

**AGENDA MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
CITY HALL, 501 W MEADOW STREET
MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023 5:01 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City of Leesburg Carver Heights / Montclair Area Community Redevelopment Agency held a regular meeting on Monday, March 13, 2023, at Leesburg City Hall. Chairperson Burry called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. with the following members present:

Commissioner Allyson Berry
Commissioner Jay Connell
Commissioner Erika Jasper
Commissioner Mike Pederson (5:05 p.m.)
Commissioner Alan Reisman
Chairperson Jimmy Burry

Commissioner Kevin Conner was absent. Also present were City Manager (CM) Al Minner, City Clerk (CC) J. Andi Purvis, City Attorney (CA) Grant Watson, the news media, and others.

INVOCATION

Chairperson Burry gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2. APPROVE MINUTES:

A. Regular meeting held February 27, 2023

Commissioner Reisman made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from February 27, 2023 and Commissioner Berry seconded the motion.

Chairperson Burry requested comments from the Commission. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Jasper	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Chairperson Burry	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission approved the regular meeting minutes.

3. RESOLUTIONS:

A. Resolution of the Carver Heights / Montclair Area Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Leesburg, Florida as to the Food Pantry projects.

1. Resolution of the Carver Heights / Montclair Area Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing the Chairperson and Secretary to execute a Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions as to the Feed the Need project in favor of Lake County; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 103

Commissioner Reisman introduced the resolution to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the resolution by title only.

Commissioner Jasper made a motion to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Connell seconded the motion.

Chairperson Burry requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Berry stated she was in favor of the grant approval and the food pantry project. However, she was concerned about the location. It should not be in a residential area. She would like to consider the location of 1115 County Road 468. **CM Minner** remarked that the grant called for the location to be on McCormack Street. However, if the commission wanted to change the location, it would not be a bad idea. The proposed location is more of a commercial district and it would be located right next to the Resource Center. The city purchased that house about a year ago. It would need some retrofitting just like the other building. If the commission would like to move in that direction, they could approve the grant with that modification. From a staff's perspective, there is no preference. It just requires an administrative change. **Commissioner Jasper** respectfully disagreed. They already have approval from Lake County for the McCormack Street location. She believed they should move forward with the project as is. We have the money and funds. We just need to move forward and get the architectural design. It would be right by Berry Park, which has adequate parking. A lot of people would benefit from that location because it is central. **Chairperson Burry** asked what the address was for the previous location. **Commissioner Berry** responded 907 McCormack Street and it is a residential area. The location being proposed is just north of the Resource Center. The proposed area is more commercial and everyone would benefit. It would not cause any traffic issues and it is right off the main roads of CR 44 and Griffin Road. It would be convenient and it would not be in a residential area. No residential area would be good. It is not just district one or Carver Heights. She cannot see a food pantry being in any residential area. **Commissioner Jasper** said the building they were looking at was previously used for commercial. It was a semi-repair store for years. She thinks it is okay to move forward now with the current location because it has adequate parking and it is right next to Berry Park. This program has already been approved by Lake County and there are so many people in need of food. The pandemic hunger relief program has come to an end, so a lot of people are in need of food. She would like to move forward with the project as is. If we move the location it will cause further delays because we would need approval from the county to change that. We would need additional funds to readjust the building to accommodate the food pantry. She felt

