

**SEBRING COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY &
SEBRING CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 17, 2021 JOINT MEETING**

The Thursday, June 17, 2021 joint meeting of the Sebring City Council and the Sebring Community Redevelopment Agency was called to order by Curt Ivy in the Jack Stroup Civic Center at 5:30 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to review the draft designs for the CRA's Waterfront Redevelopment Project.

CRA Roll Call: Kelly Cosgrave, David Leidel, Meghan DiGiacomo, Tracy McCoy and Rachel Lovett.

City Council Roll Call: Thomas Dettman, Lenard Carlisle, Charlie Lowrance, Mayor John Shoop, Curt Ivy and Mark Stewart.

CRA Chairman David Leidel opened the meeting by explaining the background of the CRA's Waterfront Redevelopment Project, the steps in the process that have been undertaken thus far, and what steps the CRA anticipates to finalize the project.

Chairman Leidel introduced James Pankonin with the CRA's design consultant, Kimley-Horn. Mr. Pankonin reviewed the input received from the stakeholder meetings and from the public as part of the public meeting in March. Mr. Pankonin then presented and reviewed the components of each of the two draft design concepts.

Comments Questions from City Council Members:

- **Councilman Dettman** - from concept #1 he is not in favor of the boat ramp he expressed his concern that boats will intrude to swimming area making it unsafe. Maybe it should be moved to the other end by the pier. Concept #2 boat rental area he is in favor if it's like kayaks stuff that is not motorized. Keep the Clovelly house to serve as retail shop. He liked the idea of making a Sebring Culture Center at the old Barnett bank building rather than the flea market. Overall he likes concept #2 better but doesn't think it's a good idea to spend money on observation deck or restaurant on the pier. Back to the culture center I think the major hurdle will be that the City will be responsible for the civic center. Mr. Leidel said that CRA is just showing a possible solution to the problem Dettman replied that we just got to make sure we can afford it.
- **Councilman Carlisle** - I don't like either concept. I dislike changing the pier. I do like the larger beach area. Leave the Clovelly house. Like the idea of the old Barnett bank for Sebring Culture Center.
- **Councilman Lowrance** - started by thanking the CRA for all of their efforts and taking on this project. He said he likes concept #2 better he is in favor of bigger lawn areas not the restaurants perhaps that could be more parking.
- **Mayor Shoop** he thanked the CRA. We have to do something in this area its deplorable. He likes concept #2 better but keep pier from concept #1. We got to do something with the waterfront it is a gem. we have to provide recreating for our locals.

- **Councilman Stewart** he also expressed his appreciation to the CRA. This area is underutilized, not safe, this building (civic center) blocks the view. Love the event lawn with steps, the splash pad, all the families I have spoken with younger families want the splash pad. I think its innovative cool stuff we will be so proud to have. I love Historic Properties but we can't keep throwing money on something not producing.
- **Councilman Ivy** I like the expanded beach concept. What is the palm grove for? James said it's a pre/post function area for the theatre. Mr. Ivy said he likes concept 2 best. And thinks if the civic center is relocated needs to keep Jack Stroop attached to the name.

Mr. Leidel presented the idea of the Sebring Culture Center (old Barnett Bank Location) first floor could house, the Historical Society, the Highlands Art League and the Hall of Fame, and the second floor could become the new civic center. At nearly 15,000 square feet, this building would offer double the amount of space compared to the current civic center.

Comments and Questions from CRA Commissioners:

- **Commissioner Cosgrave** liked the aspect from each concept. So maybe a combination from both bigger beach area, keep the pier but add decks, circular drive for the theater, and lawn are with steps. Things to keep in mind try to keep larger big trees, consider events such as triathlon ease of transition. She was concerned about not having a civic center because she thinks once the waterfront is done she thinks that activities at the civic center will grow but is happy to see the idea of a culture center. Very excited of what is in front of us.
- **Commissioner DiGiacomo** grateful for everyone coming out here. Likes the second event lawn area, larger pier, no boat area so close to the beach. Growing up I wasn't allowed after dark to come back in this area as an adult I still feel unsafe to come after dark. I think the splash pad and playground will be great. Again I like the larger event lawn area.
- **Commissioner McCoy** I am really excited about the project. Prefer concept #2 larger lawn, Clovelly house to be incorporated to the concept, and build on historic pier.
- **Commissioner Lovett** leaning towards concept #2 as a theater mom I like the circular drive and cover walk (awning). I'm loving the new concept of the cultural center. Like both ideas of the pier. Like the larger beach area that has the natural line to it. Thinks more parking for the theater is needed. Im sure we can work together to find a solution.
- **Commissioner Leidel** I like concept #2 but from concept #1 the steps and roundabout.

