

**AGENDA MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
CITY HALL, 501 W MEADOW STREET
MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023 5:15 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City of Leesburg Carver Heights / Montclair Area Community Redevelopment Agency held a regular meeting on Monday, March 27, 2023, at Leesburg City Hall. Chairperson Burry called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m. with the following members present:

Commissioner Allyson Berry
Commissioner Jay Connell
Commissioner Erika Jasper
Commissioner Mike Pederson
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

The invocation and the pledge of allegiance was previously held at the Greater Leesburg Community Redevelopment Agency meeting held immediately prior to this meeting.

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

2. APPROVE MINUTES:

A. Regular meeting held March 13, 2023

Commissioner Reisman made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 13, 2023 and Commissioner Jasper seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was:

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

Six yeas, no nays, the Commission approved the meeting minutes as presented.

3. CONSIDERATION OF FOOD PANTRY CDBG PROJECT

CM Minner said at the last meeting when the commission decided to transfer the project location from the McCormack Street address to CR 468, also known as the red road, next to the community center, he informed the commission that he did not think that CDBG at Lake County was going to have an issue with the move. When they formally voted on it, they did not have all the information and that was his fault. Since that meeting, he and the Housing Director went back to the CDBG folks to inform them that this body had changed the location. They then informed them that changing the location would do a couple of things. They felt that it would substantially change the grant application and the grant application has two parts. It has a public hearing which the county conducted and it has financial timing in part because of the cycles. With the change, they felt there needed to be more information done to examine the costs at the other location, then that would trip another public hearing. Long story short, the county determined that there was a substantial change in moving the location and this current cycle would not be permissible because they felt they would miss the federal guidelines. Basically, the federal government has some issues with HUD, where, basically, they would have to spend the money or lose it and it has to be spent at the right time. However, the county did say the location change was probably fine, but it would trigger a re-application period for the next cycle. They informed them through the Housing Director that they needed to know by the end of the month what they had chosen. He thought they should rehear that before making a final determination on this. He knows they made a final decision on it at the last meeting but the information was not that dire and it will kick them into the next cycle. In essence, this cycle they would lose the grant funding if they went to the other location. If that is okay with this body, then it is okay. If it is not, then we can still go back to the county and get everything moving forward. After the city attorney and I discussed it, we thought the board needed this information and a re-vote.

Commissioner Jasper said at the last meeting she disagreed with the amendment on changing the location and she does not want to take the risk of losing two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. There are people within the community that would like to see this program move forward. She also provided some pictures so everyone would have an idea of the building at hand. It is the subject of discussion at 701 McCormack Street. They would take the seven fifty and retrofit it. The front and the back of the building and the roof are also caved in as well. There is adequate parking and it is also adjacent to Berry Park which would provide substantial parking. At the last meeting there was commotion and some residents who came to the mic to talk about traffic. Traffic does not have to be an issue if we mitigate the hours of operation. That could be mitigated with hours of operation to redirect school traffic or any other potential traffic so that would not be an issue. This would be very fitting for the community to decrease the risk of childhood obesity and it would provide the opportunity for affordable food, since there is inflation currently going on and people would have access to healthy nutritional food at their disposal. This location is primary, since it is in a central location within walking distance and a good driving distance as well. Some of the residents need to have that and we need to do what is best for the greater good for all man kind.

Commissioner Berry stated she remains committed to relocating the project because of the simple fact that she lives in that neighborhood and she also polled the areas and she has signatures to prove that on McCormack, Chester, as well as the street adjacent to where the cross street is from McCormack. They are all not in agreement that they definitely want a food pantry. That is not an issue and she is still talking about it. It should not be in a residential neighborhood. She is not going to keep running this down and

their last vote was five to one and stood. She understands the fact that they would lose money of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, which is not the last thing if they were approved the first time and they are doing a good cause and the people in the area are supporting it. She thinks if they go back and reapply, we would possibly get it again. She cannot speak about that being the truth because we do not know. She does not see the rush. There are a lot of homeless people, there are a lot of people hungry and there are a lot of people in need, but if we really do our due diligence and the research to prepare, this should not be in a residential area. No one's residential area and that is what she is asking for.

Commissioner Jasper commented that she also petitioned the neighborhood and she went beyond the scope of McCormack and Chester Street. She went to Beecher and Tuskegee Streets. She has close to two hundred signatures of people who are in agreement with the food pantry being at this location. It was not just that central location, but it was for the greater area of Carver Heights. Not just that central location. Also, with the mention of this residential area, it would go from one residential area to the other. The house on CR 468 is a house that is zoned residential. **CM Minner** said he was unsure of the zoning for that house. **Commissioner Jasper** continued to say there is potential development coming forth. She thinks Peacock Corporation will be doing some development there. **CM Minner** remarked that he was not sure, but he thought they were looking at a Picciola address. **Commissioner Jasper** said this location goes from one residential area to another. She stands firm because they have the approval in place for this location at 701 McCormack and they should move forward with that area because she did not want to take the risk of losing that money. The key word is possible and nobody can give her a certain definite yes or no to whether they will have the funds for next year. She does not want to take that risk.

Commissioner Reisman stated he would stand on the vote from the last meeting and keep it at the CR 468 location.

Daryl Reeves pointed out that there is a desire for a food pantry and he supports the concept. Mount Ararat was a key component of food pantry distribution during the pandemic. However, they need to be very careful that they do not begin to undo their communities, because there are some things that cannot be undone. They do not want to be the site where they come in and disrupt the ability for people to live in their homes and to function. They could have a commercial or industrial site where they can do this kind of thing. It is a great thing and they support the concept, but let's not do to our communities again and again the kinds of things that have been done to their communities. They are trying to come out of that now and that is their only reservation.

Reverend Matthew Atkins, Pastor of the Mount Sinai Missionary Baptist Church on 920 McCormack Street, said he is there every day and he sees the walking traffic. He had to pick up the paper, because of the walking traffic coming from Berry Park right by the place of the site on Chester Street. When he goes to talk to people, especially some of the young people, when he talks to them they are very disrespectful. Not only to him but to the elderly people that live in that community. He had a lady come to him earlier today and she was almost in tears about what somebody said to her coming through there. Now, they want to put a food bank there. They do not disagree about the food bank, but they disagree about the people coming through on their feet, because they throw trash out. He goes out there daily to pick up their trash. They are talking about people who are disrespectful and they will utilize the food bank. Most of the people that go through there are homeless. He is all for the food bank, but the location in that neighborhood does not make sense. This should not be here because they have elderly living in that neighborhood. They do not need another commercial business in that particular neighborhood and spot. If they wish to have a food bank, that is fine, but they do not want it in that neighborhood.

Max Parker Jr. stated he was the former president of the West Leesburg CDC. He is currently a board member of the West Leesburg CDC and wanted to ask Commissioner Jasper a couple questions. One thing is that they are not on the same page. When ideas come up, there is no connection to the West Leesburg CDC and the people that they know and have spoken to in the neighborhood do not want this

area to be a food bank. They personally talked to many people in the community about what the need was for a food bank and it should not be there. Many of the reasons have already been spoken about. The problem they see is when something comes about there is no communication. If she came and talked to them at their board meeting, you would see the types of problems they have. They felt very good about moving it to the corner of CR 468 and Griffin Road. That would be a good location. With the concern of possibly losing this particular grant if they cannot make adjustments to the grant because adjustments could be made to the grant. If it can make the location on CR 468. **Commissioner Jasper** inquired what the question was for her. **Mr. Parker** replied that the information she received as far as what was going on in the community and if she had shared it with the West Leesburg CDC. **Commissioner Jasper** asked what information. **Mr. Parker** answered any information she received from the neighborhood. She does a great job with the cleanup, but as far as meetings since she has been on the commission, as a CRA representative, how many meetings has she been to with West Leesburg CDC? **Commissioner Jasper** said they were talking about the petition to the West Leesburg CDC and that is irrelevant because she does live in this community and they are talking about a petition for the food pantry and not the West Leesburg CDC. **Mr. Parker** stated it is important that she understands what he was saying and, because of the community and what they have done with the community of West Leesburg, Carver Heights, Montclair and Woodland Park, they know what the people want. His question was if she had information, any type of information. Didn't she think they could help distribute it out? They have not received anything from her at all. **Commissioner Jasper** pointed out that this was a public forum and anyone could go online and get the same information she has. She has the same information that anyone else could get. **Mr. Parker** asked how many meetings she has attended with the West Leesburg CDC. **Commissioner Jasper** said she was not a board member of the West Leesburg CDC. She had not been invited to a board meeting of the West Leesburg CDC, therefore she does not believe it was her prerogative to invade on a personal board meeting of the West Leesburg CDC. Once she is invited to a West Leesburg CDC board meeting, and since she is not a board member, she would come to a board meeting. That would be like going to SunTrust or Truist. She cannot just walk into a board meeting when she is not a board member. **Mr. Parker** said he had invited her. **Commissioner Jasper** replied that he was not the president. **Mr. Parker** said when he was the president he did. **Commissioner Jasper** stated he is just one person and currently he is not the president. **Mr. Parker** said he did not want to debate her, but his question was not answered about whether she had ever attended one of their meetings as a representative. **Commissioner Jasper** replied that was not true.

