

**MINUTES**  
**WHIDDEN PARK COMMUNITY MEETING**  
**CHARLOTTE HARBOR COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**  
**Wednesday, December 4, 2013 – 5:30 p.m.**  
Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950

**Members Present**

James Herston, *Chairman*  
Garland Wilson, *Vice Chairman*  
Charlotte Ventola, *Secretary*  
Susan Dupper  
Michael Haymans  
Delmar Wooden

**Staff Present**

Debrah Forester, Redevelopment Manager  
Kathy Knee, Recorder

**Members Absent**

Nathaniel Cooley

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- I. **Welcome**  
Charlotte Harbor CRA Advisory Committee Chairman Jim Herston welcomed everyone to the December 4, 2013 Whidden Park Community Meeting which began at 5:35 p.m. at the Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda, FL.
- II. **Introductions of Charlotte Harbor CRA Advisory Committee Members**  
The Charlotte Harbor CRA Advisory Committee members introduced themselves as did all attendees.
- III. **Terry Cerullo, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Ombudsman** was unable to attend. Chuck Masella and Arielle Poulos were in attendance on behalf of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and would answer questions, if needed.
- IV. **Whidden Park - Discussion**  
Debrah Forester noted that a few years ago there was a meeting of the Whidden Park property owners and the main complaint was the condition of the roads and swales, which are not County operated and which need to be brought up to standard prior to take over. After that meeting a small group of people met a few times and discussed this issue but a solution was not found. This issue came up again due to recent flooding in the area. There is a lack of private investment. Infrastructure improvements would help remedy the blight. The CRA has helped with the installation of a central sewer system and increased water pressure in Charlotte Harbor. CRA TIF funds are also being used for the Harbor Walk project at the bridge. If there are any suggestions, the CRA Advisory Committee could bring them to the attention of the BCC.

Whidden Park is an opportunity in Charlotte Harbor. The assessed value of the Whidden Park properties is \$11.5M. \$69,000 in TIF is being contributed to the CRA. Whidden Park property owners do not pay taxes for streets and roads. A district can be set up for funding. Discussion followed and included:

- Quotes could be obtained to determine an estimated cost for road improvements.
- Grants available to help with the funding of improvements.
- State staff noted that to qualify for Brownfield funds the property would have to have historic contaminations, something not caused by the current owner. This is not relevant in Whidden Park.
- EDA grants are based on job creation.
- A property owner asked if the cost to improve the area was \$500,000 and if there are 141 owners would that mean it would cost each property about \$5,000. The Advisory Committee and staff agreed a method to fairly distribute the cost of improvements would need to be decided.
- In order to get an actual cost, engineering will need to be done. The BCC could be petitioned for a loan to cover the engineering.
- BP funds may come available to help with funding.
- If anyone is doing a remodel of their building or buying equipment there is an opportunity for Whidden Park owners to obtain Enterprise Zone incentives.
- A separate MSBU for streets and drainage could be created or the owners can go in as a developer and then enter into the Greater Port Charlotte MSBU once roads accepted.

**V. Next Steps**

- The property owners were asked if there was an interest on their part in paying for improvements. In order to form a MSBU, a majority of property owners must be supportive.
- To obtain the actual cost for engineering and design, the County will require a RFP.
- Staff will get a better understanding of how a MSBU works. A letter will be sent to property owners with an explanation of the MSBU and the cost estimate for improvements.
- A follow-up meeting will be scheduled for February.

**VI. Adjournment**

Mr. Herston thanked everyone for coming. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Charlotte Ventola, Secretary

Approved: 01/09/2014

/kmk