

Corrected - MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
CHARLOTTE HARBOR
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monday, February 1, 2016 – 10:30 a.m.
County Administration Building – Room 119
18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948

Members Present

James Herston, *Chairman*
Garland Wilson, *Vice Chair*
Charlotte Ventola, *Secretary*
Denise Garbacz
Michael Haymans
Vanessa Oliver
Delmar Wooden

Staff Present

Commissioner Ken Doherty
Debrah Forester, *Redevelopment Manager*
Matt Trepal, *Community Development*
Kathy M. Knee, *Recorder*

Members Absent

I. Call to Order

Chairman Herston called the February 1, 2016 meeting of the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee to order at 10:36 a.m. in Room 119 of the Charlotte County Administration Building.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Herston led the members and the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum

Roll call was taken by Charlotte Ventola. A quorum was present.

IV. Additions/Deletions to Agenda – Debrah Forester requested to move the Peace River Wildlife presentation to the beginning of meeting prior to Old Business. The Chair agreed to move the presentation.

V. Approval of Minutes

A Motion was presented by Charlotte Ventola, seconded by Michael Haymans and unanimously approved to accept the Minutes of the January 4, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee as written.

VI. Public Comments

Harry Thomas noted he was pleased to hear about the plans to move the Wildlife Center from Punta Gorda to Charlotte Harbor. Signage should be easy and it will bring lots of people into the area. Mr. Thomas asked who citizens should call to voice their opinion on the move. The Chair stated it may be part of presentation.

VII. Development Review Report - Jim Herston noted there is nothing to report. Debrah Forester mentioned Harbor Nissan has moved their sign. The new pizza place is now open and getting great reviews.

NEW BUSINESS – Peace River Wildlife Center - Bob Prier

Debrah Forester noted the property for the proposed Wildlife Center is not within the CRA boundaries but previous discussions had suggested it be included when the CRA Plan was revised. The Plan revisions had been put on hold until the Comprehensive Plan revisions were approved. Bob Prier introduced himself as a member of the Board of Directors at the Peace River Wildlife Center (PRWC). Mr. Prier stated the PRWC is talking about relocating to Hickory Bluff Park, which is County property in the Charlotte Harbor area. The PRWC is rated by Trip Advisor as the #1 Tourist Attraction in Punta Gorda. This year in Punta Gorda they expect about 100,000 visitors. The gift shop already produces about \$200,000 of taxable sales. With the proposed larger location, it would be expected that both these numbers would increase. The PRWC attracts visitors from around the world thru Facebook. It is a rescue and rehab wild life center and educates the public on how to co-exist with wildlife. Students from areas school visit the park and learn. If the facility is moved to Hickory Bluff Park, there will be more space and there will be the ability to expand. Expansion ideas include a

botanical garden, a butterfly house, nature trails and more educational displays. Mr. Prier would like to have the CRA Advisory Committee endorse the move to Hickory Bluff Park.

Discussion followed. There is a private house, Knight House, which has no significant historic features due to renovations over the years. Part of the chimney may be saved to create a memorial. Mike Haymans voiced he-his support of the move but is concerned with the historic nature of house. Robin Jenkins of PRWC noted she wanted the house to be restored and used as historic display but was told by Community Services that the house was to be demolished. If it were an option they would work to save the house. If the move is approved it would take about a year or so to be up and running. Shaun Cullinan of Community Development noted that staff is doing a full evaluation of the property and will be presenting their findings to the BCC. The property is outside the Urban Service Area due to its environmental nature and flood zones issues. Bob Prier explained that the moved is necessitated because the Wildlife Center was inadvertently placed on private property. This was discovered about 2 years ago. Negotiations with the land owner have failed. The lease expires in June. There are no immediate plans to move and there are no immediate plans to develop the current property. The buildings are in decay and need to be replaced. If this moves forward, access to Hickory Bluff Park will be a compliment to the overall vision of the CRA to link the parks.

