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**NORTHEAST COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE – Regular Meeting
Martin Luther King Memorial Center - 803 Florida Avenue, Mount Dora, FL 32757
October 11, 2022**

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call, Moment of Silence & Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Public Comment Period
- IV. Approval of Minutes of September 13, 2022
- V. Discussion Item
 1. Use Plan for Resource and Recreation Center
- VI. Other Business
 1. Police Department Update
- VII. Announcement of next scheduled meeting date: December 13, 2022
- VIII. Adjournment

NOTICE: For purposes of Section 286.011, Florida Statutes, two or more members of the City Council may be present at this meeting, and this meeting may be considered a City Council meeting.

NOTICE: If any person decides to appeal any decision made at this meeting with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, such person may need a record of these proceedings. For such purpose, a person 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.

NOTICE: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, persons needing special accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact the Planning and Development department no later than seven (7) days prior to the proceedings. Telephone (352) 735-7112 for assistance. If hearing impaired, telephone the Florida Relay Service numbers (800) 955-8771 (TDD) or (800) 955-8770 (Voice) for assistance.

**CITY OF
MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA
NE CRA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**



September 13, 2022

Call to Order

Having been duly noticed as required by law, Mrs. Rowe, Chair of the Northeast CRA Advisory Committee called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call, Moment of Silence & Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Rona Rowe, Chair, Lillie Taylor, Lynn Tacher, Gerry Guenther, Stevie Harley, Rosalyn Harris

Absent: Ozell Ward

City Staff: Adam Sumner, *Deputy Planning Director*; Faith Gibbs, *Administrative Coordinator*, Interim Chief Gibson

Public Comment Period

Pastor Bobby Rowe said that providing assistance to those in the community on Mondays has resumed at the MLK Center. The partnership with Lake Cares provided new Mount Dora residents with information to come to the MLK Center to get assistance with obtaining an updated driver's license, social security card, and applying for governmental assistance. Get Connected Stay Connected has also resumed tutoring on Monday evenings at the Martin Luther King Center. Math tutors are needed for those interested.

Approval of Minutes August 9, 2022

Mr. Guenther motioned to approve the August 9, 2022 minutes. Ms. Tacher seconded the motion and all approved unanimously.

Discussion Items

1. Broadband and Utility Discussion

While attending the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee meeting on August 24, 2022, in Tavares, Lake Action Agency provided information regarding available funding for residents needing assistance with their utility bills. Anyone in the home currently receiving government assistance qualifies for the utility assistance program. Residents are concerned about the rising cost of their utility bills and believe the city has increased rates. The city does not regulate the costs of energy it purchases and only charges residents what they are charged for it. As an example, the city purchases energy from OUC and Duke Energy. In

July 2020, the city's charges for purchasing energy were \$300,000. In July 2022, it increased to \$1.8 million. The Utility Director was able to get fully blended rates for coal, wind, nuclear, and natural gas. Since natural gas is imported, mostly from Ukraine, but due to the war, natural gas isn't being imported. Because natural gas is being sold around the world, the rates have increased even more. Starting in December, the solar farm in the city will help bring costs down, and, for the first time in history, the city will be generating power locally to bring the costs down. Lake Community Action Agency is working with other organizations to assist those most in need. Staff is working internally with customer service and finance departments to look at all options to stop disconnecting those who can not pay their bills and provide help through organizations such as Lake Community Action Agency to get residents caught up on utility bills. Mr. Harley asked about the options the city is considering and if extending the extensions or deferring payments were being considered. Staff explained that extensions and deferments don't allow some to get caught up. The funds available are free and help get residents completely caught up. Ms. Taylor asked if there were any programs for the working class that do not fit the criteria of Lake Action Agency. The committee was provided with a list of agencies and organizations that may be able to assist those in need who are not receiving governmental assistance. There are several programs available with different eligibility requirements and can only be used for those within the specific category. Anyone in need is encouraged to contact the organizations on the provided list to inquire and find out what they qualify for.

Mr. Sumner shared that the state received funds to invest in broadband throughout the state. Staff is currently working on the application to submit in the Fall. The grant would provide free broadband access in the resource and recreation center, accessible to those in the community. To show the need for broadband in the Northeast CRA district, staff has been working on conducting a door-to-door survey which would be included in the grant application. Since there are about 800 eligible homes in the Northeast CRA District, the committee is asked to assist with getting the surveys completed. The committee members were given a spreadsheet showing about 100 Northeast residents that have already completed a survey for the broadband grant process and were asked to reach out to those not listed to complete the survey and or internet speed tests for those with the internet. The more people assisting in gathering the data helps prove the need for the broadband grant. If anyone has questions, contact the staff.

Staff also attended a broadband meeting with the Department of Economic Opportunity. Comcast representative showed an interest in the resource and recreation center and provided information on a program that not many individuals know about; free internet from Comcast for low-income residents. The committee was provided with applications to hand out in the community. These applications are also available online. For any residents needing assistance with completing the forms or with questions, contact staff to walk residents through applying. Although this program does not offer a lot of data, it will provide internet access for residents who may not currently have any.

2. Resource and Recreation Center Update

The contract for Professional Architectural Design Services for the Northeast CRA Resource and Recreation Center with Borrelli & Partners was signed. Staff conducted the initial kick-off meeting and the program verification process began. All information and specific design features have been shared with Borrelli to make the building better. LakeTech, Lake Care Food Pantry, and private restaurant owners will attend an upcoming stakeholder meeting to ensure that the kitchen meets the needs. All the experts meet next week with the design engineer and kitchen consultant, making it a well-rounded team with experience. The next agenda will include future stakeholder meetings. Jim Faulkner, IT Director, Chet Cramer, Construction Manager, and other Directors from the city are involved in the process to ensure that the needs of each aspect of the center are met. Mrs. Rowe asked if the community would have any input on what was going on in the meetings. Mr. Sumner said that the meeting would take place in October and the date would be provided. Ms. Taylor said that she has received calls from the Northeast community saying that there are individuals speaking on behalf of the board and wanted to reiterate that any comments made should be on an individual basis and not as speaking for the Northeast CRA Advisory Committee. Mr. Guenther asked if the kitchen would be a full commercial kitchen. Mr. Sumner said that there will be enough of one as a teaching kitchen with Lake Tech and Lake Source committed to funding it.

Other Business

1. Habitat for Humanity Home Repairs:
Habitat for Humanity has completed the projects on the first three homes participating in the home repair program and has received payment for the work done. The fourth home application is approved.
2. Northeast CRA Budget:
There have been no changes to the Northeast CRA budget.
3. Food Distribution:
Lake Cares is hosting a drive-through food distribution at the Lake County Fairgrounds on September 14, 2022, at 9:30 am.

Announcement of next scheduled meeting date: October 11, 2022

Adjournment

Mr. Guenther moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Taylor proceeded to adjourn the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

*Rona Rowe, Chair
Northeast CRA Advisory Committee*

*Faith Gibbs
Administrative Coordinator*