

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
January 13, 2009

In attendance: Ronald Sikes, Charlie Roper, Jim Gustino, Bob Battaglia, Alan Haughey and John Kirby, Planner II Regina McGruder, City Manager Mike Bollhoefer, Economic Development Director Dolores Key, Chief Planner Tim Wilson, Finance Director Robin Hayes, Officer Anthony Dawkins, Officer James McLeod and Acting Code Enforcement Manager Ray Lettsome.

Absent: Larry Cappleman, Joy Bouler and Kelly Randall (excused)

Co-Chairman Bob Battaglia called the meeting to order and determined a quorum at 4:40 p.m.

Mr. Battaglia called for a discussion of the December 9, 2008 meeting minutes.

Alan Haughey made a motion to approve the above meeting minutes, seconded by Charlie Roper, Approved unanimously.

Mike Bollhoefer stated that the City is currently working with the project engineer, Mark Marcel and property owner Ken Thomas to try to re-negotiate the requested \$130,000 property selling price and construction cost to a lower price so that the Tandem Housing Project will be affordable.

Mike Bollhoefer stated that with the current Economic downturn, the City is expecting the economy to get worse before its gets better; therefore the City is currently trying to find creative ways and marketing tools to increase business to the Downtown area and merchants. Other cities including Ocoee; has hired an Economic Development Staff person to help with recruiting more businesses to their cities.

Mike Bollhoefer stated that the CRAAB can recommend to the CRA to allocate funds that can be used for marketing and other resources that may include some additional signage on State Road 50 and other areas in the City for the Farmers Market, and other City hosted events to help increase and attract more business to the area. He stated the City is also having some additional events this year to try and increase business downtown such as Uncle Don's Chili-Cook-off that is scheduled for the month of January.

Mike Bollhoefer stated that if any members of the CRA Board have any creative ideas that can help increase business and business events to downtown; please contact Dolores Key, Economic Director. The City is currently seeking some early spring events that can partner with the local schools and recruit some business sponsorships. The corporate sponsors can assist with the

purchase of schools supplies for the local schools. The City is always open to new ideas and events.

Ron Sikes stated that as a member who has previously helped to coordinate the annual Art & Musical Festival; these type events require a lot of money and sponsorship to put together and make it a successful event. The City needs to look for creative ways to off- set some of their cost for sponsoring these events. He stated that one key factor is to be able to charge a minimum cover charge that is not too expensive, and still be able to recoup some of the event cost and expenses for sponsoring that event. Alan Haughey stated that maybe as an alternative; the City could consider asking for donations instead of charging a cover charge.

Dolores Key Economic Development Director stated that some of the issues that may hurt the downtown area are not enough retail shops. A marketing study indicated that there are enough demographics to bring business downtown to the restaurants but not to shop. The Downtown area needs more specialty stores to recruit more people to shop. People would come from all over to shop at these specialty stores. The Marketing Strategy would advertise as West Orange Downtown not Winter Garden Downtown and hopefully attract people from everywhere.

Mike Bollhoefer stated that the Code Enforcement Department is currently working with some of the downtown merchants to bring their buildings up to standards and into compliance.

Alan Haughey presented the Board with an article regarding the Community Land Trust and how this concept has worked in other areas as a tool to keep homeownership affordable.

Mike Bollhoefer stated that other local communities have used this concept such as the City of Winter Park and the key is to build attractive housing units that people would feel good about owning and this will make them want to maintain their property. The City does not control the Land Trust. He also stated that the Kenny Court Annexation ballots will be mailed on January 27, 2009 with the hope of receiving enough ballots in favor of the annexation into the City.

Mike Bollhoefer stated that the East Winter Garden Neighborhoods still has some negative people that have some negative influences in the community because they do not like or want changes the Community. But there are also lots of good people in the community that would like to see positive changes in the community.

Robin Hayes, Finance Director stated that there were no major changes to the CRA Budget this fiscal year. Orange County is expecting the budget to remain the same but waiting until after the Special Session is over before everything is finalized.

Mike Bollhoefer stated that foreclosures are high in the City as with other Cities in Orange County. Jim Gustino stated that most HOA's are just trying to maintain their neighborhoods with this loss of revenue.

Mike Bollhoefer stated that the City is currently working on lowering the Downtown Parking Fee to help with development cost. The City is conducting a study to review the current development impact fee cost for consideration of maybe lowering that cost. He stated that the City is currently trying to attract high paying jobs and working with businesses that may consider relocating to the city and attracting new jobs to the area.

Mike Bollhoefer stated that new businesses will bring new dollars to the City which will create a community where people want to live, shop and play.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Chairman Larry Cappleman

Planner II Regina McGruder