



MEETING MINUTES

Lealman Community Redevelopment Area Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 14, 2022, 6 PM

Committee Members Present In-person: Gary Grooms, Jeremy Heath, Marsha McCoy, Oscar Seguban, Charles Flynt, Rick Orr

Committee Members Absent: Father Viet Nguyen, Brian Ellis, Steve Cleveland

Pinellas County Staff Present: Chris Moore, Felix Nunez, Tanya Kurtin, Evan Johnson, Scott Swearngen, Amanda Coffey

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM

II. Introductions

Introductions were made by each Committee member and County Staff member present.

III. Citizen Input

Community resident Frank Matowitz began to address the Sherriff regarding transients in the neighborhood. Reserved his comments for Sherriff Q&A session later in the agenda.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from the October meeting were approved unanimously.

V. 2023 Committee Meeting schedule

2023 meeting schedule was presented with meetings beginning in January. It was approved by the board unanimously.

VI. Community Policing Initiative

The Sherriff did not have a presentation and went immediately to Question-and-Answer Session with the community. Community residents addressed their concerns with safety within the community. Topics included the Homeless population, safe harbor initiatives, and solutions that can be implemented to address these challenges. Other issues addressed were drug sales in the community and what can be done to address these issues as well. The Sherriff did discuss some steps that have been taken to alleviate some of the challenges in the community.

Chris Moore discussed community policing solutions which could include a potential park ambassador program and neighborhood watch program as ways that the CRA can work to empower the community.

Sherriff continued to speak with the residents, and they shared their experiences with the community, and he continued to give potential solutions and suggestions on how to address



their challenges in the community.

Board Chair Jeremy Heath identified lack of affordable housing being an issue and the large amount of Mobile Home Parks as being a huge bed of crime in the community and asked how we could address this as far as crime is concerned. The sheriff stated that the landlords need to verify whom they are renting to as a start. The sheriff noted that most of the arrests made are of transient people who are not people who list Lealman as their home address.

Rick Orr asked what we can do as a community when it comes to the transient and homeless population. The sheriff stated that the people should stop giving the homeless money and feeding them. People should direct them to Safe Harbor and other homeless services to get them off the streets.

Charles Flynt asked if the County has a nuisance abatement board that can act to close some of the motels down. Chris Moore stated he could reach out to Code Enforcement to see if they can aid with some of the motels.

VII. Housing and Community Development

- Lealman CRA Form-Based Code Update

Scott Provided an update on Form Based Code. Shared the vision map that had previously been endorsed by the committee. Identified the three initial districts of the first phase which include Neighborhood/Park District, Haines Road District, and the commerce district (mostly 34th St North). These districts allow for multiple use types. Scott shared images of the proposed structures and layouts for the areas. Addressed setbacks, parking, landscaping, building heights. Highlighted the changes and updates from previous versions shared with the committee. Plans are available for review.

Scott mentioned that they would like to have a draft form-based code to share with the committee by the end of December or Mid-January and by January 11 or 18 to have a community engagement activity to share the plans with the community and have drafts available for the community to review.

February 9th he is going before the BCC for a work session to re-introduce the project to them. Scott and Evan will be back at the committee meeting on January 25th for another update.

Gary Grooms stated that he feels the height requirements for 34th street is too low. He wanted them to reach 20 to 25 if they have a decent setback as opposed to 8 stories. He is disappointed from the beginning of form-based code, which he was on the board from its inception. The idea is that it changes something, and he always wanted to know what's the goal what's the vision? He wanted the county to tell him a story, what is it that we are going to get? He feels they haven't done so; he feels it has been met with silence every time he has brought it up. He feels bad as a property owner and business owner in Joe's Creek. He feels the process has been a complete failure. He said no one has answered his questions as it makes



sense in Joe's Creek. He was the biggest supporter of Joe's Creek, but he feels frustrated and feels his vision and ideas have been ignored. He feels he is being pushed to Manatee County by being ignored. He thinks that Form based code does not make more sense on 34th Street than on Joe's Creek. He feels no one has listened to him during his time on the committee. He states the area is not a manufacturing area or industrial area. He regretted he couldn't get this accomplished and he finds it appalling it couldn't get done and he was sorry he couldn't get it done.

