

**Palmetto City Council
Administrative Meeting
October 30, 2000 4: 00 PM**

Elected Officials Present:

**Pat Whitesel, Mayor
Tamara Cornwell, Vice Mayor
Shirley Groover Bryant, Council Member
Donna Keefer, Council Member
Mary Lancaster, Council Member
Brian Williams, Council Member**

Elected Officials Absent:

Mary Lancaster, Council Member

Staff and other present:

**Garry Lowe, Palmetto Police Department
Mary Jean Forrester, Acting City Clerk
Mike Hickey, Public Works Director
Margaret Tusing, Planning & Zoning Director
Diane Ponder, Administrative Assistant**

Mayor Whitesel called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. ATTORNEY REQUESTING ADVISE CONCERNING LITIGATION AND MEETING DATE – DELESLINE CONSTRUCTION V. CITY OF PALMETTO

Attorney Dye advised Council a meeting needed to be scheduled on the DeLeslie Construction, Inc. v. City of Palmetto litigation. It was consensus of Council to schedule the meeting November 6, 200, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

2. COMP PLAN STIPULATED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

A public hearing addressing the Stipulated Settlement Agreement between the Department of Community Affairs and the City of Palmetto will be scheduled for Monday, November 6, 2000.

3. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

Capt. Lowe presented the Palmetto Police Department's Over \$500 Expenditure Report. The first expenditure was for three new police vehicles that were previously approved in the budget process totaling \$58,670.55. The second expenditure was for \$4,930 to mark all vehicles, which will be paid by block grant funds. These were information only items.

A discussion was held concerning the fact the proposed signage for the Police vehicles will not be the same as all other city vehicles. Capt. Lowe was instructed to incorporate the City's existing logo into the proposed signage and bring it back to Council for approval.

Mr. Williams asked about the possibility of financing the new vehicles vs. paying cash. Mr. Dye advised Council that municipalities cannot give a security interest in personal or real property that is financed for longer than one year because it would be considered a pledge of full faith and credit of the City, which would require a public referendum. Mr. Dye stated there were other ways to pledge revenue streams to accomplish longer financing terms.

3. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

Mr. Hikey

Mr. Hickey recognized Public Works staff that worked on the railroad crossing repairs for their timely completion of the project on 7th Street. Duane Kinn and his crew will receive letters of recognition.

The Wedding Chapel has had its first wedding. Frank Baxter and Dave Enos worked to get the Chapel ready for the temporary one-day event.

The electronic gate at Public Works has been down but will be repaired in the next two days.

Mr. Hikey and Ron Koper will attend a Safety Council meeting in Bradenton to discuss the City's application for part of a \$3.5 million grant to address traffic.

Mayor Whitesel advised Mr. Hikey Council had asked for an update on the construction at Palmetto Elementary. Mr. Hikey will bring the report to the November 6, 2000 meeting.

Mr. Dye

Mr. Dye reported the LaFitte property is under contract and should be closing mid to late November.

4. NOVEMBER 6, 2000 AGENDA

Mr. Williams stated the Citizen Comment agenda item should contain a clause noting the two-minute time limit.

MOTION: Mr. Williams moved, Ms. Bryant seconded and motion carried unanimously to approve the November 6, 2000 agenda with the stated addition.

consideration should be given to dissolving the CRA Board. Mrs. Keefer asked Council for suggestions.

A discussion was held concerning the CRA problems and the residential revitalization program. Mayor Whitesel discussed the need for development of criteria for the program, stating the CRA Director should development the criteria, take the program to the CRA Board for approval and then bring the program back to Council for approval before implementation.

Mr. Williams discussed the possibility of changing the CRA Board to an advisory board, with City Council overseeing funds and making decisions. He commented on the necessity of changing the ordinance to accomplish this change. Mrs. Keefer commented on her fear of receiving more resignations from the CRA Board.

Ms. Bryant discussed the hiring of Ms. Hartman to come in and improve some of the City's blighted areas. Ms. Hartman's direction was to increase and improve the commercial corridor, which has been accomplished. Ms. Bryant echoed the opinions of Mrs. Keefer and Mr. Williams, expressing her opinion the CRA has been effective. Ms. Bryant discussed the perception that a lot of people on the CRA were under the impression Council had pushed to have homes in Ward 1 identified for condemnation, when in reality that was not true, stating she had never pushed to have a residence taken away. Ms. Bryant also commented on a property valued at \$92,000 that was awarded funds.

Alan Moore stated his opinion that a pot of gold exists that belongs to everyone in the city, is reasonably large right now, and is expected to grow. He discussed the storefront program and its criteria and the fact the criteria for the residential program did not mirror anything that had been done in the past. Mr. Moore stated his belief that every homeowner applying for funds in the residential program received the amount for which they applied.

MOTION: Ms. Bryant moved, Mrs. Keefer seconded and motion carried unanimously to extend Mr. Moore's time to speak.

