



# City of Eustis, Florida

City Hall  
10 North Grove Street  
Post Office Drawer 68  
Eustis, FL 32727-0068

## Meeting Minutes - Final City Commission Workshop

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Thursday, October 11, 2018

5:00 PM

City Hall

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**CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Morin - 5:03 p.m.**

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF QUORUM AND PROPER NOTICE

**Present:** 5 - Marie Aliberti; Linda Bob; Carla Gnann-Thompson; Michael L. Holland; and Robert Morin

### I. Workshop Item

#### 18-0251

#### Discussion on Proposed CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Program

*Ron Neibert, City Manager, reported that there are funds budgeted in FY19-2020 under the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) for a CDBG housing rehabilitation program. He stated that 25% of the funding will come from the CRA and 75% of the funding will come from a CDBG grant for a total project cost of \$1,000,000. He explained that the grant application period will open in April and reviewed the eligibility requirements for participants and their properties.*

*Vice Mayor Aliberti arrived at 5:06 p.m.*

*Mr. Neibert explained that the City previously decided not to apply for CDBG funds through the County due to their ability to receive more funding by applying themselves. He further reviewed the applicant guidelines and requirements.*

*Commissioner Gnann-Thompson asked if the policies are what is stipulated under the grant with Mr. Neibert indicating they are taken from HUD guidelines. He acknowledged that there is some leeway on some items.*

*Commissioner Bob asked if the program will only do repairs or could low value homes be torn down and rebuilt with Mr. Neibert responding that this program will do repairs only. He stated that the purpose of the program is to bring the properties back to minimum housing standards. The loan maximum per house is \$40,000 and the minimum is \$5,000 as long as the total debt after rehab does not exceed 125% of the appraised property value. He added that, if a property owner thinks the Property Appraiser's value is too low, they can pay for a private appraisal.*

*Commissioner Bob then asked if the rehab will affect their taxable value with Mr. Neibert explaining how the Property Appraiser determines value and indicating it should not affect their property taxes.*

*Mr. Neibert then indicated that if the bids for a home come in over the program funds available, a homeowner may contribute up to 10% of the value in personal funds. He then reviewed the payback requirements stating that the loan will be forgiven 100% after seven years of meeting the owner occupancy requirement. However, if the owner*

*relinquishes the property or moves out prior to the 7 years, the loan will be due on a pro rata basis based on the total months of occupancy.*

*The Commission discussed the grant versus loan aspect of the project. They confirmed that the owner dying would also cause the loan to be due and that the work would be done by licensed contractors.*

*Mr. Neibert explained how the project is administered with contractors submitting invoices for payment after the work has been completed. He reviewed the requirements for maintenance of the premises and explained that each home must be brought completely up to HUD standards and not just partially.*

*Commissioner Bob confirmed they would also inspect for termites.*

*Mr. Neibert then reviewed the structural aspects that will be inspected for repair. He added that if the owner is handicapped, the home must be brought up to handicapped standards. He then reviewed the electrical, heating, sanitation, plumbing and miscellaneous other standards.*

*The Commission confirmed that the HUD guidelines only require hearing not air conditioning.*

*Mr. Neibert noted that standards may be waived by the Building Department if it is determined to be impractical or economically infeasible to be accomplished.*

## **II. Commission Discussion**

*The Commission asked, once the project is done, if there is anyway the City can monitor the upkeep of the homes with Mr. Neibert noting that they will have to maintain the home and provide insurance for the seven years of the loan.*

*Mr. Neibert then cited items for consideration if the Commission wants to consider a non-CDBG housing rehabilitation: 1) location; 2) scope of work; 3) eligibility; 4) other requirements; and 5) funding.*

*Mayor Morin expressed support for a housing improvement program that would be Citywide rather than a rehab program so that homes not in the CRA would also be eligible.*

*Mr. Neibert confirmed that the facade improvement program is usable for homes as well as commercial as long as they are located within the entrance corridors.*

*Tom Carrino, Economic Director, stated the program has had about ten applicants per year with about \$100,000 budgeted annually. He stated that the majority of the applicants have been businesses but there have been some residences.*

*Mr. Neibert explained that the \$1,000,000 project will probably only rehab 15 to 18 homes.*

*The Commission discussed how many homes are located within the CRA district that would be eligible and that non-CRA funds could be used elsewhere as well as in the CRA.*

*Mr. Neibert provided some estimated costs for different types of improvements such*

as painting and re-roofs. He suggested having a second workshop with staff obtaining some better estimates for a variety of home improvement projects such as painting, roofing, windows, and external doors.

The Commission asked Mr. Carrino to send out the criteria for the facade improvement program which includes a matching grant requirement.

Mr. Carrino noted that the program was increased in the new fiscal year and explained the criteria.

The Commission asked if the City is working with Habitat or other housing programs with Horace Jones reporting that Habitat has liquidated most of their holdings in Eustis and donated the property to the Eustis Housing Authority.

