuterman presented also stating members have applicant's pictures and was available for questions.

   Homeowner explained her drawings and what her requests were. Agency Members asked questions about locations of existing plantings and the locations of where new planting would go. Applicant was available for questions and she asked if any one has applied. She added that flowers need to be replaced and if the board keeps tabling things they won't get anything. Chairperson Moore explained the board's intent was to be fair. They continued discussing the placement of plants and they also would like mulch. Agency Member Brown asked if she was talking about the Front. Chairperson Moore asked Staff if the landscaper went out to work with them and Mrs. Neuterman responded they would work with the homeowner on what they wanted but it had to meet the requirements of the grant and the applicant has requested hibiscus in the yard and Mrs. Neuterman stated she is not sure if Hibiscus is Florida Friendly or not. It will be at the discretion of the landscaping. Chairperson Moore commended applicant on how well her yard looked. Applicant added she worked hard on it. Chairperson Moore also confirmed with the applicant about the requirements to be in the front yard and the side yards would not be eligible. Applicant replied she understood.

* ***MOTION by Agency Member BROWN; SECONDED by Agency Member JONES** to approval for an application for the agency's Residential Beautification Grant Program in an amount not to exceed $500 for the property located at 701 Aurora Street, Cocoa Fl and authorize the City Manager to execute a Residential Beautification Grant Program Agreement.

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0)

Agency Member Brown stated both grants should go back to staff to be tweaked.

Chairperson Moore stated the important thing is the needs were met and the CRA is hoping that residents would take advantage of this but they didn't want to make it a hard thing to do. As we move forward, we want to be sure we meet the needs of the residents and would like to revisit the topic of applicants applying for both grants in one year.

Agency Member Brown asked if Staff followed the landscapers' recommendations. Mrs. Neuterman replied in the affirmative and continued, the grant requires that plantings are Florida friendly and the landscaper will make those recommendations.

5. **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**

Someone in the audience speaking and not audible. Chairperson Moore replied to her comments and thanked her for getting the word out about the grants.

Mrs. Neuterman told agency members the agenda item includes applicant's pictures and that the applicant was available for questions.

The applicant stated she hopes to make her yard nice but also wanted to state when there is a grant, it should be more specific. She stated it sounds like the yard needs to be a dessert to get grant. She hesitates applying and the grant wasn't specific. She said they are making it too hard. She was displeased and shared her thoughts on how the grant was written. Chairperson Moore responded the agency was not trying to discourage anyone from applying and if that is what she thought she apologized. Mrs. Gibson responded that she disagreed, saying the boards' actions and words don't add up". The Board wants to help the community and help to beautify the yards said Chairperson Moore. Ms. Gibson returned to podium and decided to withdrew her application for the beautification and paint grants and left. Chairperson Moore stated the board is trying to do any beautification possible and it is sad she left before making a decision. The grant is a process, and the boards is trying not to create any division but wants to make sure they are doing everything possible to keep DS beautiful. Chairperson Moore asked if there was any more discussion and accepted the applicant's withdrawing from the process.

Agency Member Smith stated she is not a plant or flower person and the applicant's explanations helped her see it through their eyes, for example Ms. Cox was very helpful for her to understand her vision. Chairperson Moore agreed and said is their responsibility to do due diligence.

Audience Member, Terrance Thomas, 74 Rosa L. Jones, stated he is quite versed with plants and if you cut them it will stunt the growth and some get fungus and if you don't have the necessary water to get to the roots, the plants won't grow.

Agency Member Jones asked how many applicants there have been. Mrs. Neuterman responded 5 have been presented to the board. Agency Member Brown asked if the landscaper could go out to the applicant's home prior to applying. Mrs. Neuterman responded that would be an additional expense and would also be time consuming. Agency Member Brown asked if staff had looked at the properties. Mrs. Neuterman replied affirmative.

Agency Member Brown asked why the last applicant was brought to the board and Chairperson Moore stated staff should bring all applicants to board. Mrs. Neuterman added staff determines eligibility and the decision is up to board. Chairperson Moore added and the applicants have the opportunity to speak on their request.

VI. **Attorney's Report** – None

VII. **Updates and Staff Report** –

Mrs. Neuterman introduced Shaunna Ginn, Cocoa Housing authority to speak about what is going on within the Housing Authority. Ms. Ginn explained Construction is completed for both phases. Financing for Phase II is still going one. As soon as these two are complete there is vacant land they will be looking at to see what the best use will be. One location on Fiske near Dollar General, they could put housing but felt the best use is a business/restaurant. Another location is next to Endeavor and that property that has always been thought to be used for elderly homes. The plan is to apply for some kind of funding from the State similar to funding they received previously. There is also a 2-acre area at School and Pineda. At one point there was a plan for townhomes there, may look at that again.

Ms. Ginn added that on Barbara Jenkins, there is a strip possible for single family and there is some interest from the church for them to purchase and build.

Are cameras helping with the Crime asked Agency Member Brown? She replied they are not monitored but help to look back after an incident and it has helped solve a number of crimes and cameras at Provost have been added. Some people pay no attention to the cameras, however in some cases it has helped.

Chairperson Moore asked to please keep us updated on the properties.

Mrs. Neuterman notified members of a couple of events (flyers at their seats) for Community Meetings regarding the 5-year Consolidated Plan required by HUD from our Housing department to get input from community. There will be two public meetings in regard to this on November 3, 4. One is at Joe Lee Smith and another at Endeavor Elementary. Flyers have been posted on Social Media. The 5-year Plan is a consolidated plan to determine funding for all housing, rehabilitation, public services, public facilities and improvements and these meetings will prioritize those needs/resources.

Rose Garden Apartments are still in negotiations with the owners to purchase the property to the East for residential use.

Chairperson Moore asked if any updates re: code on Stone Street. Mrs. Neuterman replied Staff and the new Planning and Zoning Manager were working on the code and how to change it for that area on Stone Street. When more information was available it would be brought back.

Chairperson Moore asked about the Conference and any updates. Mrs. Chabot replied stating she would be attending, Mrs. Neuterman stated she would not as she will be on a different trip, members are registered at Hotel Indigo, all have been registered for Conference, a van has been reserved for those wishing to ride.

Agency Member Jones stated he noticed there is curbing work going on East of Fiske, and asked if there were similar plans for Virginia Park. Mrs. Neuterman replied Public Works does have a list for curb, gutter and paving in those areas. She will try to get the list for them adding they are also working on right of ways on 520 with Palm Trees.

Vice Chairperson Martin requested to invite Chief of Police to next meeting and give a presentation on his vision, plans etc. Mrs. Neuterman replied she will extend that request.

Vice Mayor Goins updated members regarding a question Agency Member Isom asked at the last meeting re: property on Peachtree and continued the property was approved at the last council meeting to be put on the Surplus list and go out for request for proposal. He added the Plan is to move forward, however not all agreed. Therefore, he encouraged all DS members and community to attend Council Meetings. The amount of money being spent in the district to include Provost Park is being questioned and it would be helpful to have community come to defend those decisions. This will be part of the Town Hall District IV meeting at Cocoa HS tomorrow 6 in Auditorium and encouraged attendance. Vice Chairperson Martin echoed what he said, however, added people are not aware when things are happening at the Council. Agency Member Brown suggested agency members look at the Agenda to see what is coming to next meeting.

VIII. **Next Meeting Date**

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

IX. **Adjournment**

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

AYES: ALL

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0)

MEETING WAS ADJOURNED at 7:57 pm.

Tracy Moore

Tracy Moore, Chairperson

Respectfully Submitted by:

Lori Chabot, Recording Secretary