He discussed the Board's decisions regarding the awards to the applicants.

Mr. Moore expressed his belief the process probably needs to be refined if comparing it to the storefront program. Mr. Moore suggested Council needs to decide how the CRA funds are going to be spent, i.e. how the funds will be distributed to various programs and how taxes can be reduced. He also suggested the best thing Council could do would be to have the liaison to the CRA meet and determine what is expected in revenue, determine a reasonable budget, and decide a dollar amount that can go back to the City to offset the costs in operating the City in certain areas.

5. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Whitesel thanked Ms. Cornwell for speaking at the Garden Club meeting.

Mayor Whitesel reported the Palmetto Make a Difference Day event benefiting the parents of Erin Polson was very successful, raising \$6,000, with more donations expected. She thanked Ms. Bryant for her participation in the event, and stated the City would recognize employees who had donated their time to the event. The City will also recognize companies making contributions to the event.

Mayor Whitesel asked that Council Members advise staff who will be attending the Manasota League dinner in Venice.

Diane Ponder advised Council the City would be sponsoring a city event *2000 in 2000* that will be held at the Wedding Chapel on December 3, 2000 beginning at 2 PM. Council asked about the logistics of the event. Ms. Cornwell suggested contacting the Manatee County Fair about the possibility of utilizing the shuttle. It was consensus of Council to allow the event.

Ms. Bryant commented on the first wedding held in the Chapel. Ms. Hikey stated engineering would be determining exactly what is necessary to finish the Chapel.

6. INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

Ms. Bryant

Ms. Bryant requested that Public Works and the Palmetto Police Department meet, in anticipation of the fair, to address disabled parking at the fair grounds to ensure the spaces are properly marked for enforcement.

Ms. Bryant expressed how impressed she was with City staff at the Palmetto Make a Difference Day event.

Mrs. Keefer

Mrs. Keefer commented on the report the Palmetto Police Department compiled on tickets issued on 8th Avenue, stating the report showed 109 tickets issued in the past nine month period. She further discussed the small Palmetto task force that is patrolling this area. Mrs. Keefer asked for this report on a monthly basis. Captain Lowe stated the department was looking into contacting FDOT about borrowing a speed cart for the 8th Avenue corridor. Mrs. Williams discussed using the cart and a machine utilizing photo capabilities for speeding vehicles. Mr. Williams requested the report be broken down to separately itemize 8th Avenue.

Mrs. Keefer opened a discussion on the memo issued by CRA Director Karen Hartman. She stated it is time for Council to think about what they are going to do about it given what has happened in the past two months, and whether or not

Ms. Cornwell asked if other CRA's have established percentiles as related to how a CRA budget is spent. Mr. Moore expressed his opinion that funds should not be grants but should be loans, even interest free loans, that gives homeowners or business owners an incentive. This type of program would be a self-perpetuating fund.

Mr. Williams stated the criteria of the program should require the applicant to obtain more than one bid for requested work.

Ms. Bryant discussed cost associated with development to determine some type of formula to determine expenses such as police protection to a specific development.

Mr. Moore stated that one aspect of the Council assuming control of the CRA that he did not like would be the politics that come into play, stating that some of the projects CRA approved may not be able to be considered by Council. Mr. Moore stated Council might face a project that may become impassable as a body that the CRA Board took in stride and accomplished. Mr. Williams disagreed, stating that as a CRA Board, Council would be able to do things that they could not do as a Council.

Ms. Cornwell asked that Florida League of Cities be contacted to seek information concerning any existing formula that may govern how a CRA budget is disbursed. Mr. Moore also discussed how the TIF revenue from the county could be determined.

Ms. Keefer commented that any home in the CRA district should be eligible for the residential program regardless of value. Ms. Bryant stated her problem with the situation was based on need and the failure not to have the criteria allowed this to happen. Ms. Cornwell suggested that a rubric should be used in awarding funds to applicants.

Cynthia Fobbs addressed Council and expressed it was unfortunate the CRA Director was not present. Ms. Fobbs stated the article that ran was old information. She stated she agreed with Mr. Moore on the issue as it relates to the housing program, stating it was an emergency situation where families faced condemnation of their homes.

MOTION: Ms. Cornwell moved, Mrs. Keefer seconded and motion carried unanimously to extend Ms. Fobbs' time to speak.

Ms. Fobbs explained that not every applicant received funds, as some applications were not complete. She stated the CRA Board had been informed by the CRA Director that the money needed to be spent before the end of year, thus the Board funding the families they did. Ms. Fobbs stated she had been asked to revise the application, which she had turned in to CRA. Working with other CRA districts and information received from a conference Ms. Fobbs attended, she came up with

a grant with a \$25,000 cap. Added to the application process was an assurance agreement protecting the City of Palmetto and CRA from liability. Ms. Fobbs stated she went around with Mr. Hikey, who volunteered to add in additional information relating to regulations and codes required by the City.