Chris thanked Mr. Grooms for his service and congratulated him for his tremendous impact. He let him know that this is only the first phase and part of the reason Joe's Creek was not part of the first phase was due to multiple layers of other governmental agencies and that because of the TIELS study, in which he participated, the Joe's Creek area has been recommended to be classified as a new category a Warehouse Arts District. If the Board of County Commissioners approves this designation, then we can move forward with a successful Master Plan for redevelopment.

Mr. Grooms was not satisfied with this response and Mr. Heath chimed in stating that Mr. Grooms made fantastic points and stated that we have missed opportunities, stating that the only developments that have happened in the last seven years have been gas stations, car washes, crab shacks, and vape shops. He knows that they have been heard but hopes that they continue to be heard.

- 46th Avenue N. Affordable Housing Project Presentations (Habitat for Humanity and Pinellas Affordable Living) 46th Avenue N. Affordable Housing Development Updates.

Presentations by Pinellas Affordable Living and Habitat for Humanity were given, both improving sites along 46th avenue N.

Jack Humburg – Pinellas Affordable Living, a division of Boley Centers. Developers of affordable housing for people affected by mental illness. They already built Duvall Park which has 88 units. Now looking to develop a new unit on 46th Avenue N in a triangular space and they will be calling it The Point. They plan to build a 17 unit building on the site. They will be submitting a proposal for a total of \$4MM dollars to build the 17-unit building. They plan to serve people with special needs with disabling conditions. 80% of the units will be set aside for this population. Another unit will be set for someone who is homeless and another for someone who is below 50% of the median income. Jack shared photos and plans of other developments they have built in similar fashions with similar funding.

Jeremy Heath asked about how many parking spots they were planning on adding, Jack stated at minimum 17.

Oscar Seguban asked if they had plans to see the units in the future. Jack said they had no intention to and that they had at least a fifty-year commitment.

Jeremy Heath identified that this is an oddly shaped parcel and difficult to develop on, but he stated that it's a strong proposal and will serve a major need in the community. He expressed a



reservation about the surrounding areas challenges and hoped that the development doesn't contribute to the area's challenges. He did add that Boley has a strong track record on its developments and is excited to see what Boley adds to this site.

Mike Sutton – CEO Habitat for Humanity. In the last 6 months completed 14 homes in the Lealman community. Over the next 6 months will be completing 15 new homes near 29th Street and 54th Avenue. Mike described the program and how they service the community. They provide a zero percent interest mortgage and that's how it remains affordable. Their applicants must have a stable work history and reasonable credit history (not a credit score but reasonable credit). They received homebuyer education classes as well. A habitat homebuyer also contributes 350 to 450 hours of sweat equity toward earning their home. The homeowners must have an income of 30 to 80 percent of the AMI to qualify for the program.

The project they are proposing is the Greenway at Lealman, a property off 43rd Avenue. They are proposing building 10 single story villas and two single Family detached homes for a total of 12 units. They are open to building all Single-family units. The single-family Units will be three-bedroom homes. The Villas will be at minimum two-bedroom homes.

Mike shared visuals of their different homes and explained the affordability for the potential families. They have built 780 homes so far and are expected to build 80 this year alone. Shared the color palettes of the available colors and how they teach their homeowners about Florida Landscaping.

Jeremy Heath thought it was fantastic that that we are bringing this development to Lealman as he feels that the lack of multigenerational affordable housing is the biggest problem in Lealman.

VIII. Lealman CRA Updates

Chris Moore provided a brief update on First Annual Lealman Tree Lighting Ceremony was a success presented by the Lealman Special Events Committee. He shared photos from the Lealman Community Association website and announced the Lealman Honey and Arts Festival on February 18th and the July 4th Event with fireworks.

Chris mentioned the gateway and way finder signs that have gone up in the community and identified some of the locations of the way finder signs including the Lealman Exchange, Lealman Park, Neri Park, and Sawgrass Lake Park. The Welcome to Lealman Signs are in the fabrication process and some are still in permitting process with state permitting entities, but we are likely to see the first ones go up in January or February.

Habitat was very successful in their first year of funding and acquired 10 lots on their agreement and will be amending their agreement to acquire more.

Chris handed out an updated workplan in the interest of time for individual review.

IX. Advisory Committee Member Comments



Chairman Heath recognized Gary Grooms for the seven years of his dedication to the committee and thanked him for his time on the committee.

X. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM