



## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Lealman Community Redevelopment Area Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 6 PM**

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

**Committee Members Absent:** None

**Pinellas County Staff Present:** Amy Davis, Cameron Ehmig, Felix Nunez, Jason Ester (Virtual), Scott Swarengen

#### **I. Call to Order**

- Chair Kim Blessinger called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

#### **II. Introductions**

#### **III. Citizens' Input (3-minute limit per person)**

- David Lee provided public comment about purchasing stormwater parcels. He also provided public comment on non-profit organizations' eligibility for the Commercial Grant. He asked for more clarity on how staff is determining which properties are considered to be on a "commercial corridor".

#### **IV. Approval of Minutes**

- Chair Kim Blessinger requested a motion to approve the 6/25/25 minutes.
- Motion by Jeremy Heath
- Seconded by Dominic Howarth
- Vote: Approved unanimously with no changes

#### **V. Lealman CRA Agenda Items**

##### **1. Lealman CRA Commercial Grant Review**

Staff presented changes to the Lealman CRA Commercial Improvement Program.

- Recapped discussion from last meeting, reviewed major changes to categories and award amounts.
- A committee member confirmed that eligibility is limited to businesses with frontage on the commercial corridors. They suggested that we add more definitive language to make this clear in the guidelines.
- A committee member commented that non-profits should not be included in the Commercial Grant.
  - Staff reiterated that currently non-profits were eligible for the commercial grant program and that this is not one of the proposed changes
  - would be presented to the Committee prior to approval
  - Discussion ensued on whether non-profits pay taxes, of which was clarified that only religious and certain types of non-profits are tax-exempt, should committee review prior to approval, allotting a certain amount or capping the number of non-profits that are approved through the program.
- A committee member asked what types of restaurants will be using the grant where a discussion followed



discussing if take-out only restaurants can qualify, requiring at least 8 seats, those who work in Lealman may want take-out restaurants, question if language could include grocery stores and their eligibility.

- A committee member discussed adding car washes to list of ineligible businesses.
- A committee member questioned if it was realistic to require food-service businesses to provide a business plan from which a discussion ensued that resulted in making this requirement more broad to include a detailed menu, floor plan to suffice for a business plan.
- A committee member asked about “Waivers of Competition”, staff clarified that this is only granted under extenuating circumstances.
- Staff recapped recommendations
  - Non-profits will remain eligible, but adding stipulation that tax-exempt non-profits are ineligible
  - Add language that eligible properties must have frontage on main corridors
  - Expanding Joe’s Creek to the Targeted Employment Area
  - Grocery stores will be considered food-service
  - Finalizing the list of ineligible businesses.
  - Staff recommended keeping guidelines as open as possible so as to not limit the pool of qualified potential applicants.

## **2. Budget Review**

Staff reviewed the adopted budget.

- One change: CRA budget will be paying for two park rangers for Ray Neri Park
- Work plan: Three projects did not get completed before end of FY25 and will be done in FY26
  - Playground improvement at Ray Neri Park
  - LEX monument sign
  - LEX technology project for Neri Room

## **3. Lealman CRA ADU Grant Review**

Staff presented the ADU Grant program.

- Grant award: \$40,000-50,000
- Requirements that go above the code
  - LURA: agreement to keep unit affordable for 10-15 years depending on grant award amount
  - Soft lien: owner must maintain ownership for five years. If they sell before five years, they have to pay back a specific percentage of the grant depending on how long they maintained ownership.
  - Require ADU tenant to meet the income restriction, instead of the property owner
  - Required to have off-street parking regardless of size
  - ADU must be of same quality as primary home
- Committee members asked if renovations to existing ADUs would be eligible.
- A committee members discussed costs of building an ADU and the variables that impact cost and suggested starting with \$50,000 as the award amount and then adjust next year if needed. Committee members and staff discussed the LURA period and if it was reasonable.

## **VI. Additional Lealman CRA and Non-CRA Updates by Amy Davis**

- Joe’s Creek Master Plan adopted August 19, 2025.
- Lealman Heights update: Habitat is proceeding with site plan and permitting. Existing tenants were notified in-person by the Housing Authority that their month-to-month leases would not be renewed after January 30,



2026.

- Timeline on The Point (triangle lot): targeted closing with Florida Housing in October 2025, construction to begin November 2025.
- Morning Mixer on July 16<sup>th</sup> in Joe's Creek Industrial Park. Public Works and Stormwater Maintenance representatives explained some of the challenges with stormwater in that area. Second mixer scheduled for December 2025, for afternoon instead of morning.
- Potential property purchase: Hick's Laundry located near Silver Lake, would help further stormwater efforts for stormwater storage. In process of getting appraisal.
- Flood mitigation identified for Joe's Creek Industrial Park that can have a positive impact consists of three strategies according to consultant: increase box culvert size, replace seawalls to allow dredging, find up to 40 acre feet of stormwater storage.
- \$8.5 million budgeted for infrastructure in Joe's Creek Industrial Park. \$2.58 million is going toward upsizing the culvert; this is in the budget, all funding sources were found and the county is closing the gap in funding.
- Committees for the Lealman Neighborhood Park Project and Art Project: Committee members were asked if they want to serve as a representative for either of these committees. Dominic Howarth will serve on Public Art committee and Jennifer Post will serve on committee for the Park Improvement Project.
- PSTA: updated bus routes, asked committee if they had any suggestions for questions to ask PSTA.
  - Committee members mentioned bus shelters, and where Lealman's bus stops rank in ridership.
  - Amy said they reduced number of stops but increased frequency.
- Lealman Tree Adoption: deliveries are delayed to October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025. 160 households signed up.
- 28<sup>th</sup> St. Sidewalk: delayed, to begin in December 2025.
- Shared road paving map of upcoming FY 26 projects provided to committee members.
- Star Mobile Home Park: As of August 4<sup>th</sup>, they still do not have power, they were granted an extension to November 18<sup>th</sup> to remediate violations.
- Ray Neri Park: ribbon cutting date to be scheduled for mid-December 2025. Current contractor has to be out before end of the year, and then other contractors will come into complete their work. Athletic field sod will be laid down, and needs to sit untouched for 60 days.
- Volunteers encouraged for Fall Festival in Lealman Park on October 25<sup>th</sup>
- Amy went over the current Development Review Committee cases in Lealman:
  - Haines Road: proposal for demolition, construction of 2 multi-tenant buildings
  - Corner of I-275 and 54<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.: requested exemption from Form-Based Code. Scott Swearngen elaborated on this case. Access is limited to 55<sup>th</sup> Ave. N., use is vehicle storage and towing. They are requesting to return to their zoning designation before being rezoned per the Form-Based Code. Local Planning Agency recommended approval by Board of County Commissioners, public hearing will be October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025.



- West Lealman: new car wash proposed for 5345 66<sup>th</sup> St. N.
- Florida Dream Center: asking for modification to conditions of previously approved Type 2 Use for a Community Service Use. Staff recommendation was to deny request and made recommendations towards a site plan modification/review that is more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

## **VII. Advisory Committee Member Comments**

There were no committee member comments.

## **VIII. Adjourn**

Jennifer Post made motion to adjourn, Tyler Payne seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.