

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2010
5:00 PM

The minutes of the February 16th & March 2nd meetings were inadvertently printed out of order on these numbered pages.

The 2/16/10 Workshop begins on pg. 7493 and the 2/16/10 regular mtg begins on pg. 7493 B. The 3/2/10 Workshop begins on pg. 7484 with the regular meeting of 3/2/10 beginning on pg. 7487.

CALL TO ORDER

The Mayor called the workshop to order at 5:00 PM with the following members and staff present:

Arcadia City Council

Mayor Roosevelt Johnson
 Councilmember Keith Keene
 Councilmember Sharon Goodman

Deputy Mayor Robert Heine
 Councilman Lorenzo Dixon

Arcadia City Staff

Interim City Administrator Shelly Baumann
 City Attorney Adam Fernandez

City Recorder Dana Williams

The Mayor called the workshop to order with all members being present. The City Administrator provided a brief introduction of Mr. Kenneth Thomas and Mr. Christopher Edwards, Director of Economic Development and CRA Coordinator respectively for the City of Leesburg, Florida.

Mr. Thomas provided a handout of his PowerPoint presentation and briefly discussed each slide. He pointed out the City of Leesburg has three distinctive CRA's, namely the Carver Heights & Vicinity CRA, the Greater Leesburg CRA and the US 27/441 CRA. He then explained the Greater Leesburg CRA is a hybrid of sorts where it serves both a neighborhood and the downtown business district; and that the US 27/441 CRA was designed specifically to address the 300' on each side of the respective highways to provide an aesthetically pleasing gateway to the City along with undergrounding utilities to lessen power interruptions during adverse or inclement weather.

Mr. Thomas then covered the establishment dates, area in terms of acreage and units within each CRA, its priority project list and the increase in taxable values since the creation of that particular area. In doing so, he explained the financing of a CRA in terms of tax increment financing (TIF) and how some CRA's have leveraged their funds in order to accelerate the project list. On the issue of funding, Mr. Thomas also touched on Federal Home Loan program, Florida Small Communities, EPA and other grants, State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) funds, and the Brownsville Association.

As part of the US 27/441 area, Mr. Thomas discussed bonding for the underground utility work and adoption of a sign ordinance which bans billboards in favor of only ground signs. In making the change, a portion of the CRA dollars were used to assist businesses in converting their signs.

Mr. Thomas also talked about the steps required to create a CRA as defined in *Florida Statutes* to include a needs assessment identifying areas of blight, defining a particular area slated for improvements, and capping the existing tax base so that only increased values would be designated for the CRA.

Both Mr. Thomas and Mr. Edwards took questions from the Council. Councilmember Dixon questioned the timing of creating a CRA, noting that property values have declined dramatically over the past few years and the Central Florida Regional Planning Council has taken the position that now is not a good time for start up. The Interim Administrator added to the question asking what impact a negative assessment would have. Mr. Thomas responded that CRA's should be created when there is quite a bit of vacant land and values aren't high. He equated it to playing the stock market and getting in when prices are down, thereby being in position to capitalize on increases in value once the market turns. Mr. Thomas believes this is a good time for the creation of a CRA although he did concede that Mr. Edwards will be making some cuts in operational expenses for the Carver Heights CRA.

Councilmember Goodman asked for a reasonable time frame from start up to realization of the priorities. Mr. Thomas didn't specifically provide that answer though he did address the steps required for start up. Other questions were of a particular nature such as the logic for starting with Carver Heights (it was actually 2nd and based on the success of the downtown area), the number of participants on each of the CRA boards (7 members with two city councilmen serving on each), and the population of Leesburg (20,000).

Both Mr. Thomas and Mr. Edwards offered their assistance if needed and thanked the Council for the opportunity to present their city's success via Community Redevelopment Agencies.

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:43 PM.

APPROVED THIS 2nd DAY OF MARCH 2010.

By: Roosevelt Johnson, Ed.D.
Roosevelt Johnson, Ed.D., Mayor

ATTEST:

Dana L.S. Williams
Dana L.S. Williams, CMC
City Recorder