MINUTES
CITY OF COCOA
COCOA CRA
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 24, 2020

The Special Meeting of the Cocoa Community Redevelopment Agency was held on June 24, 2020 at City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL, as publically noted.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Williams called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm

ROLL CALL:

Jake Williams, Jr.	Chairperson
Alex Goins	Vice Chairperson
Don Boisvert	Agency Member
Janne Etz	Agency Member
Lorraine Koss	Agency Member
Edward Lanni	Agency Member
Brenda Warner	Agency Member
Anthony Garganese	City Attorney
Landon Morley	Recording Secretary

PRESENT:

Jake Williams, Jr.	Chairperson
Alex Goins	Vice Chairperson
Don Boisvert	Agency Member
Janne Etz	Agency Member
Lorraine Koss	Agency Member
Edward Lanni	Agency Member
Brenda Warner	Agency Member
Anthony Garganese	City Attorney

ABESENT:

STAFF PRESENT:
Charlene Neuterman, Deputy Community Services Director, **Matt Fuhrer**, City Manager, **Nancy Bunt**, Community Services Director, **Samantha Senger,** Public Relations Specialist, **Rebecca Bowman**, Finance Director, **Bryant Smith**, Public Works Director, and **Landon Morley**, Recording Secretary.

Vice Chair Goins provided the invocation and **Agency Member Boisvert** led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

II. Approval Of Agenda And Minutes:

1. AGENDA: Meeting of June 24, 2020

* **MOTION by Agency Member Boisvert; SECONDED by Agency Member Etz to approve the Agenda for the January 8, 2020 Regular Meeting as amended (adding second action item).**

AYES: WILLIAMS, GOINS, BOISVERT, ETZ, KOSS, LANNI, WARNER

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0)

Anthony Garganese joined the meeting at 4:07pm.

III. Delegations:

- E-comment from **Ed Greene** addressing concerns regarding a civic center and boating parking spaces.
- **Agency Member Koss** replied that there were a diversity of opinion and no other location was presented. "This 'autocratic' accusation, I think, is unfair. We have to be able to look at a whole spectrum of solutions as a community. Stop this tribalism and start trying to work together. Let's collaborate for the good of Cocoa."
- **Candace Rogers** had an email read aloud by **Charlene Neuterman** that expressed concerns regarding the civic center, criticized the agency, and requested the cost of the project.
- **Agency Member Williams** and **Agency Member Koss** emphasized that they want more public participation, but also that being an elected representative is what gives the average citizen a voice.
- **Aleck Greenwood** from Commercial Property Group agreed with the **Agency Member Williams** and **Agency Member Koss**. He claimed no one had been very satisfied with the civic center location and that it should be kept for a future date if the city can afford it. His parting sentiment was the parking garage should be given preferential treatment.
- **Kathy Hamilton-Brown**, a life-long resident of Cocoa, suggested saving money and renovating the Civic Center in Cocoa Village instead of building a brand new one. "It will be a struggle to pay for this building especially after the pandemic. Let's renovate the building. It's in a good place. If we get a $10 million building, who could afford to rent it? It may be $1000 just to rent a banquet room. Use the 10 million to invest in our children."

IV. Action Items

1. Staff and Consultant presentation of the Civic Center Study prepared by Infrastructure Solution Services, GAI Consultants and RLF Architecture Engineering Interiors. Agency direction is requested on (1) moving forward with completing the remaining tasks on Purchase Order 74623 for the Civic Center at Lee Wenner Park or (2)

suspending/modifying the process towards completing the remaining tasks on Purchase Order 74623.

- **Charlene Neuterman** prefaced the presentation.
- **Pete Sechler** gave a presentation summarizing how the idea for a Civic Center on Lee Wenner Park came to be. 'It's not about one person's plan. I'm not here to defend one thing or another. I want to faithfully reconstruct the conversation and thought process used and ultimately come to a decision. You can table the issue, study other sites. You can determine now is not the time. There are lots of options. Background – 2008 Cocoa Downtown Waterfront Redevelopment Plan: had interesting ideas about connecting people to the water, water to the people, and shared appreciation for the waterfront in the village. The 2008 recession happened and stopped everything. Commendably, by 2010 the community had rolled up their sleeves and determined what they could do. 2017 Hurricane Irma wiped out the waterfront, the sea wall, the boardwalk. Assignment in 2018 from Jan to Apr then reported at June. Over 95 attendees in January 2018 meeting, over 100 in February 2018 meeting. Began talks of a new civic center on Lee Wenner Park. The current Civic Center building was perceived to possibly be nearing the end of its life. There has also been a hope to take some of the Village parking problems out to the Civic Center and give the Village some wiggle room. Nothing would make that park safer than to have people using it. The planning principles were to make Lee Wenner Park feel safer, to enhance and promote the environment, have more boat access and visitation, expand landside activities, and encourage economic development. The building was thought to be 5.2 million dollars. The site is highly stabilized because it was a road for 100 years. Tearing down the current civic center would help access to the water, especially visually. The vision is rose-garden effect that would complement the formality of the Porcher House. The cost has gone up, but there are some caveats to that cost that need to be explained.'
- **Steven McDonald** Chief Economist for GAI explained that there is a market for the Civic Center. 'It's only when you raise your level to a conference/convention center do you need a hotel. The emphasis here is more on community type activities which has more recreational components. The market study is complete. It does have specific recommendations, but you may decide to do more than just what is in the report. In essence, there is a market demand that would support a civic center. It's about the same size as your current civic center, but performing at a much higher level. We think the purpose will be to support local meetings and events, but the reality is it will be possible to create demand higher than that. Not necessarily convention/conference center, but still events that draw outside demand. You can meet community needs at 9,000 square feet rather than 15,000 but there are trade-offs. It could break even or maybe even make a little money. '

- **Tom Vill** with ISS covered site suitability. 'There is nothing unsuitable in the soil requiring special foundation. There is a concern of projected sea-level rising in 2070. Nuisance flooding can occur. Regarding the budget, the 10.5 million cost estimate is based on 15,000 square feet. This can be made cheaper by downgrading in square feet, with 7.5 million for 9000 square feet. Additionally, no matter how large this building is, the whole area will be developed to be functional for boaters, parking, and storm-water. $10.5 million dollars is a maximum figure.'
- **Chairperson Williams** stated Lee Wenner Park served more than one purpose. It was a park that was not properly patrolled and some things got out of hand. It was a boater haven. It was a fishing area. For years, the residents of Cocoa have wanted to bring that bridge back. There were birthday parties. It was a well-utilized park. We have a medium income of about $32,000 per person. We've invested very little in our current civic center. It's almost an embarrassment. The roundabout was part of the master plan and nothing has happened there. I don't think we did our due-diligence in making sure everyone had a seat at the table. We have other issues that need to be dealt with first. Let's go back and refurb our old Civic Center so it's affordable for everyone. Let's do some re-branding and then possibly go forward without going further into debt.
- **Agency Member Warner** agreed with Chairperson Williams that the cost of using the facility would be too much for most of the City of Cocoa and that she cannot in good conscience go through with it right now.
- **Agency Member Lanni** expressed that a Civic Center would not work in Lee Wenner Park.
- **Agency Member Etz** noted the proposed Civic Center will likely operate at a deficit. "I would like to hear from the people who may use it. I'd like to know what they'd like to see built."
- **Mr. Fuhrer** emphasized the reason for this special meeting was to build next year's budget with as much information as possible and discussed various budgetary considerations.
- **Emma Kirkpatrick** representing Historical Cocoa Village Main Street emphasized the group's interest in a new Civic Center, but noted it does not have to be at Lee Wenner Park. The current building has reached the end of its life.
- **Agency Member Goins** asked Mr. Fuhrer to provide options, to which **Mr. Fuhrer** replied that there were, including scaling down the size, adding a floor, remodeling, etc. The existing Civic Center has no parking, but there could be maximization of parking nearby.
- **Agency Member Koss** asked if there were any opportunities for public/private partnership, to which **Mr. Sechler** replied affirmatively. There is a scenario to rehab the current building and make Lee Wenner a more complete park. This study was based on one set of questions. **Agency Member Koss** then asked if

parking could expand in Lee Wenner, to which Mr. Fuhrer replied affirmatively.

- **Mrs. Neuterman** conveyed it would take a task-order amendment to complete the process.
- **Agency Member Etz** asked if there was any funding currently in the budget for Lee Wenner Park, to which **Mr. Fuhrer** replied that was the remaining amount for this FY. He stated staff can bring to the Agency the FY21 budget showing potential projects that can be utilized for Lee Wenner Park.

** **MOTION by Agency Member Koss; SECONDED by Agency Member Etz for option two; suspending the process.**

AYES: WILLIAMS, GOINS, BOISVERT, ETZ, KOSS, LANNI, WARNER

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0)

2. Agency Direction on the revised color scheme for the welcome feature boat.

- **Mrs. Neuterman** presented an image to the council of the adjusted paddleboat. **Agency Member Koss** asked if it could be painted to which **Mrs. Neuterman** replied that it would be wrapped. **Agency Member Koss** and **Agency Member Warner** advocated for getting rid of the white. **Mrs. Neuterman** promised to come back to the next meeting with another image.

V. Attorney's Report

VI. Updates and Staff Reports

VII. Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Cocoa Redevelopment Agency will be on Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 5pm at the Cocoa City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, Florida, unless a business need arises earlier.

VIII. Adjournment

* **MOTION made by Agency Member Boisvert; SECONDED by Agency Member Koss to adjourn the Special Meeting of June 24, 2020.**

AYES: WILLIAMS, GOINS, BOISVERT, ETZ, KOSS, LANNI, WARNER

MOTION PASSES (7-0)

MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 5:59 PM.

Jake Williams, Jr., Chairperson

Respectfully Submitted by:

Landon Morley, Recording Secretary