

THE SPRINGS REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)
Minutes for Regular Meeting
Thursday, February 4, 2010
Boys and Girls Club of Valley of the Moon

1. Call to Order

Vice Chairperson Ellen Conlan called the meeting of the Springs Redevelopment Advisory Committee (RAC) to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call/ Oath of Office

Present: Ellen Conlan, Donna Hays, Ryan Lely, William Murray and David Whiteley. Steve Cox was absent. Kara Olness Reyes arrived at 7:10 pm. Also present were Redevelopment Manager Cas Ellena, Redevelopment Associate Al Lerma, Redevelopment Assistant Jennifer Howze, and approximately four (4) members of the public during the course of the meeting. This meeting was recorded by SVTV-27.

Cas Ellena administered the Oath of Office for William Murray and he was sworn in as a RAC member.

3. Chair Elections

Ellen Conlan was promoted from Vice Chairperson to Chairperson.

Members of the RAC agreed to nominate Steve Cox for Vice Chairperson.

David Whiteley made a motion to elect Steve Cox as Vice Chairperson. Ellen Conlan seconded the motion; the motion was approved 6-0-1 (Cox absent for vote).

4. Minutes

Ellen Conlan requested that item 8C include the statement that DTPW is going to provide the RAC with a cost estimate for the Donald Avenue project.

Ryan Lely made a motion to approve the January 7, 2010 minutes with the requested change. Donna Hays seconded the motion; the minutes were approved 4-0-1-2 (Murray abstained, Cox and Reyes absent for vote).

5. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters

None

6. Information Sharing

Ellen Conlan shared an article she found on public art in Emeryville with members of the RAC. The project was implemented to give utility boxes a facelift by painting all of the boxes in the city using a common theme.

Donna Hays thanked staff for having the abandoned TV she mentioned in last month's meeting removed from the side of the road. She also thanked Ms. Conlan for a collection of printouts regarding redevelopment projects throughout the Bay Area.

Ms. Conlan explained that she had gone through the previous handout and cut it down to include projects she felt were more on the scale of the Springs Redevelopment Project. She highlighted particularly significant or interesting points in each article and handed out copies to the RAC members for review.

David Whiteley asked whether it is the general policy of the Board of Supervisors not to land bank unless there is a prospective buyer lined up for the site. Ms. Ellena said she was not aware of any such policy, but believes that if a parcel of land was ideal for a redevelopment project site, such as key properties identified in the Strategic Plan, an argument could be made to support the purchase of the parcel(s) even without a specific development identified.

7. Correspondence

None

8. Monthly Reports

Ms. Ellena reviewed the monthly reports. She explained the Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) is currently working on acquisition of approximately 90 right-of-ways (ROW) and are currently in the appraisal process. The DTPW is asking that RAC members get the word out of an "ambulance chaser" appraiser trying to drum up business in response to new legislation that allows property owners to request a second opinion appraisal for ROW acquisitions. Property owners should be aware that the cost of these additional appraisals will directly reduce the amount of redevelopment funds available for projects. Mr. Whiteley asked why the budget for appraisals for Stage 2 is so much larger than it was for Stage 1. Ms. Ellena explained that there are a lot more properties to appraise for Stage 2 which accounts for the higher cost of getting the appraisals done.

Al Lerma provided an update for the Commercial Rehab Loan Program. He said that there has been a delay in getting the architects under contract, but staff is hoping to execute the agreements in the coming week. Ms. Conlan asked how long it would take for designs to be created once the architects are under contract. Mr. Lerma said he is hopeful the process will move very quickly once the contracts are executed and construction on the projects will begin soon.

Ms. Ellena said that SVCHC is still working on pulling together funding for the project in the absence of the grant funding. She also advised that four of the five option agreements with the property owners have expired and SVCHC has not yet been able to renew the contracts.

Ms. Ellena explained Las Palmas is currently having trouble pulling together construction funding but are not in default on any of their loans. CDC will be getting an appraisal on the property, but work on the embankment and under grounding will continue in the meantime as it is necessary for the Highway 12 project.

9. Old Business

A. MIG Final Report

Al Lerma introduced the item by explaining the purpose of the discussion is to look at specific parcels in the central activity hub and think about possible projects to rehabilitate existing structures or build/ landscape vacant lots. Mr. Lerma described a new business that will be opening at the site of parcel #13 on the central activity hub map after the building has been rehabbed. The

owner will be opening a tortillaria and will hire local people to work there. He also reviewed the meeting staff has had with local realtors, Laurie Decker of the Economic Development Partnership, and Jennifer Yankovich of the Sonoma Valley Chamber to open up communications and work with them on possibly coordinating marketing activities surrounding the sale of property in the Springs. Ms. Conlan asked whether there was any sense of business prospects for the Springs now that the street lights are in and some improvements have been made. Ms. Ellena explained that feedback has been very good, and the improvements are seen as a good faith gesture that there is growth and change occurring.