very strongly about it and wanted to move forward with the program as it was approved. **Chairperson Burry** asked if they moved the location to CR 468 how long would the delay be? **CM Minner** answered he did not know, it could be thirty to forty-five days. **Commissioner Pederson** wanted to know how much money has been invested in this project already. **CM Minner** replied not much, if anything at all. **Commissioner Jasper** said there would be an additional delay. This process has taken a while to get to this point and they should keep moving forward. There is such a great need. She read an article the other day that said people are going to lose about ninety dollars from the food stamp assistance program. There is a great need and we are going from a pandemic crisis to a hunger crisis. The need is there and we should move forward with the McCormack Street location. It was already approved by the county and we need to move forward. **Commissioner Berry** questioned if consideration was taken or given to the residents of the area? **Commissioner Jasper** said yes. **Commissioner Berry** asked what the responses were. **Commissioner Jasper** said she and the former Housing Director worked on this project. They went to some of the residents who live in close proximity to the proposed project. They received positive consideration from the residents. **Commissioner Berry** said she did the same research. She went out and knocked on the doors of the residents. She also lives two blocks down from this area. The feedback she received from the residents was that they were not even aware of this project and they were not interested in having more traffic in that area. That was her concern as well. Knowing we are trying to rebuild our community in the neighborhoods, bringing a food pantry for others to come in would just increase traffic and allow for more homelessness in the area. They need to be fed too. They have traffic issues now on McCormack Street, so it is a concern of the residents. **Commissioner Jasper** mentioned that there was a feeding program every Tuesday where Pastor Hardy has his food program. It is located in a vacant lot right near Berry Park and there are no problems there. A lot of people would benefit from this program and it should be taken to another level. She has not had any problems or issues with people saying they were not aware of this. This has already been approved and we need to move forward. Traffic should not be an issue because they have adequate parking at Berry Park. There was also a vacant lot donated adjacent to the building. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to know what days the food pantry would be open. **Commissioner Jasper** answered they still need to put the guidelines in place. For the record, homeless people do not really go to the food pantry, they go to the soup kitchens because they do not have refrigerators or stoves. They cannot store food. This is more for low income and low poverty line individuals. Those people would benefit from this program. It is not just for the homeless, it is much more than that. **Commissioner Berry** agreed that providing a food pantry in the area for the homeless would be a benefit, especially if the food is being given away. They would be the first to come. Her only concern is the location. **Commissioner Reisman** remarked that he liked the Resource Center location. If they are going there for food, they could go next door to the Resource Center for other services. He liked the CR 468 location because it is a more commercial grade road. **Commissioner Pederson** inquired about the zoning at the current site. Is it currently zoned commercial? **Commissioner Jasper** said it was in the past but she was not sure about the current zoning. **Commissioner Pederson** wondered if it had been commercially zoned in the past. **CM Minner** said that area is borderline. The south end of McCormack is more commercial. **Commissioner Berry** said Century Link and the school buses are in that area. There are three houses adjacent to the front and houses on the side that would go straight to Berry Park. There were five houses there and no one was in agreement. **Commissioner Pederson** wondered how they could move this along in a timely manner to keep Commissioner Jasper happy. He does like the location, but he understands the concern. We have been talking about this for quite awhile. **CM Minner** said he did not specifically speak with the folks from the county. However, with the CDBG, he did not think it would be an issue. It would just be a small modification. The hitch is to ensure the funds are used for and benefit low to moderate income folks. That was the hook for CDBG funds. He did not think that the county would have an issue with changing the location as it would be right next to the Resource Center. It would be more commercial and it would be a minor change. Whatever direction the commission wants to go, they can make it work. **Commissioner Jasper** commented on the future development of CR 468. Would it hinder future projects by having a food pantry there? **CM Minner**

responded not a lot. One of the reasons they purchased that house was because it was the eye of the hurricane. We did not have plans to tear it down, so this plan helps because the core spot would be filled. Also, Pastor Hardy already stores stuff at the Resource Center, so shifting it over there might be helpful. Commissioner Berry brought this to the table and he believes it would work. He understands the concerns about delay. It would work, but whatever the commission chooses they will make it happen.

Commissioner Pederson inquired if the city owned the existing building next to Berry Park. **CM Minner** answered yes. The property that the city owns goes from South Street up to the school. There are two streets, Rymes and Pruitt Street, and then CR 468 at the western edge back to the school property. That whole box is owned by the city. Before that, 1115 CR 468 was a circle but now it has been filled in. **Commissioner Jasper** said, from an architectural design and land for parking, how would that work at the CR 468 location? They already have adequate parking in the conceptual design of the building on McCormack Street. They already had a design and ideas in place. **CM Minner** responded he was unsure there would be a major issue. There would be some tradeoffs from what they are not doing for the facility. There would be enough room for parking. They have road access along with the ability to tap into the existing parking at the Resource Center. Either way, the project works and it can be done within the budget. It is just a matter of shifting. At the end of the day, the goal is accomplished. **Commissioner Pederson** asked if the dollars were about the same for renovation of the two buildings. **CM Minner** answered yes. The grant is for about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. One way or the other, they are not looking at significant change. **Commissioner Reisman** added that the grant is for fifteen years, so we need to make sure we choose the right location. **Commissioner Berry** agreed.

Daryl Reeves, Pastor of Mount Arait Metropolitan, 1108 East Main Street, said he was an administrator for the pandemic food program in Lake County. They served three counties. They administered over sixteen thousand boxes of meals during that period, which included fruit, vegetables, staples and meat. They decided to do it in a commercial/industrial complex area and not their church location because they are located in a residential area. It created tremendous lines of cars with people coming through to get food. It was a tremendous inconvenience for the community. On the financial side, there are members that live in that area. When there is a fifteen year feeding program in the community that drops the value of each homeowner's property. It would not benefit the residents who own homes in that area. Moving the location would be doing a good thing for both sides as opposed to harming some people for the benefit of others. Moving to the new location is the best way to go.

