



## MEETING MINUTES

### Lealman Community Redevelopment Area Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 6 PM

**Committee Members Present In-person:** Kim Blessinger, Jennifer Post, Charles Flynt, Jeremy Heath, Dominic Howarth, Kenneth Williams

**Committee Members Absent:** Tony Coryn, Tyler Payne

**Pinellas County Staff Present:** Amy Davis, Felix Nunez, Cameron Ehmig, Amanda Coffey (Virtual)

#### I. Call to Order

Chair Kim Blessinger called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

#### II. Introductions

The Advisory Committee members and Pinellas County staff introduced themselves.

#### III. Citizen Input

David Lee, a resident of the Lealman CRA, provided public comment. He voiced enthusiastic support for the proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Grant Program, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a focus on housing as a redevelopment strategy. He also expressed appreciation for the CRA's efforts in land acquisition but cautioned that CRA funds should prioritize community revitalization and affordable housing over infrastructure backfill, such as stormwater improvements. He urged the committee to be intentional in preserving the purpose of redevelopment efforts.

#### IV. Approval of Minutes

Chair Kim Blessinger requested a motion to approve the March 2025 minutes.

Motion by: Jeremy Heath

Seconded by: Jennifer Post

Vote: Approved unanimously with no corrections or discussion.

## V. Lealman CRA Agenda Items

- **Proposed ADU Grant Pilot Program – Discussion**

Presented by: Felix Nunez, CRA Coordinator

Felix reviewed the proposed structure of a new Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Matching Grant Program for FY26. Key elements discussed included:

- Maximum award of \$50,000, requiring a 50/50 match from homeowners.
- Eligible costs include permitting, construction, and utility hookups.
- Homeowners must reside on-site and be homesteaded with the renter's income at or  $\leq 120\%$  AMI. Discussion about whether the income limitation should be on the resident building the ADU or the renter.
- Grant is reimbursed after completion and final inspection, with lien releases required.
- Program would include a 5-year owner-occupancy agreement (soft lien).

Committee Discussion Highlights:

- The committee supported the idea that the quality of construction of the ADU needs to match the home.
- A question if prefab ADUs should be eligible; it would have to be compliant with code – some mixed thoughts on this, it would contradict the former point, but would also be less expensive to construct.
- The committee discussed whether the income eligibility should be on the homeowner or the renter; it seemed to favor the renter, as the homeowner, not income eligible, would seem most likely to build an ADU.
- Committee members generally supported the proposed ADU grant as it would add affordable housing, could provide for multigenerational housing, the ability for the homeowner to generate income and overall neighborhood stability..
- Committee members also discussed the alignment with the CRA's mission and expressed support for moving forward.
- The committee gave notes and feedback for staff to review. Staff will make updates based on committee feedback and bring them to future meetings for the committee to review and discuss in further detail.

Outcome: General consensus to proceed with further program refinement and development.

- **Commercial Grant Program – Update**

Presented by: Cameron Ehmig, CRA Specialist

Cameron introduced some ideas for updating the Lealman CRA Commercial Grant Program based on a comparative analysis of several other Florida CRA Commercial grant programs.

Key proposed changes:

- Shifting from "site" vs "interior" categories to: interior, exterior, site, and targeted businesses.
- Stackable grant awards are proposed across categories to incentivize greater investment.
- Inclusion of ADA upgrades, stormwater improvements, fire, and other code compliance items.
- Targeted support for specific sectors (food-related businesses such as markets and restaurants).

Committee Discussion Highlights:

- Committee members generally expressed support for prioritizing restaurants and food access businesses.
- A Committee member inquired if the grant could support remediation in older industrial properties;
- A Committee member noted that aligning grants with regulatory upgrades (ADA, code) helps modernize the area responsibly.
- Committee members emphasized the importance of maintaining flexibility for applicants while promoting impactful improvements.

Outcome: Committee members engaged in a thorough discussion about potential changes to the commercial grant program, with most questions focusing on grant funding for major code updates. There was support for prioritizing or incentivizing restaurant and food-related businesses, as well as overall support for updating the program. CRA Staff suggested that the major code updates/compliance issues be pulled out of the grant update, and conversations can continue on that element.

CRA staff will propose updates to the grant program based on research and committee feedback and return with proposed changes for consideration.

- **CRA and Community Updates – Amy Davis**

- Public Art update: The 54th Ave Plaza mural is completed, and the 44th Ave mural is in progress but not yet finished, with completion expected by the end of the month. The three utility boxes are to be completed by the end of June.
- Senate Bill 1242 / House Bill 991, the Senate Bill died; however, the House Bill is now combined with SB110 and could potentially be discussed in the extended legislative session.
- BOCC approved the contract amendment for the Joe's Creek Industrial Park Master Plan for additional infrastructure assessment and a timeline extension of 4 months.
- The Agreement for Lealman Heights will be presented to the Housing Financing Authority Board next week. The application for the Board of Adjustments for SFHs to be built on multi-family zoned properties is scheduled for July 2nd. Upon approval, Habitat can submit the permits.
- Sidewalk paid for by CRA along 58th Ave N connecting 34th St to Lealman Elementary School has been completed.
- Street Tree Planting Project had trees installed on 35th Way and 36th Avenue to enhance the streetscapes.
- The Pond Beautification and restoration project started on May 21st and will be completed by June 13th. Removing the exotics/invasive species and replanting with native plants. There will still be a vegetative barrier to the pond, but it will be cleared out of invasive species, and KPB will also go in and clear the litter and debris before any replanting occurs.

## **VI. Advisory Committee Member Comments**

- Jeremy Heath asked whether stormwater utility fees collected in Lealman could be redirected to local capital improvements.  
→ Amy Davis clarified that fees are restricted to O&M (operations and maintenance) and cannot be used for capital projects.

- Jen Post and Kim Blessinger reiterated the importance of using CRA dollars to strategically address capital infrastructure gaps, especially where they intersect with housing and redevelopment.
- Several members voiced appreciation for the good discussion on the topics for tonight's meeting.

### **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Jen Post

Seconded by Dominic Howarth

Vote: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 PM