

**AGENDA MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
VENETIAN CENTER, 1 DOZIER COURT
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2021 5:15 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Carver Heights/Montclair Area Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Leesburg held a regular meeting on Monday, November 22, 2021, at the Venetian Center. Chairperson Christian called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. with the following members present:

Commissioner Jimmy Burry
Commissioner Jay Connell
Commissioner Dan Robuck
Commissioner Mike Pederson
Commissioner Erika Jasper
Chairperson John Christian

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

INVOCATION

Chairperson Christian 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 October 11, 2021

Commissioner Robuck made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of October 11, 2021 and Commissioner Pederson seconded the motion.

Chairperson Christian requested comments from the Commission and the audience. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes

Commissioner Jasper	Yes
Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Chairperson Christian	Yes

Six yeas, no nays, the Commission approved the minutes.

3. PURCHASE AUTHORIZATION FOR FENCE AROUND BERRY PARK:

- A. **Resolution of the Carver Heights/Montclair Area Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing the City Manager to execute a construction work order via the continuing services EZIQC Gordian Contract with Johnson-Laux for the construction of decorative fencing and an electronic parking gate for Berry Park; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 98

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

Commissioner Burry made a motion to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Robuck seconded the motion.

Chairperson Christian requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Jasper stated she had a couple of questions concerning this proposal. As she was reading the proposal, it was saying the fiscal impact of the contract price, two hundred and sixty thousand dollars, was to be provided by the Carver Heights CRA budget and she recalled in a previous meeting where Commissioner Robuck suggested that we do not use CRA dollars for this and she believed the City Manager was going to come back with proposals from different departments. **CM Minner** responded that he did not do that and believes the best expense for the project is through the CRA funds. That was Commissioner Robuck's suggestion and the board could choose to shift that to the Commission and the Commission could do that and the number would then come out of Reserve Funds. **Commissioner Jasper** stated that she would like to see it handled that way.

Commissioner Connell asked for clarification if the money that was just appropriated was about three quarters of a million dollars. Would it not come out of that fund? **CM Minner** replied, no, that this would not be an eligible expense for the recovery money and the three quarters of a million dollars would be for the West CDC. It would not be their responsibility to take it from there. The appropriate expenditure for the funds is either this CRA or to shift it to the general fund of the city. **Commissioner Robuck** stated when he made the original suggestion for the general fund that was prior to putting the seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars to West Leesburg CDC, so he is okay with it coming out of the CDC because now we have all that other money that we are going to spend in the area as well.

Commissioner Connell stated he agrees with that as well. **Chairperson Christian** stated that for him he has a major problem with it being CRA, but he wishes they would actually go out and borrow enough money to make major improvements throughout the entire area of Carver Heights. This approach gets us to the point where we are getting money and we are spending it and we are doing small projects. This is a small project that he considers as opposed to us going out and borrowing a couple million dollars and

taking the bond proceeds and paying that off and doing major things at one time, as opposed to getting a proposal that took us two months to do. Building the fence will take another six months and then we will do this process again. So we will do one project a year as opposed to going out, borrowing the funds and really getting rid of blight. That would be his only suggestion. Right now, we have just bought a house for one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars and we spent two hundred and sixty, so basically, the CRA funds are depleted until next year as opposed to taking the projects that we are talking about doing in Carver Heights, going out and borrowing a couple million dollars, taking that bond proceeds and paying that off. He thinks that is probably the best approach to it and it is not that he is against doing this project, he just thinks we should be doing major projects at one time over the course of a year or two, as opposed to doing it this way. His suggestion to move forward would be to tackle the blight all at one time, as opposed to just doing one project at a time. **Commissioner Robuck** had one question because he agreed with the Chairperson, we still have the TIFF coming in after this year and he wanted to know what that number was. **CM Minner** responded it was about a buck fifty. **Commissioner Robuck** then asked if we wanted to tackle bigger projects, would we be able to use part or all of that seven fifty as the collateral on the note rather than use the TIFF proceeds, because you are not going to let us borrow cash. **CM Minner** answered he believes they will be in a position to do the Mayors suggestion to be able to pledge future TIFF revenues to help leverage a bond even with this expense. Second, to answer your question, could you use the seven fifty, he would think one of the CDC's would need to work in partnership with the city and two of those expenses would need to be made on (ARP) all American recovery qualified projects. It could be an improvement and it could be an option, but there are multiple steps. The reason this was placed on the agenda was because the Mayor gave him the request to get the issues over at Berry Park addressed and this is the quickest way to do that. He does not think it is appropriate to use a stop gap measure and put up a temporary type of fence. The whole object of using this type of fence is that this is the same type of fencing that is throughout the whole city and it is the standard. These are the things that we are doing to prevent (for lack of better words) riffraff and mischief in all our city parks and, because of the issues we have had at Berry Park, persists with parking and some of the parcels we have with loitering after hours. This is the way to quickly combat that issue and make it similar to what we have done in other parts of the community. It will also give the police the ability to tackle those issues quickly without having to do something makeshift. He thinks we are accomplishing one of the goals. We are not going to fix every problem in Berry Park, but it is a good first step and he encourages the board to move forward with this as presented. The CRA's purpose is to remove blight and address issues in the Carver Height CRA district and this is certainly a qualifying project for that. He still thinks they are in the position to leverage those monies in the future and then the monies that they gave both CDC's, whether it be the West Leesburg CDC or the Leesburg CDC, will probably compliment these types of projects. He would continue to move forward with this project. The second thing he would do is, if they do not want to pay it out of the CRA fund, then they would have to shift it over to the general fund and they could shift some projects around or use cash. The ARP funds were spent with both CDC's to address blighted areas and we also did Pine Street so that it does help disbursing use and general fund money in other areas. He does think we have a good mix going and we would not go wrong doing the expenditure this way or shifting it to the reserves in the general fund. **Commissioner Jasper** thanked the city manager for his efforts. She appreciated everything but she wanted to know if he had a model for the coverage as far as the dimensions, because it would be pretty wide. **CM Minner** replied he did not put a map in the packet, but what the wrought iron fence does is, go from the entryway gate, it will go round the corner and it will go all the way to the woods on the north side of the park into the Tuskegee and Johns intersection, so it covers that area. What we will have to do is if the problems arise, we will have to come back and look at a different approach, because we have homelessness issues too and those issues are coming from the trailside/southside, but the immediate pressing issue is the corner there and keeping cars from coming into the parking lot and this does accomplish that. **Commissioner Jasper** liked what the Chairperson said about moving forward and doing bigger projects in the future because they have done that in the past and taken out loans and paid them off in a timely fashion with

