Community Redevelopment Agency
And City Council Joint
Workshop Meeting Minutes
Community Center
April 23, 2025
3:00 PM

1. Call To Order

Mayor Bob Campbell called the Community Redevelopment Agency Board & City Council Joint Workshop meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Present: Mayor Bob Campbell, Mayor Pro-Tempore Todd Bierbaum (Seat 1); Councilmember Josh Sconiers (Seat 2); Councilmember Glen Harrison (Seat 4); Councilmember Danny Cosson (Seat 5); Reynolds Henderson, Cathy Mosley, Bruton Campbell-Work, Rob Hamilton

Absent: Councilmember Amy Heavilin (Seat 3).

Also in attendance: City Clerk Rafael Ali, and Executive Director Josh Ervin

2. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he would like to start the conversation with undergrounding of utilities downtown.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that the undergrounding of utilities downtown is something that he would like to pursue.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that this project can take care of a lot of stuff in the alleyways.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he would like to see an investment in our downtown.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he would like to see a revitalization of downtown.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that from the city perspective we can multiply that funding with the CRA.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he would like to see the commercial building purchased at the outside of the tracks to be put into a shell and have the Cultural Art Alliance in it.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that is kind of his top 3 items.

Mayor Campbell asked Josh Ervin where we are with the CAA building.

Mr. Ervin stated that on tonight's agenda there is an RFP for the building.

Mr. Ervin stated that we did receive a proposal.

Mayor Campbell asked how can you phase the project and if you can do one block at a time.

Mayor Campbell stated that as far as water use goes, he does not think there is massive usage.

Mr. Henderson stated that terracotta pipes are an issue around town.

Mr. Cosson stated that terracotta pipes are all over the city.

Mr. Ervin stated that his approach from a project management perspective is to take care of their utilities and then move on to the next phases as we need to.

Mr. Ervin stated that from his conversation with utilities owners this seems to be something they would like to engage in.

Mr. Ervin stated that the total cost for the project would be $600,000.

Mr. Henderson asked if we approve the undergrounding project, we will have to see who does what.

Mr. Ervin stated that he thinks we should start with utilities because they are the most blighted.

Mr. Cosson asked if we discussed this about a year ago.

Mr. Ervin stated that it was disapproved about a year ago.

Mr. Cosson stated that this is going to be expensive but we need to have a vibrant downtown business district.

Mayor Campbell asked if we could share engineering services.

Mr. Ervin answered that we can as long as it is not on the capital improvement list.

Mr. Ervin stated that he does not see the reason to do it all at the same time.

Mr. Ervin stated that he is willing to do everything the board or the council wants.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that Mr. Adkinson is doing the groundwork to ensure that we are legally covered on which list projects go on.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that for him it is about making sure that we are all in agreement.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he does not see an issue with not being done till 2035.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that this shouldn't be broken down into different phases.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that we should keep it at a small level.

Mr. Hamilton stated that it needs to be a coordinated effort with the city.

Mr. Hamilton stated that his goal is to get our portion approved.

Mr. Ervin stated that in most situations government will hire an engineer to put this together.

Mr. Ervin stated that he put that burden on the utility owner to have that burden.

Mr. Ervin stated that Florida Power and Light state that they won't be able to do this till 2026.

Mr. Ervin stated that Florida Power and Light develops an agreement.

Mr. Ervin stated that if this needs to be done at the same time we can do that.

Mr. Ervin stated that if we move forward in that direction this project will take a lot longer.

Mr. Sconiers stated that some of the utility owners won't use your covenants.

Mr. Ervin stated that there may be issues with paying for some and not paying for others to do those upgrades.

Mr. Sconiers asked if the CRA can be involved because it is technically getting rid of blight.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he thinks that we are talking about a lot of details we need to work out but in the interest of time we need to say from the council perspective this is something we need to pursue and then set a day for Clay and engineer to come together and bring back a report to us.

Mr. Sconiers stated that he is good with that.

Mr. Henderson stated that we can get a draft plan together and get it approved.

Mr. Cosson asked if anyone has thought of an end game on how that will look.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the end game for him is to make the alleyways walkable.

Mr. Cosson stated that in order to think ahead we would start on 1st Street and go to Firestone Alleyway.

Mr. Ervin stated that we have it going from 5th to 10th.

Mr. Henderson stated that the concern is downtown.

Mr. Henderson stated that nothing happens without that being done first.

Mr. Henderson stated that a lot of people target main street towns for stops and visits.

Mr. Henderson stated that this is the time to talk about this and get a project priority list together and decide who can do this.

Mr. Henderson stated that we don't need to do a big project at a time but we can do small projects at the same time.

Mr. Henderson stated that priority list is a good way to get there.

Mr. Cosson stated that we need to tell engineering firms what they want and let them do it.

Mr. Ervin stated that clear direction on where we need to go is very important.

Mr. Henderson stated that he wants to see the board's thoughts about the amphitheater.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that we should focus on the amphitheater.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that this is top 5 for him.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that we have asked TDC.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that Hall of Brotherhood is number 4 for him.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he agrees we have a limited amount of time.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that we need to get a list of top 5 projects.

Mr. Henderson stated that we need to have a relationship because the CRA has an end date and the city council does not.

Mr. Campbell-Work agreed with the amphitheater.

Mr. Henderson stated that amphitheater can bring people to our town.

Mr. Cosson stated that we should live within our budget.

Mr. Cosson stated that the alleyway currently sounds like the number one.

Mr. Campbell-Work stated that the amphitheater can be done with the TDC.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that the CRA gets funded through a different trust fund.

Mr. Cosson stated that we need to be good stewards of the city tax funding.

Mr. Hamilton stated that he is thinking about what will give the biggest return on investment.

Mr. Sconiers stated that he is agreeable to the undergrounding utilities.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that for them to run fiber to his building is going to be over $10,000.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that it is worth pursuing this.

Mr. Bierbaum mentioned the abatement portion of code enforcement.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he wants to have an agreement with what the CRA can address.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he would like to see a program where we see a treadmill of properties that get on our magistrate list and then walk away.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that we should be proactive on the front end.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that we should have a program where the CRA agrees to do an abatement up to $15,000.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that the goal is to get rid of blight.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he wants this program to be for all code violations.

3. PARKING STUDY DISCUSSION

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Approved:

Chair Reynolds Henderson

ATTEST:

Minutes taken by Rafael Ali
City Clerk
Proper notice having been duly given

THE CITY OF DEFUNIAK SPRINGS
CORPORATE
SEAL
1901