Debrah Forester asked Mr. Prier to mention what the PRWC is asking from the County. Mr. Prier noted the letter of intent to the County states PRWC will construct all the cages, displays, buildings and restrooms; PRWC is asking the County to provide with the lease on the property, the access road to Bayshore, a parking lot and to have utilities run to the facilities as well as the County picking up the utility bills. PRWC is currently paying about \$500 monthly for utilities, which includes electric water and sewer. Mr. Prier also mentioned PRWC would like to petition FPL to put in solar panels and PRWC would provide them a kiosk to advertise their solar program. ***A Motion was presented by Michael Haymans, seconded by Delmar Wooden and unanimously approved to forward a letter of support to the BCC with the recommendation to support the project with the caveat that the historic resource on the site be addressed. In addition, this property, which fits into the Harborwalk concept, should be brought into the CRA in order to enhance programming and activities along the Harborwalk.***

VIII. Old Business

Harbor Walk Update – Debrah Forester reported Phase 1 was completed in April. On February 23 staff will be going before the BCC to request entering into a LAP Agreement with the Department of Transportation which will secure the FDOT funding for Phase 1B. Additional funding is needed and an application will be presented to Marine Advisory for funding and RESTORE money has been requested. In addition, staff is looking for funds through state appropriations. Garland Wilson advised the light poles fixtures are gloss black instead of matte black. Debrah Forester will check with Public Works. The increase in cost is due to the use of cement pilings instead of wood; although initial cost has increased, maintenance will be less costly. Discussion followed about cost increase. FDOT would like construction to start by the end of the year. Phase 1B 100% plans complete and approved by FDOT in January. Peter VanBuskirk will be asked to come to the March meeting to review plans.

Land Development Regulations Review – Matt Trepal noted he would start discussion today on Portable Signs and reminded the Committee they agreed to use the County code as the starting base. Portable signs, sandwich signs and snipe signs were discussed. Portable signs are prohibited in all of Charlotte County except for Punta Gorda where one portable sign per business can be displayed only during business hours. It must be placed clear of pedestrian traffic, no more than 20 feet from wall of the business and within the same lot. The area of the portable sign is limited to 24 inches wide by 48 inches high. If used in Charlotte Harbor CRA, the Committee may choose to limit the number, the size and/or the materials used. Portable signs and additional signs are not the same. County code allows a maximum of 32 square feet for additional signage but this may be changing. ***A Motion was presented by Michael Haymans to have the Charlotte Harbor CRA adopt the additional sign provisions of the Charlotte County Code.*** Denise Garbacz asked if this would be included in total sign allocation. Matt Trepal responded yes. ***Garland Wilson seconded the Motion.*** Concerns included safety during an unexpected storm and lack of enforcement. Matt Trepal read the definition of an additional signs. The Chair called for the vote. ***Motion passed 4/3.*** Denise Garbacz, Delmar Wooden and James Herston voted No.

A Motion was presented by Michael Haymans, seconded by Vanessa Oliver to include portable signs using the City of Punta Gorda guidelines. Motion passed 6/1. Delmar Wooden voted No.

Landscaping around free standing signs is not required under County provisions. It was the consensus of the Committee to encourage landscaping. Staff will get input from a landscaping specialist and will bring language back to Committee next month. Xeriscape could be considered.

Height/Width Ratio – with changes previously made with signage, this item is no longer an issue.

Matt Trepal advised he will have revisions ready by the next meeting. Architectural Standards could be reviewed next month; Mr. Trepal had a few comments as they conflict with County code. It was the consensus of the Committee to have Mr. Trepal bring the Architectural Standards in line as needed to clarify and present both a new strike-through and a clean version with new edits.

Hands Across the Harbor Update – Debrah Forester advised the Hands Across the Harbor was a successful event. There was great support from the business community. 440 people had registered. The first half marathon was well received. Some participants are considering the event a destination run. Future marketing should reach outside the area. Runners who want to get out of the cold look for Florida events. One of the reasons this event was started was to bring people into Charlotte Harbor and let them see the opportunities that are available there.

IX. New Business

Peace River Wildlife Center – Presented at start of meeting.

X. Correspondence/Communications

The following items were included in the meeting packet:

- Minutes from Punta Gorda CRA meeting of January 6, 2016
- Newspaper Article

XI. Public Comments – None.

XII. Staff Comments – None.

XIII. Attorney Comments – None.

XIV. Member Comments

- Mike Haymans noted it takes an army to run a successful event and Debrah is the General. She is doing a great job and she works on its organization all through the year.
- Denise Garbacz stated she is ecstatic about the Wildlife Center coming over to Charlotte Harbor. Ms. Garbacz is concerned about signage in Charlotte Harbor becoming too much like the rest of 41. It's difficult to change once the clutter is created.
- Jim Herston mentioned he thought the total bucket verbiage needs to be readdressed.

XV. Next Meeting Date

The next regular meeting of the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee will be held on **Monday, March 7, 2016 at 10:30 a.m., in Room 119 of the Charlotte County Administration Center, 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL.**

XVI. Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting **ADJOURNED at 12:32 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlotte Ventola, Secretary

/kmk

Approved: 
3.7.2016