

**MINUTES
TOWN CENTER COMMUNITY
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 - 5:30 PM
DESTIN CITY HALL BOARDROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Wernet called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at the Destin City Hall Annex Council Chambers with the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

2. ROLL CALL:

TC Members Present

Lockwood Wernet
Michele Sandstead
Nikki Johnson
Dorothy Robinson
Delores Morrell
Joshua Cowsert

Staff Present

Kim Montgomery Deputy Clerk
Steven O'Connor
Daniel Butler

3. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

➤ **August 16, 2023**

Motion to approve the August 16, 2023 amended minutes was made by Committee member Morrell with Committee member Sandstead providing the second. The motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

None

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A) Community Redevelopment Areas Master Plans Update – 3TP Ventures

Mr. Callahan explained to the members the draft Master Plan includes the strategic direction for their projects and their prioritization, as proposed for their review to ensure that it has everything that they want included in the plan. He briefly covered the past meeting and what was discussed to be included in the plan, and how what they are now seeking, is to ensure they are on the right track to implement it all. He spoke of the sheer size of the Town Center, and how they feel the key is to focus on one general area within the Town Center and then, focus on the financial incentives for property owners and put design standards in place.

Some the key issues for the entirety of the district:

- Large blocks with limited connectivity for walkability.
- Fragmented property ownership.
- No Financial incentives for the property owners, as previously mentioned.

The following opportunities:

- Identify the key place to be developed for the Downtown or Arts District
- Establish Design Standards
- Public/Private Partnership
- Market the Plan

General Strategies:

- Connectivity
 - Mobility Plan | Vehicular/Bicycle/Pedestrian
 - Expanding Multiuse Trails | Sidewalks and Bike Paths
- Safety for Pedestrian Crossing
 - Intersection improvement at Main Street and Hwy 98, and other locations
 - Reduce Vehicular Involved Crashes
- Achieve more Greenspaces
 - Building the Linear Park
 - Create a Park System within the District
- Economic Development
 - Creating the Downtown
 - Arts
 - Public Gardens
 - Pedestrian Focused Areas
- Workforce Housing
 - Live | Work | Alternative Means of Commuting, i.e. walking and/or biking

Mr. Whalen provided the members with ways to incentivize development programs that would encourage private property owners to certain development types, an example would be workforce housing and by setting up eligibility requirement projects to help support the development such as:

CRA Development Fund Incentives that offer:

- **Tax Increment Rebate (TIR)**
 - Provides financial support to private sector development in targeted areas
 - Use a portion of the CRA revenue generated from new developments
 - A portion of increased tax revenue due to completed project is returned to developer.
- **Purposes of Tax Increment Rebate program**

- Encourages/enables private development in targeted locations by closing financial gaps
- Encourages development of workforce housing
- Encourages private sector installation of infrastructure improvements
- Enables implementation of redevelopment strategies and projects in CRA plan

➤ **Tax Increment Rebate Program**

- Eligibility Requirement examples
- Project characteristics
- Location within CRA
- Demonstration of need of rebate/gap in financing
- Proposed compliance with redevelopment strategies/design guidelines
- Review and Approval Process options
- Review proposals/business plans on case-by-case basis
- Establish approval matrix linking rebate to specific project elements

Other items to consider

- Development Agreement
- Performance bond, letter of credit, other surety type
- All taxes, liens, fees paid prior to rebate disbursement

Mr. Callahan then covered the seven (7) most wanted items that they all chose from their exercise back at their May meeting:

- Arts District \$200k
- Linear Park \$10M (preconstruction costs)
- Sidewalk/Bike Lane Improvements \$592k
- Park Systems 0
- Intersection Improvements \$1.3M
- Completion of the Cross Town Connector \$5.3M
- Completion of the Street Network (it was noted that this is also a part of the Mobility Plan and would receive funding from the Mobility Impact Fee, once it is created).

He then spoke of the importance of design guidelines, and how once those are put in place, the CRA funds can be used as a development incentive to support the construction of the design elements within the public realm, which are things that go above and beyond a typical development that provide public benefits. Additionally, once everything has been implemented into the revised Master Plan, they anticipate bringing it back for their review and adoption by the CRA.

Committee member Sandstead agreed with the notion that the Town Center in its entirety

to too large of an area and they do need to just work on a specific area within the district to focus on. She spoke of a video that she provided to staff to show everyone from Tallahassee, where a certain portion of their CRA that was also an industrial area, as Destin's is, and how it was redeveloped. After watching the video, Mr. Callahan agreed that is a good model to follow with it having some similar ideas they are working towards.

Motion by Chairman Wernet to integrate the findings for the Phase II memorandum from 3TP Ventures into the Town Center CRA Master Plan's final draft, with Committee member Cowsert providing the second. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

B) Development and City Projects Update – Daniel Butler

Members of the committee questioned staff what the status is of the property with the proposed Publix, noting that there has been rumors that apartments was going to be built. According to staff, currently there is an approved Development Order for the Publix and that is what is going to be built. It is a 60k sq. ft. grocery store with about 4k sq. foot of other retail units. Mr. Butler added that the other four suites are 2k sq. ft. per unit and is exactly what has been approved. Currently demolishment is under way to prepare the property for construction. Mr. O'Connor asked the members that if they are asked by anyone in the public about what is being built, to please refer them to the planning staff in Community Development. There was an additional question regarding if the property would be used for a Town Center development. According to Mr. O'Connor, the only way the district could utilize funds that way would for it to be written in the Master Plan, along with the TIR Rebate incentivizes for developers, they discussed earlier.

The City Attorney provided the members with the current details of the contract with SRS and how they are being asked to look at all of the city properties comprehensively and provide various designs.

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

8. MEMBER COMMENTS:

Committee member Cowsert spoke of how he wants a place included for the youths to have somewhere within the district to gather, such as a skateboard park.

Committee member Robinson just reiterated the need to focus on a general area of the

district to redevelop in order to not lose focus on their overall goals.

Committee member Sandstead spoke of wanting to focus on the properties located on Main Street those being the old Toomey building, the Orr building and Vanguard Bank building. Additionally, for park purposes, the property behind the Orr and Toomey buildings would be a good place to have events and focus on turning them into the Arts District. Noting that one of the buildings is owned by the Howard Group and being interested in Art, maybe he would be agreeable to the idea. Mr. O'Connor again briefly explained the steps that could be taken to incentivize owners and developers.

Chairman Wernet informed the members that there is a schedule Code Compliance Workshop on October 23, 2023 in this building for those interested in finding out their processes and how they operate.

9. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Having no further discussions, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Adopted and approved 15th day of November 2023.


Lockwood Wernet Chairman


Kim Montgomery Deputy City Clerk