Fred Griffin Jr., President of West Leesburg Community Development Corporation, said he spoke with several residents in the community and they are already complaining. There are a lot of buses and a trucking company there already. As a substitute bus driver, he sees the traffic and it is crazy. It is crazy just trying to get to Carver Middle School and or leaving the bus depot. He was there as an advocate for the residents and Pastor Hardy. He is very concerned about the location, even though he is serving out of that location now. Parking is one issue. He is unable to bring loads of items in due to the congestion there already. That was his intake and feedback from the residents.

Kenneth King said he is the pastor of the Mt. Arait Progressive Baptist Church in Leesburg on Childs Street. He lives at 1016 McCormack Street in Carver Heights. This is a great thing because it will feed the homeless. Having a food pantry is a great thing. He is not against that, but there is a problem with the location. There are existing problems in the neighborhood. With the pantry there, the traffic will increase and make the problems worse. They are trying their best to get rid of the problems they have now.

Matthew Adkinson said he was the pastor of Mt. Sinac at 920 McCormack Street. Just as Pastor King said, he lives in the community and he is a pastor in the community. Every day he has to turn people around because they are cutting through the church yard. He is in the food pantry, but not at that location. They have enough traffic as it is. It is tremendously bad, not only the cars, but for the pedestrians. If they

could change the location, it would be very appreciative.

Chairperson Burry asked if anyone wanted to amend the current motion.

Commissioner Berry made a motion to accept the actions listed in the analysis of the food pantry project and to accept the CDBG funds along with amending the location to 1115 County Road 468, Leesburg and Commissioner Resiman seconded the motion.

Commissioner Jasper said she was not in favor of moving the location because it would hinder the process. There are people in need of food now due to inflation and the high cost of food. It would further delay the construction of the building. She was not in favor of the amendment to changing the location.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Jasper	No
Chairperson Burry	Yes

Five yeas, one nay, the Commission approved the amendment to the resolution.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Jasper	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Chairperson Burry	Yes

Six yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the resolution as amended.

4. DISCUSSION AND UPDATE ON CRA GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

CM Minner stated this was put on the agenda and there was no staff backup. It is really a discussion item for the CRA board. There has been a lot of turnover with elected officials and board members. In the past, there was a project that was quasi-approved, but it had some strings attached to it and it needed to come back to the commission. That project was the bond. They discussed how they were going to use it and where they wanted to spend it. They identified that they could leverage debt money. There was talk about a one to three million dollar bond. That was about six months ago. However, they are now leaning towards a million dollars. The project was for housing and going back towards the Alabama/Tuskegee project near Berry Park. As the faces have changed at the table, they have not moved forward on that. They should have an open discussion for directions on where they should go. They may want to have a conversation about everything before they start spending the funds. That way they all know where the money is being spent. If there are differing opinions at this time, they can re-plan, take a step back, and figure out the best way to use the Carver Heights CRA money. It would be an open dialogue. With only five minutes left to discuss something significant, they may want to hold off and reschedule that discussion. It could be on an off Monday, so there is more time for discussion; meaning a first or third

Monday.

Commissioner Jasper and **Commissioner Berry** said that would work. **CM Minner** said his office would get back with them to schedule a meeting.

5. ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Connell had no further comment.

Commissioner Reisman had nothing further.

Commissioner Jasper wondered if it could be tied into the next meeting, but Homes in Partnership bought a lot off John and Beecher Streets and she would like to see that program move forward. They have wanted to build a house on that corner lot for about thirty years. People used to hang out there on a day-to-day basis. Revitalization will help increase property values. It also allows someone to have the American dream of owning a home. She would like to see that project move forward.

Commissioner Pederson remarked that moving forward he would like to see maps incorporated into the agenda packets. He is a commercial realtor and he thought he knew all the properties. It would be good for them and the audience to see maps and visuals.

Commissioner Berry had nothing further.

Chairperson Burry had no further comment.

6. ADJOURN:

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NEEDING ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THESE PROCEEDINGS SHOULD CONTACT THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, ADA COORDINATOR, AT 728-9740, 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING.

F.S.S. 286.0105 "If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that for such purpose they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based." The City of Leesburg does not provide this verbatim record.

The meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.