Comments and Questions from the audience:

- **Michelle Roberts** asked how safety was going to be insured and how maintenance is going to be kept up.

- **Stan Raley** Thanked Hannah and her colleague for the social media demographics. He thinks traffic will be an issue he asked if a traffic study has been conducted, how is the traffic flow going to be affected and how it will be controlled. He thinks the concepts will create parking issues. And relocating the civic center will cost lots of money to buy and renovate.
- **Richard Vosburgh** I'm here to plead, please keep your head open. Keep both historic houses, needs more parking it will need more maintenance and security.
- **Christa Jones** we need to update this area. Maybe should incorporate showers like at the beach to rinse off the sand/ dirt. Love the idea of splash pad, playground. Make the pier useful. Adults want to sit kids want to swim. Likes the boating dock. Thinks should keep the Clovelly but needs updating.
- **Tom Staik (HLT Vice President)** concept one is the only one that works for us (HLT). When planning keep in mind we get delivery trucks. We need more parking as majority of our patrons are seniors. The idea of using golf carts to get people from parking to HLT will not work we are volunteers we can't afford to pay for that service. Maybe should implement a formal scheduling system were other events will not compete with Theater.
- **Pete Pollard (former CRA Executive Director)** we put together that 1991 waterfront plan and the renovation is needed. I like the idea of the old bank building to become the Sebring culture center, if that's the route maybe CRA to put as much money for assistance as possible in the renovation. I see on the plan the retention pond is smaller I don't think that will work. You need more lighting, poles need to be repainted, maintenance, at night needs to be well lit. Food trucks and events where are you going to put it? I think parking will be the biggest problem.
- **George Miller** I think that the people that work here, at your local hospitals, restaurants and nursing homes their kids deserve what you are proposing, a place to be entertained without having to go out of town. I like historic buildings when they are maintained.
- **Bill Clay** we support concept #2 only negative is the pier, on concept #1 the boat deck is not safe.
- **Mike Schmidt** where is funding for all this coming from. It will need more shade, keep oak trees and two historic homes.
- **Jeff Stanley** I hear all man power rentals are we going to have any motorized boats, fishing boat tours etc.
- **Joan River** I love the concept but think execution is wrong no thoughts on noise factors, how the traffic and wild life will be affected.
- **Scott Randall** the project is lacking strategic planning, financial, cost of maintenance if it will be phase out.
- **Miguel Arceo** my suggestion as a young adult to get younger groups involved, my generation love the idea of improving the area. I think the area can be improve while keeping the historic area too.

- **Dan Andrews** waterfront is the first step to redevelopment of other areas in downtown. I think concept #1 does not fit for future desire. I like concept #2 better big activity lawn, water side activity.
- **Jeff Carlson** I know over the years that plans and contracts for the old houses were done in the past and not met at this point this plans gives you a chance to renovate downtown. Im excited to see something done here. If I could have it my way everything from the theater to the art league will be leveled and redone.
- **Susie Tucker** my great grandfather was George Sebring, I love hearing stories but will like to see something new. I am a teacher (31 yrs teaching) the younger kids need something to do. As a Sebring I would like to see this develop.
- **Shane Mitchell** we moved here from Chatanooga and we were there when the waterfront was not safe we saw the water front being renovated, repurposed a beautiful waterfront build that was a complete turnaround.
- **Jackie Andrews** just wanted to thank the CRA for the concepts and efforts.
- **Bobby Lee** there are only 4 houses in Sebring with international historical significance, if we tear these two houses down we will only have two left.
- **Alice Stroppel** presented an alternative concept that includes the desires of the art league & historical society.

James with Kimley-Horn thanked everyone for coming out tonight, we will take the comments, suggestions and questions into consideration and make some revisions and present a concept to the CRA board possible after that one more revision will be make and then again it will be presented to CRA board and seek City Council final approval. Mr. Leidel said he is hoping that final approval will be made by September.

There being no further business to come before the CRA, the meeting was adjourned.

Nellie O. Albarran, Recording Secretary