MEETING MINUTES
Lealman CRA Advisory Committee
Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 6PM

Committee Member Present In-Person: Kim Blessinger, Kenneth Williams, Charles Flynt, Jeremy Heath, Tyler Payne, Jennifer Post
Committee Members Absent:, Tony Coryn, Tahisia Scantling, Dominic Howarth
Pinellas County Staff Present: Amy Davis, Cameron Ehmig, Colan Treml, Jason Ester

I. Call to Order: Chair Kim Blessinger called meeting to order at 6:00pm.
II. Introductions
III. Citizens Input: None
IV. Approval of Minutes: Chair Kim Blessinger requested a motion to approve the 7-22-2026 minutes. Committee member commented that the Citizen Advisory Committee was not given all the pertinent information about the funding of the gym hardening project at the last meeting. Committee member also commented that the Board of County Commissioners was under the impression that the LEX Gym Hardening was being funded solely by Penny for Pinellas. Staff clarified that the funding from the State was vetoed, and the federal money is in the form of a grant that required a quick turnaround.
Motion by Tyler Payne, seconded by Jennifer Post. Vote: Approved unanimously with no changes.

V. Lealman CRA Agenda Items

1) Lealman CRA Plan Update – Kickoff Presentation by GAI Consultants, Claudia Ray and Tom Kohler

- Tom Kohler was the CRA director for Downtown Orlando for 25 years, Claudia is an urban-designer and trained architect. Their assignment is to update the 2016 CRA Plan and establish a vision for the next 10-15 years, final plan to be completed and finally adopted around October 2027.
- Key focuses of the plan will include commercial corridors, making mobile home communities more resilient, and continuing residential improvement and Joe's Creek Industrial Area efforts.
- Claudia presented some examples of other CRA plans her team has completed. Committee member asked about the prevalence of land banking or bonding; Claudia and Tom said it is common but depends on resources and leadership. Claudia reviewed the original 2016 plan and what has been accomplished so far, including code enforcement, sidewalks, murals, and placemaking. She highlighted some persistent challenges such as building deterioration, inadequate pedestrian facilities, and flooding and drainage.
- Claudia opened the floor for discussion, and asked members to list the CRA's most significant accomplishments, as well as challenges or barriers affecting the CRA today.
    - *Significant Accomplishments:* murals and art program, sidewalks and repaving, code enforcement, Lealman Heights, wayfinding, alleyway cleanup, grant programs, cleaning up commercial properties
    - *Significant challenges:* food desert, crime, no major feature tying into the neighborhoods (i.e., connectivity, major employers), attracting commercial construction
    - *Other notes:* Businesses that are getting pushed out of St. Petersburg due to high rent are coming to Lealman. Lealman Heights is becoming a hub of workforce

housing. Having alleyways is a great asset for building and accessing ADU's. Claudia advised to cluster redevelopment instead of scattering throughout the area. Committee members mentioned Haines Rd. as an area to focus redevelopment.

- *Focus areas for the next 10-15 years:* incentivize restaurants and grocers; connecting with landowners; attracting locally-owned businesses; redevelopment with new SWFWMD requirements for retention; mobile home communities; 54th Ave. and Haines Road commercial corridors; opportunities to create interesting destinations just off Joe's Creek Greenway Trail; building relationship with school district/school board

VI. Additional Lealman CRA and Non-CRA Updates by Colan Treml and Amy Davis

- CRA team is receiving and reviewing applications for the newly updated Commercial Grant program
- Joe's Creek Mixer: December 10th at Fiberglass Coatings
- ADU grant is going through departmental review
- Lealman Heights: more home dedications to come, townhomes in process
- Frontage on 54th: pursuing second appraisal
- Budget Work Session: 9/10 and 9/24 at 2pm
- Duke Energy: Distribution line undergrounding on 46th Ave., to be completed mid-October
- 28th St. sidewalk is moving along
- 57th Ave. N. tree planting
- Florida Dream Center deadline for site improvements extended to 10/4

VII. Advisory Committee Member Comments: None

VIII. Adjourn: Motion by Jennifer Post, seconded by Charles Flynt. Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm.