



**COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY ADVISORY BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 11, 2025**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Derek Blakeslee called the meeting of the Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board to order at 6:02 pm in City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

Quorum was declared present.

Present: Chairman Derek Blakeslee and Board Members; Larry Cappleman, Jamie Quantora Holley and Donald Wingate.

Absent: Vice-Chairman Nick Asma (excused), Sharee Freeman (unexcused), Carmen Horne (unexcused), Tim Keating (excused) and Torrance Rhodes (unexcused).

Staff Present: City Manager Jon C. Williams, Economic Development Director Marc Hutchinson, Assistant City Manager for Public Services Steve Pash and recording secretary Colene Rivera.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Blakeslee stated that the minutes from previous meeting were sent out as part of the meeting packet. Everyone acknowledged receipt and no one stated any changes needed.

***Motion by Board Member Cappleman to approve the August 13, 2024 minutes as sent out. Seconded by Board Member Wingate. All approved the minutes of regular meeting minutes of August 13, 2024. The motion carried unanimously 4 – 0.***

**ITEMS**

**3. Property Acquisition – 186 North Street**

Economic Director Hutchinson presented information pertaining to the available property located at 186 North Street. City has initiated purchase of this property. City request approval for the purchase of this property at the sale value of \$150,000.00. Discussion ensued regarding the two vacant lots next door to this property and city staff confirmed these properties are also in discussions of possible purchase. Board inquired about previous discussion of staff being able to proceed with purchases of property. City staff and Board Chairman explained these items need to be brought before this board for recommendations and then final approval from Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board.

***Motion by Board Member Cappleman to approve recommendation to CRA Board to purchase property located at 186 North Street. Seconded by Board Member Holley. The motion carried unanimously 4 – 0.***

#### **4. Historic East Winter Garden Neighborhood Update**

Economic Director Hutchinson presented an update of various details pertaining to Historic East Winter Garden Neighborhood.

##### **Dyson's Plaza Commercial Revitalization**

Site work and building renovations are underway with 28% of budget cost realized to-date. Delays were encountered after demolition work commenced. Structural concerns about the interior load bearing columns and some of the interior walls requiring the need for the structural engineer to reevaluate. Decision was made to remove and rebuild these columns and walls. Cost of these changes fell within the 10% contingency of the project budget and completion expected late spring/ early summer of 2025.

##### **West Orange Boys & Girls Clubs**

Groundbreaking and construction delayed due to effects of Hurricanes Helene and Milton in fall of 2024. Construction anticipated to start March 2025 with expected completion fall of 2025/ spring 2026.

##### **Streetscape Infrastructure Improvement**

Community meeting was held with residents October 3, 2024 with feedback on design features. Next steps are to develop engineering/ construction plans targeting Triangle Park/ North Street area as Phase 1. Discussions took place regarding Community Garden still operating during construction and access would be from of Maple Street.

##### **Zanders Park Upgrade and Renovations**

Construction/Installation of playground equipment started on December 16, 2024 and was completed week of January 20, 2025 with fencing, signage and furnishings still in the works for completion. Conceptual site plans and construction plan of the open space renovations (next to the pool) are still in progress and expected to be completed in summer 2025. Discussed possible renovations to one of the two basketball courts with the potential of converting the court into a pickleball court. Various options are being evaluated with the assistance of One Winter Garden organization – will obtain direct feedback from the community and will update the Board on direction.

##### **Stormwater Improvements – Recently Annexed Segment**

A Notice to Proceed was issued February 10, 2025 and construction scheduled to start 14 days later with estimated substantial completion in 360 days (1 year) and final completion in 420 days (60 days later). Discussed infrastructure upgrades including streets, curbing, increase in water main pipes to 6", service lines to homes and installation of fire hydrants. Board inquired about communicating the progress, upgrades and services to the community and city staff stated this is an Orange County

project and details should be communicated by county. City staff will reach out to county regarding this concern.

#### Legacy Fund Home Rehab Initiative

This program is being refined recognizing two potential scenarios – home rehab repairs and home replacement needed with down payment assistance. More than 50 of these eligible homes were built in 1950's/ 1960's. There's a high likelihood that these homes might need to be condemned/demoed rather than be modified/ repaired. Finalization of program are being determined with consideration/approval from CRA Board. Discussion of two homes identified for a Pilot program approach as a kick-off. Qualifications and details are being addressed but qualifiers would include such things as homeowners must complete 10 hours of community service and must complete financial literacy and home maintenance training prior to start of repairs. These classes and training are being done in partnership with West Orange Habitat for Humanity.

#### Habitat For Humanity

Update of various details from Habitat for Humanity. Neighborhood Revitalization included 56 non-habitat homes have been revitalized to date with 26 being revitalized in the last year. This program plans for 20 homes each year. 35 Habitat Homes constructed to date in East Winter Garden with and 4 homes currently under way on Center Street and 7 more homes planned on Edgeway Drive. Board inquired about environment and mood of the area with all these renovations and new construction and if there are less rentals and low income housing in the area. City staff stated progress is slow but steady but there are still some troubled areas. Hutchinson continued to explain recruitment efforts in Historic East Winter Garden with 25 resident-applicants applying and receiving counseling sessions with the assistance of One Winter Garden and the Dream Center. The outreach efforts are focused on the residence of the Historic East Winter Garden area. Board also discussed Habitat for Humanity has its own legal guidelines to follow on issuance of homes within the West Orange County community and city cannot mandate who is assigned the Habitat for Humanity homes within the community. Hutchinson discussed the Jobs Program within the Habitat for Humanity organization which is a partnership with City of Winter Garden, WO Habitat for Humanity and iBuild Central Florida. They are providing a 4-month apprenticeship training in several construction trades that target 17-22 year old residents in East Winter Garden. 20 students were targeted/recruited with 12 students participating/enrolled. Seven (7) students successfully graduated on December 10, 2024. 3 of these graduates have job placements to date and 3 working with counselors for interviews/placements. Board also discussed Jobs Partnership of Center Florida coordinating with the Dream Center for spring session of mentoring on skills for applying for job, resume, interviewing and coaching for success. Staff agreed to follow-up.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 pm.

**ATTEST:**

/S/

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**Recording Secretary Colene Rivera**

**APPROVED:**

/S/

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**Chairman Derek Blakeslee**