CRA funds and she would like to do that. She had presented earlier in the year some ideas and projects that she would like to do but they had not discussed this and that would tie in to the vision and the idea of eliminating blight and things of that nature. She would prefer not to use CRA funds so they could have those funds to go get bigger loans.

Chairperson Christian mentioned that the City Manager and Commissioner Pederson had something, and with the American Recovery Act Funds, with these funds we came back and made a small loan with the TIFF dollars allocated. It will be a major improvement in the Carver Heights area. He has not seen any West Leesburg CDC plans, but he believes with the purchase of the Beecher Johns lot that area will improve immediately and the City will continue to look at other problematic areas. It will be vital for us to continue moving forward. He is good with the City Managers' assistance, bringing some projects that we can tackle in the near future as long as we have the TIFF funds and TIFF funds could be available and we should be getting more than one fifty, but we should have funds to do something with.

Commissioner Pederson stated he was pretty vocal during the budget meeting on this one, but he agrees with Commissioner Robuck. He said what he was about to say, but after we gave the seven fifty to the West CDC he thought it was a good idea to use General Funds, but he believes now it should come out of the CRA. During the budget his comments were that he had no problem borrowing money, he just did not want us to borrow too much money and we talked about that. He believes that we also talked about prioritizing projects but he does not remember if he saw a list of the priorities, including some dollar amounts. He does believe this is a good plan to move forward in that direction. **CM Minner** said they did task staff with that and they will be back with some suggestions and recommendations on how to leverage that revenue for debt. **Commissioner Pederson** mentioned it for his sake and learning when he hears, he thinks of a lot of closing costs. Are these simpler? **CM Minner** responded his guess was that there would be more bank notes. **Commissioner Connell** questioned whether we are putting the fence up because of loitering and if that is the reason we need the fence. **CM Minner** replied it is for loitering and aesthetics. **Commissioner Connell** said if we put the fence up, is there a curfew on when you can be in and out of Berry Park? **CM Minner** answered there is a curfew now and all the parks close at sunset or ten o'clock at night. The issue with not having a fence is it becomes harder to enforce and get people out of there. With the fence, we will have a better position to be able to keep folks out after hours.

Commissioner Connell said if we spend this we will be able to enforce this now and keep people out of the park after hours? **CM Minner** replied that we would do a better job; yes. **Chairperson Christian** added it is not just after hours. If you were to go now, people are literally driving their vehicles across the parking lot on the grass and right up to the picnic bench, so you can have seven cars or trucks backed up right near the picnic bench, so the fence will eliminate you driving your car right beside a picnic bench. So, if you have to park in the parking lot where it is designated and walk to the picnic bench and do what the park is supposed to do and have a picnic and go home. They cannot park the car, turn the music on and have a small block party in the park, which is basically what is taking place, and it makes it difficult for other people to say they could take their family to have a picnic when they have seven vehicles parked right beside a picnic bench. It takes away what we are trying as a city to say this is a community park for families and the homeless is another issue. These are not homeless people that come and park there all day long. **Commissioner Pederson** also said that we talked about cameras at the gate.

CM Minner responded that we do have cameras out there and, as part of this project, we will make sure that we get the security we need on the fence. **Commissioner Jasper** asked about the electric gate. Who would be responsible for opening and closing it? **CM Minner** replied that it is automated and city workers. **Commissioner Jasper** asked if it would be on a timer. **CM Minner** said yes. **Chairperson Christian** added that it will be like the one at Ski Beach.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Jasper	Yes

Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Chairperson Christian	Yes

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

4. ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Pederson had no comment.

Commissioner Burry had no comment.

Commissioner Jasper had no comment.

Commissioner Robuck had no comment.

Commissioner Connell had no comment.

Chairperson Christian stated he is excited about the activities in the Carver Height/Montclair area community. The city is addressing so many needs and issues that have been here a long time. He is excited to see the progress forward. He thinks we put a lot of money and work in Berry Park and it is great that we are making sure it is maintained at a high city standard. **CM Minner** added that it is neat to see all the concepts slowly spreading throughout the city. It will be a neat project to get done.

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.

The meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.