Pastor John Christian, Christian Worship Center, 903 County Road 468, said the discussion tonight is to move the food pantry. He knows it was a five to one vote. He strongly disagrees with moving it to CR 468 because that is his neighborhood. That is where he lives and where his church operates. They have a very valuable piece of property that could be used for revitalization and, since you have a year and if you are going to vote to get rid of the grant, he would suggest having a workshop to talk about a better location for the food pantry. It seems like this is not an urgency. They could give up the two hundred and fifty thousand dollars and this board voted it as not urgent. He does not think the new location is a good location because it is a residential neighborhood and it is coming off CR 468 and the speed limit is forty-five miles an hour. Now they will cause people to go get food from the food pantry and there will be a back up on CR 468. He thinks they would be creating another problem because they have three acres of land behind the Resource Center and that could be prime for redevelopment. If they have an acre of land, major prime property, owned by the City of Leesburg that they paid about one hundred and eighty thousand dollars for, so that may be something they take a look at. As the previous speaker said, they have not talked to anyone and no one talked to his church, and no one talked to his community to see if they wanted this in their neighborhood. So they are just picking neighborhoods and he does not prefer that to be in his neighborhood. That is his neighborhood and they have a big development coming with Tara Oaks and there will be nine hundred homes behind CR 468, so this may not be the right location either. So, are they going to run it by every neighborhood they want to go into? He suggested that if 701

McCormack Street is not their location, the next item should be to demolish it because the City of Leesburg now owns a piece of property that is a detriment to the entire city. If they vote not to go with 701 McCormack Street, the next item should be to demolish it ASAP.

Chairperson Burry asked where the commission was with this item. **CM Minner** said the motion should be a motion to continue the consideration of the food pantry at the CR 468 location and not submit the grant for the McCormack location. **Commissioner Pederson** inquired if they could make a recommendation that they make it the CR 468 location or other locations based on the comments heard tonight. If they are giving up the grant, they could reevaluate everything. **Commissioner Berry** thanked Pastor Christian for his statement because he was exactly right. She is doing exactly what was done to her area without doing any research or inquiring about the area. This should not be in any residential area. She is willing to discuss further whether they should go back and reapply once they have done further research for CR 468 or any other area. It is a good deal and it is great. They would be helping the community for all to benefit, but they need to find an area that is not in a residential area.

Chairperson Burry stated they have a motion to consider moving the grant for the food pantry to CR 468 or other suitable property that will be determined in the future.

Commissioner Berry made a motion to consider moving the grant for the food pantry to CR 468 or other suitable property that would be determined in the future and Commissioner Connell seconded the motion.

Commissioner Jasper said she was trying to understand by approving this tonight that they will forfeit the two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. **Chairperson Burry** said correct. **Commissioner Jasper** was not comfortable with that.

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 motion.

4. ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Berry commented that as far as getting a list of the city-owned properties that we have for district one, she requests that they make no further transfers at this time until the district residents, as well as herself as the district commissioner, get a better hold and understanding of where they are and what they are doing. She would like further conversation or make a motion about how they want to handle this.

Commissioner Jasper asked if she wanted a list of all the properties that the City of Leesburg owns?

Commissioner Berry replied that she was looking for the list in district one.

Commissioner Jasper asked if there was a particular reason why she wanted it. **Commissioner Berry** answered that as the new commissioner she has no idea of what is out there and how they stand. She would like to know what the status is and until we can get a comprehensive plan about what is going on, it would be in her best interest as well as the residents of the district to know what is available. She would also like no further transfers made until we can come to an agreement. **Commissioner Jasper** said she was not in agreement with the transfers as people should have a right to buy property regardless. She can get the list but let people purchase property if they want to because some people could be in the

middle of a transaction for building a home. **CM Minner** commented that what Commissioner Berry was asking for is that they have done a number of title changes and swaps and those types of thing and she is asking that they do not do anymore transfers of title to other organizations in district one until the city prepares an inventory list for the commissioner and the commission to review. **Commissioner Jasper** mentioned that there is an inventory list already. **CM Minner** said there is an inventory list but it is not specific to the district. Commissioner Berry asked him about that today, so GIS is working on it with the housing department. They can get a list rather quickly for the CRA board, as well as the full city commission. **Commissioner Jasper** said she wanted to make an amendment to that because they should not stop titles or transfers. She could get a list but they should not stop the title transfers of property in the meantime. **Chairperson Burry** asked if there were any active title transfers going on right now. **CM Minner** answered there was a couple sitting at his desk because there were requests for some consideration to donate properties. He would need to put that together, but yes, he believes there is. **Commissioner Berry** suggested using the same template as the city uses for development, so it is standard across the entire city and that they all have the same appearance when it comes to planning. **Commissioner Reisman** asked if the requests were all for district one. **CM Minner** said he could not answer that at this time. **Commissioner Reisman** asked if they could do it for all the districts. **CM Minner** replied absolutely.

