

DRAFT MINUTES - CRA MEETING 11/10/15

A duly noticed meeting of the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Advisory Board was held on November 10, 2015, in the Commission Chambers at City Hall, 204 Ash Street, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL/ MINUTES

Present were Chair, Arlene Filkoff; Members Andrew Curtin, Lou Gold, Marla McDaniel, Anne Thomas, and Lynn Williams; City Commission Liaison Robin Lenz; and Community Development Department Senior Planner Kelly Gibson. Absent was Member Daniel McCranie.

The minutes of the October meeting were deferred to the December meeting.

2. BOARD BUSINESS

2.1 Flood Mitigation

Planning Board member Len Krieger circulated a diagram to illustrate potential flooding in downtown Fernandina Beach, spoke of dire consequences were there to be a combination of high tides and winds, and said that the City must do whatever needs to be done to avert the costly risk of flooding. He mentioned a shoreline survey that had been done every 30 feet along the St. John's River. Community Development Director Adrienne Burke mentioned a Washington, D.C. Potomac River study on flood mitigation measures and recommended that flood mitigation measures be addressed in the CRA. It was mentioned that although the City had done a stormwater study five years ago, that study did not include a stormwater survey. Someone mentioned that City employees John Mandrik and Rex Lester have plotted where runoff exists on a large scale map and that there is anecdotal knowledge as to the location of stormwater conduits, but it was felt that the City still needs to find out what kinds of pipes it has and where they are located. There was general agreement that a stormwater survey is needed.

A discussion ensued as to how, in the short-term, anyone looking to develop in the downtown area could simply follow FEMA guidelines, but that more would be needed for the long term. For example, west of Front Street, it may be necessary to construct bulkheads. Ms. Filkoff asked whether the City should put tax credits on the table, since the cost of constructing in a floodplain is significantly higher due to FEMA requirements that have to be met. Community Development Director Adrienne Burke said that the cost of constructing in the floodplain has not arisen as an issue.

A City representative then gave a presentation on tidewater. Someone expressed concern about the lack of check-valves on the City's stormwater pipes, to which he responded that stormwater is often confused with tidewater and that check-valves don't help with tidewater. He told the Board that there is a tide station in back of Bretts which reports every half hour what the tide level is via satellite and then he showed a number of slides, including a diagrammatical sketch of how the mean high waterline is calculated, a picture of a bulkhead in the Amelia River, and a slide with white stakes in the marsh at David Cook's property delineating where the mean high water line is located. There were also pictures of the flooding caused by a recent high tide

event along the Southeast Atlantic coast, including one showing the Amelia River flooding considerably to the west of the white stakes at the Cook property.

The conclusion of the slide presentation was that bulkheads need to be constructed north of Bretts. Ms. Burke said that the problem with bulkheads is that they cause erosion at the ends. She said the City needs to do an engineering study to determine how to mitigate the erosion problem. When Planning Board Member Mark Bennet asked whether it would be possible to build on pilings, Ms. Burke's response was that a property owner could build on pilings for a water-dependent use, but would typically have to prove that there was a pre-existing structure in the particular location. Ms. Filkoff inquired whether there exists any document laying out what an owner can and cannot do with submerged property. There followed a discussion of riparian rights, including rights of access to the center of the river channel and sightline rights. There was a consensus that if the City acquires title to the Ventura property, the City must ensure that title includes all riparian rights. Mr. Gold noted that, for a commercial property like a marina on the Ventura property, the City would also need to lease the submerged land from the State.

2.2 Railroad

The railroad was on the agenda, but discussion was deferred except to the extent of reiterating that no one present at the meeting could say with certainty whether CSX owns any part of Front Street and, if it does, what would be the ramifications of that ownership. There was a consensus that the City needs to partner with the railroad.

2.3 Design Guidelines

The CRA design guidelines have been incorporated into the Land Development Code and some were of the opinion that perhaps this should be undone. It was noted that the Historic Commission guidelines are not incorporated in the Land Development Code.

2.4 Specific Commission Recommendation

The Board approved the following recommendations to be made to the City Commission: (1) that the City initiate a flood mitigation study, including a stormwater survey; and (2) that a partnership be developed between and among the City, the railroad, the OHPA, and the mills.

It was agreed that the December meeting would cover items on the November agenda not addressed at the November meeting.

3. STAFF REPORT

In the Staff Report, Ms. Gibson told the Board that Main Streets had hired an Executive Director and that 20% of their budget would be devoted to the CRA.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair asked if any members of the public wished to comment, and there were none.

The meeting was then adjourned.