The Commission discussed the possibility of other organizations such as churches and Habitat providing some free help to homeowners. They also discussed having clean up days on weekends using City employees. They discussed the need to look at quality of life issues and not just how they look, such as air conditioning for the elderly.

The Commission commented on the need for Code Enforcement to be more proactive.

Stephanie Carder, Code Enforcement board member, noted that a lot of the code cases involve rental properties. She stated they also see a lot of people, especially in the CRA district, that have become elderly and can no longer clean up their property themselves. If they are unable to care for their property, the City needs to find a way to help them.

Mr. Neibert stated that the City's Code Enforcement staff tries to work with property owners. He indicated that the City does not have the staff available right now to help people. He then commented on the possibility of holding Citywide clean up days. He cited a program where he was previously employed that had it included in their waste management contract for them to do a once per year bulk item pickup citywide. He indicated he could discuss that with Waste Management. He noted that their contract expires in 2022 and the City will be going out to bid.

The Commission discussed the need to have clean up days more than once per year. They also noted that different people have different understandings of what is "clean". It was noted that there was a group of retirees with the United Methodist Church called "Nomads" that used to help people paint and clean their homes.

The Commission further discussed the need to find community partners to help residents rather than counting on employees wanting overtime. It was emphasized that you have to make sure you can follow through before starting a program. It was recommended that, if the Commission wants churches to get involved, then they should go to the churches and make a plan first.

The Commission discussed other groups and individuals that may be willing to get involved such as college students on spring break, Habitat for Humanity, and 84 Lumber.

James Trent cited the need for the community to do what they can for themselves. He noted individuals that in the past took money out of their own pockets to help people. He stated that the City's lawsuits made people back down that used to donate. He

*commented on the community program that Emily Lee previously ran.*

*Commissioner Bob stated it would take a year for the CDBG program to be done. She asked for a consensus at the next meeting to ask the City Manager to find \$50,000 - \$100,000 to start a program in cooperation with other community organizations. She cited the \$250,000 in reserve that could be used to start a program now.*

*Mr. Neibert responded that the \$250,000 is in CRA as the match for the CDBG project. He indicated that they need to have a better idea of the scope of the program. He noted that ideas have been presented for help with cleaning up yards. He asked if there are other issues in addition to the need for non-CDBG home improvement and yard clean-up.*

*Commissioner Gnann-Thompson emphasized the need to have a plan in place first. She stated they need to have people in place and a stated purpose. She added they need someone who knows how to organize and make contacts and how to ask for assistance.*

### **9.9. III. Public Input**

*Daniel DiVenanzo suggested that the City establish a committee to answer those questions. He commented on his experience in working with derelict buildings and stated that the funding being discussed is not enough. He added that just holding a citywide cleanup is not practical citing the elderly residents that aren't capable of hauling stuff to the curb. He cited a variety of issues to be considered including better doors and security for older homes, lead-based paint abatement on homes older than 1978, the high cost of improvements versus the home's value and the possibility of paying someone for a dilapidated home, tearing it down and donating it someone who will build on the property.*

*Mayor Morin stated his desire to have a staff member appointed to organize a program over the next few months and see what can be started out of the General Fund.*

*Vice Mayor Aliberti commented on how cleaning up yards and making homes look more habitable can reduce crime.*

*Mr. Neibert noted that the Waste Management contract already allows residents to put large items out weekly and call the City to have Waste Management pick it up.*

### **IV. Commission Direction**

*Mr. Jones noted that CDBG is an application process and the City may not get approved. He asked what is the likelihood of the City receiving the grant.*

*Mr. Neibert responded that with good performance on the current CDBG grant and what is being proposed the City should have a good chance of being funded.*

*Mr. Trent recommended contacting Emily Lee about helping with the program.*

*Mr. Neibert stated that the City does not have a job description or anything at this time. He recommended allowing staff bring something back in November with a job description and program parameters. He explained that he has to develop the job before he can hire someone.*

*The Commission discussed whether to hire an employee or establish a committee.*

*Mr. Neibert suggested that he put together the parameters that have been discussed and develop the requirements for a program. He agreed to have Mr. Trent and Emily Lee meet with him.*

*Commissioner Holland suggested that each Commissioner bring the name of a committee member to the first meeting in November. He expressed opposition to hiring an outside consultant.*

*CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for each commissioner to bring a name to the first meeting in November and for the City Manager to develop some parameters and requirements for a basic program.*

*Mr. Jones asked if there is any way that some of the eligibility requirements can be streamlined with Mr. Neibert indicating that those are HUD guidelines and have to be followed.*

*Mr. Trent reminded everyone that the political forum would be held Tuesday, October 16th at the Carver Park Garden Room.*

## **V. Adjournment - 6:28 p.m.**

*\*These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to [www.eustis.org](http://www.eustis.org) and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording or verbatim transcript of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*