Ms. Fobbs stated she feels we need to go forward with a housing program and need to at least continue the program to upgrade the community so it will look according to 8th Ave. and other surrounding communities.

Ms. Fobbs stated the press faxed her a copy of the letter in question. She stated it appears a lot of accusations had been made in the letter that she didn't care to discuss because of Ms. Hartman's absence. She further stated that when the letter speaks of others no longer with the city, if the person had concerns, Council or her should have been spoken to.

Ms. Fobbs stated she feels the CRA Board is moving forward. Mr. Moore stated he would be happy to review the projects. She stated the projects are underway and the City would be proud how the funds have been spent.

Mr. Williams stated that when attending CRA meetings as liaison, it was stated the funds needed to be spent this year or appropriated in the proper area, i.e. the residential program. Once the funds are encumbered they can stay there until next year but has to be spent within three years according to Florida Statute 163.387(7). He further stated Mrs. Hartman had pointed that out so there was no rush to do this by the CRA that the issues needed to be resolved and perhaps some of this wouldn't have happened. Ms. Fobbs stated nobody has received any funds.

Mr. Williams stated that he hopes Board members will curtail their time spent with staff. Ms. Fobbs stated she was told by the CRA Director to meet with Mr. Hikey.

A discussion was held on the \$25,000 cap in the new criteria of the housing program. She agrees that a lot of the funding the CRA has could be used in the city. Mrs. Keefer asked Mrs. Fobbs for the number of applicants; six applied, four were approved. Multiple family housing applicants were not approved. Mrs. Keefer asked Ms. Fobbs to go back to her board to see if the cap could be lowered. Ms. Bryant stated she felt \$25,000 was too high a cap. She also stated she liked the concept of low interest or interest free loans to be repaid and help more projects in the future and meet more of the need throughout the CRA community.

Ms. Cornwell suggested that notes taken in Council be sent to Ms. Hartman so she can see the directions Council has asked for, further stating the notes should be signed for. Ms. Cornwell stated Council recognizes Ms. Fobbs has submitted a draft of the new application and Council looks forward to the CRA Board reviewing it and then coming to Council and presenting their ideas and receiving Council's comments. The topic brought up by Mr. Moore such as what percentage of CRA funds should be spend on home repair, businesses and lighting should be

established. Mr. Williams suggested Council might not want to get into requiring signed signatures if hand delivering items.

Ms. Fobbs asked Council to continue to give its guidance in the directions that it would like the Board to continue to pursue. She stated the CRA at large was in agreement with the program and everyone on the Board cast a vote to do what was done.

Ms. Bryant asked Mr. Williams to discuss the financial information requested with Mr. Hartman as related to the revenue expected from projects.

7. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mr. McMillan stated he has had the opportunity to have a vision of all of what's going on in terms of this specific issue. He stated he came out of the period of the Great Society where citizen participation was encouraged. He stated by citizens becoming involved in citing a need and what some of the criteria should be, and Council approving the progress of this specific action that has evolved into our community represents the very epitome of how our process works. He hopes some of the innuendoes regarding the project and its purpose to the community can be have some honesty put to it.

Mr. Moore suggested Council asked city attorney about the legality of the loan program discussed. Mr. Williams will ask Ms. Hartman to research interest free loan programs and how the City can ensure repayment.

Mrs. Keefer asked Mr. Hikey about the green stripes on 4th Street. Mr. Hikey will report back to Mrs. Keefer.

Mr. Williams

Mr. Williams commented on baskets prepared by the Mayor. The Mayor advised Mr. Williams she had solicited specialty items from various vendors for inclusion in the baskets. Mr. Williams explained the reason he was bringing it up was not using taxpayers dollars for pens, pencils, shirts or employees to assemble the baskets. Mayor Whitesel stated employees who helped create the baskets were on their own time.

Ms. Cornwell

Ms. Cornwell stated more garbage cans are needed at the historical buildings. She suggested if the wooden containers continued to need repair the City should look into having a different type of container.

Ms. Cornwell commented on the dog situation around Lincoln Middle.

Ms. Cornwell inquired if electricity was back in the park and if the City is ready for the Tomato Festival. Mayor Whitesel stated the festival is not costing the money

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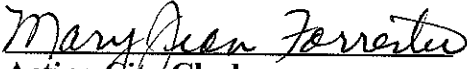
any funds. Ms. Cornwell asked that Mr. Seger be notified that teachers have inquired about bringing back games on the tennis courts.

Ms. Cornwell stated Curtis Johnson would be at Lincoln Middle School November 1, 2000. She will speak to him to see when he will be back in town so the City of Palmetto can recognize him.

Ms. Cornwell stated Lincoln Middle School is seeking mentors. She asked Council Members to advise people of this need as they were out in the community. Mrs. Keefer stated the expense for a mentor was \$25 and suggested a donation could be made in lieu of volunteering personal time.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Minutes approved: November 20, 2000


Acting City Clerk

Copies of audio tapes are available in the city clerk's office.