Mr. Lerma said he met with Jeff Frieberg who is the owner of the gas station. Mr. Frieberg is interested in selling the parcel. He is currently in the process of having the site approved as a "clean" site since it was previously a gas station. He is hoping he will get the clearance later this year.

Mr. Lerma also described a meeting with Michelle Bertram the Production Operations Manager for Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn to talk about potential projects in the Central Hub, for example a public plaza near the old Uncle Patty's site, and to see if SMI may be interested in participating in some capacity such as in on-going maintenance. Ms. Ellena explained that it would be beneficial to try to pull in grant funding and local partnership to help fund, construct, and maintain projects since there is a limited amount of money left in the redevelopment budget for the next five years. Ms. Conlan suggested contacting Basin Street, a company that built a project in Petaluma to see if they would be interested in bringing a project to The Springs.

Ms. Conlan asked about the Immigrant Investor Pilot Program, which provides a green card to foreigners who invest \$500,000 or \$1 million in a new or existing business and create at least 10 jobs. She asked whether Sonoma County participates in the program or could participate in the program. Staff agreed to look into the details of the program.

Ms. Reyes said there are a lot of good grants available, but the County has to apply for them. Mr. Lerma said there is a County staff member who sends updates on pertinent grants to various departments so they are made aware of what is available.

Ms. Ellena explained that staff is planning on continuing the discussion next month, and will invite as many property owners and business partners as are interested to come to the meeting and take part in the discussion of development opportunities in the Central Activity Hub. .

B. Donald Avenue Stretch of Highway 12- Proposed Project

Ms. Ellena advised RAC members that since redevelopment must be funding of last resort, staff must explore the possibility of CalTrans funding the repairs before recommending that redevelopment fund the project. CDC is working

with DTPW to draft a letter to CalTrans and will not be able to move forward until a response is received.

10. New Business

A. Preliminary FY 10/11 Budget for the Springs Redevelopment Project

RAC members reviewed the proposed annual budget for FY 2010-11.

David Whiteley made a motion to approve the FY 2010-11 budget. Seconded by Ryan Lely. The budget was approved 6-0-1 (Cox absent for vote).

RAC members reviewed the Achievements for FY 2009-10 and commented that the Façade Improvement Program was included twice. Staff agreed to remove "design, market and implement a commercial façade improvement program" and leave "Initiated commercial façade improvement program" as the stated accomplishment.

RAC members discussed the Goals for FY 2010-11. Ms. Conlan said she would like goal three to be changed to read "pursue economic development and affordable housing opportunities." The other members agreed with the change. After a brief discussion, RAC members also decided goal four should be changed to read "shift economic development priorities to activity hubs identified in the strategic plan along the Highway 12 corridor."

Ryan Lely made a motion to approve the FY 2009-10 achievements and the FY 2010-11 goals with the proposed changes. Seconded by Kara Reyes. The FY 2009-10 Achievements and FY 2010-11 Goals were approved 6-0-1 (Cox absent for vote).

B. RAC Policy Discussion Regarding Requests for RAC Support

Ms. Ellena explained that taking a position of support or non-support for local issues or initiatives is something the RAC itself can decide to do or not to do. She opened the discussion up to the members for their opinions on what to do when such a request arises.

Mr. Whiteley said he would prefer not to do this because of the possibility of differing opinions amongst the members and Mr. Lely agreed with him. Ms. Hays said she would prefer not to close the door on the possibility in case something pertinent comes along that the RAC does want to express an opinion on. Ms. Reyes agreed, saying it doesn't come up very often.

Mr. Lely said he thinks that if the RAC is going to express a formal opinion they should at least hear from both sides of the issues first. Ms. Conlan suggested that if an issue comes up that the RAC wishes to express an opinion on that everyone should be in agreement and steps should be taken toward due diligence to hear both sides before a formal opinion is made. All members of the RAC agreed on this process and the discussion was closed.

11. Agenda for Next Meeting

Call to Order; Roll Call; Approval of February 4 Minutes; Public Comment; Information Sharing; Correspondence; Monthly Reports; Old Business: Activity Hub Discussion, Donald Avenue; New Business: Go Local, Grange Hall, Housing Rehabilitation Program, Agenda for Next Meeting; Adjournment.

12. Next Meeting

March 4, 2010, 7:00 p.m., Boys & Girls Club of Valley of the Moon, 100 Verano Ave., Sonoma.

13. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.