Commissioner Jasper asked if they could still move forward with the title transfers for the ones that were on the city managers' desk. **CM Minner** replied that would be a question for this body to consider and there would be variations of that. He will need to get with the city attorney on that too, because some of these properties may be titled to the CRA, where the CRA would need to be the authority to give that asset away. Some may be titled to the city, which the city commission would need to be the authority to give that title away. When the conversation came up today, he asked the IT and housing department to put together the list for the entire city. They will get an inventory list of all the properties the city owns separated by districts. He will provide a list of the requests that are sitting on his desk to transfer titles. **Commissioner Jasper** asked to make an amendment to the motion if possible. **CM Minner** responded that is Commissioner Berry's motion on whether she wants to accept an amendment to that motion. He was unsure if there was a second for the motion.

Chairperson Burry said there was no second. Commissioner Reisman asked if she could repeat the motion.

Commissioner Berry made a motion that they put a moratorium on any transfer of titles to properties that the city owns until they have further understanding of where they are and what the city wants to do with them for all of Leesburg and Commissioner Reisman seconded the motion.

Commissioner Jasper wanted to amend the motion that they have the list but not inhibit the transfer of title.

Commissioner Berry replied that as the new commissioner, she thinks she needs to have some time to know what is going on before she gets the information on an agenda and that is all she is asking for.

Chairperson Burry said there is a motion on the floor and there is a motion to amend that lacks a second at this point. Before they could discuss it at all, there would need to be a second for that motion. The amendment failed as there was no second. **Chairperson Burry** then said they were back to the original motion which was to hold all title transfers until this body meets again with the information.

Commissioner Pederson commented about what if they conveyed a property at fair market value. He would hate to prohibit that and there may be none on the table, but he would not want to prohibit that.

CM Minner answered there were none on that table for that. Most of the requests are for donations.

Chairperson Burry asked for any public comment.

Mr. Christian commented that his church is an affordable housing builder and they are doing their best to build homes in Carver Heights as well as the CDC of Leesburg. He made a request to the city manager about three weeks ago. After Ms. Wilson came to the city back in November of last year. He designated some city properties for affordable housing and that was a twenty-four hour request to ask the city to donate two or three lots in the Carver Heights area to build affordable housing. He agrees that the new commissioner needs time to look at that, but he hopes they do not wait a long time to make that decision or this body waits to get back together to consider the requests of the non-profits. This is a great market to build in and a great market to buy homes in. As someone who has been in this community for a long time, people will want to relish the opportunity to become a first-time homebuyer. Maybe there could be a time when they will meet back again to discuss it so it does not linger for six or seven months. Not that he disagrees that the new commissioner needs to know what is out there and what is available, but he hopes they do not wait six or seven months to come back and make a decision. **CM Minner** stated he should be able to have the list by the 10th so that it could be put on the agenda as a discussion item.

Commissioner Berry remarked that she wanted time to review it and have some understanding to come up with a comprehensive plan. **Chairperson Burry** said they could talk about it on April 10th. A list will be provided for everyone before the 10th. **CM Minner** pointed out that he mixed up the CRAs. April 10th is the Downtown CRA meeting, but they will get this agendaized shortly. It will probably be the fourth meeting in April. It is a tick longer, but it is reasonable. Those discussion items will be a thirty minute timeframe, so they will shoot for April 24th for the housing list.

The roll call vote was:

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

Five yeas, one nay, the Commission approved the motion.

Commissioner Pederson stated going off John Christian's comment, asked who owns this property on McCormack? **CM Minner** said it was the Carver Heights CRA. **Commissioner Pederson** said he wanted to be respectful to Pastor John Christian for demolishing it. It is all boarded up and if we are not going to make it a food bank, can it be demolished? **CM Minner** said that it could be demolished pretty inexpensively and it would remove blight and everyone can agree to remove it. If everyone was okay with that, this would be something that falls within his spending authority, so he would endeavor to have it demolished.

Commissioner Reisman had no further comment.

Commissioner Connell had no comment.

Commissioner Jasper echoed the sentiments of Commissioner Pederson, that was an item on her list tonight, if it was not approved. She would like to go ahead and demolish the building.

Chairperson Burry had no comment.

5. 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.

Commissioner Pederson made a motion to adjourn and Commissioner Reisman seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.