

Eloise Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

Johnny and Freda Brooks Resource Center
710 Snively Avenue
Eloise, FL 33880

Monday, June 3, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Advisory Committee Members present:

- Eugenia Barton, Eloise CRA Committee Member
- Minerva Gil, CRA Committee Member
- Janie Torres, CRA Committee Member
- Bobby Williams, CRA Committee Member

Advisory Committee Members not present:

- Martha Paul (with notice)

Polk County BoCC Staff & Invited Guests present:

- Delia Jouppi, Budget & Management Services
- Tabitha Alpers, Budget & Management Services
- Lisa Urban, Budget & Management Services
- Elizabeth Voss, Assistant County Attorney
- Autumn Fenton, Code Enforcement Director
- Ben Ziskal, Land Development Director
- Chanda Bennett, Land Development Comprehensive Planning Administrator
- Mark Bennett, Land Development Senior Planner
- Jay Jarvis, Roads & Drainage Director
- Mike Callender, Parks & Recreation Manager
- Emmanuel Dones, Parks & Recreation
- Jenna Wilkinson, Parks & Recreation
- Kim Long, Polk Vision Executive Director

Residents present:

- Lee Castillo (former Eloise CRA Committee member)
- Patricia Gonzalez, Eloise Resident
- Ann Garcia, Eloise Resident
- Sandra Pearson, Eloise Resident
- Timothy Pearson, Eloise Resident
- Cecelia Coronado, Eloise Resident
- Jerreit Briseno, Eloise Resident

CALL TO ORDER –Delia Jouppi, CRA Administrator called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

No. 1 on Agenda: Welcome to Stakeholders

Delia welcomed stakeholders and introduced the new CRA Administrator Tabitha Alpers and two new Committee Members, Janie Torres and Bobby Williams.

No. 2 on Agenda: Approval of March 4, 2024 Minutes

- Motion to Approve: Eugenia Barton
- 2nd Motion to Approve: Bobby Williams

Minutes unanimously approved.

No. 3 on Agenda: Request from the General Public & Opportunity to be Heard.

No. 4 on Agenda: Old Business

- Mike Callender provided updates on the following projects:
 - Snively Brooks Park Projects:
 - Exercise Equipment Installation: Staff is currently in the process of ordering the equipment.
 - Shade for Playground Area: This has been completed.
 - Basketball Court Resurfacing: **This item was moved from new business as part of the project updates.** Mike explained that he was unable to secure formal quotes due to questions pertaining to the layout of the court. He did receive an informal quote to tile the court and the estimated cost for the 5,250-sf play court area is \$40,950. The cost to tile the 6,000-sf basketball court is estimated at \$46,800. Bobby Williams expressed concern about spending funds on any additional playgrounds or park improvements until they know more about the future of the local elementary school. Delia asked Mike what the timeline would be to resurface the basketball court should the Committee choose not to move forward with the project. Mike stated that it will have to be resurfaced within the next few years. Should the Committee choose not to move forward with resurfacing, it will still be responsible for repainting of the courts as part of the Snively Brooks Park project. Ultimately, the Committee decided to postpone the vote to allow County staff to present the proposed budget and explain the various options available for use of the CRA funds in the community.
 - Shade for the Resource Center has been installed.
 - New Sign: The permit invoice was received, and installation is expected to take place in within the next two weeks.
- Chanda Bennett presented the Committee with the following candidate projects:
 - Code Enforcement Strategies
 - Keep Polk County Beautiful Clean Up Events – one is already provided annually; the CRA has the option of paying for one additional event per year
 - Abatement/ Lot Cleanups
 - Foreclosures on vacant lots – targeted properties are those with Code Enforcement/Demolition liens – County Attorney's office will assist with five per year
 - Heirs Properties Research – a lengthier process but would assist residents who are unable to afford the probate process
 - Housing
 - Roofing/minor repairs – this would be in partnership with Housing & Neighborhood Development
 - Sewer connections
 - Mobility, Infrastructure, Bike/Pedestrian Safety
 - Recreation

One of the concerns related to foreclosure of properties is whether the person who purchases the property from the CRA will turn around and sell the property for a large profit. Staff explained that putting the property back on the tax roll will benefit both the community for aesthetic purposes and put money back into the CRA. The goal is to sell the land to build on and reduce blight in the community. These properties may also be donated to affordable housing providers. Staff will begin researching properties from 1st Street and continue south. Staff requested a vote from the Committee on their chosen candidate projects to begin building a budget.

Motion to direct staff to build budget based on chosen candidate projects

- Motion to Approve: Eugenia Barton
- 2nd Motion to Approve: Bobby Williams

Motion unanimously approved.

Bobby Williams asked staff if CRA funds could be used to assist or reimburse a homeowner already with a Code Enforcement or Demolition case (ie: their home burned down). Assistant County Attorney Elizabeth Voss advised that type of program is not in the CRA plan. Code Enforcement Director Autumn Fenton stated that a homeowner can apply through the County for a no-interest loan if the County demolishes the structure. Residents will also have the opportunity during the additional Keep Polk County Beautiful event to dispose of tires, yard waste, or household waste at a designated location in Eloise.

No. 5 on Agenda: New Business

- Bobby Williams asked staff about adjusting the meeting schedule to monthly, beginning with the September meeting. Eugenia Barton explained that should the need arise; the Committee has the option to call Special Meetings. The Committee will revisit the meeting schedule at the September meeting.

- Reappointment of Minerva Gil – third term
 - Motion to Approve: Janie Torres
 - 2nd Motion to Approve: Eugenia Barton

Reappointment unanimously approved.

- Vote on Chairperson and Vice-Chair
 - Motion to appoint Bobby Williams as Chairperson: Eugenia Barton
 - 2nd Motion to Approve: Minerva Gil

Appointment unanimously approved.

- Motion to appoint Eugenia Barton as Vice-Chair: Minerva Gil
- 2nd Motion to Approve: Janie Torres

Appointment unanimously approved.

- The question originally asked of Roads & Drainage concerning road improvements will be revisited later, pending any decisions made regarding the local elementary school. Staff is anticipating a reduction in traffic through Eloise upon completion of the Thompson Nursery Road Phase 1. Right-of-way acquisition is nearing completion, followed by a construction timeline of approximately two to three years.

Remainder of 2024 Meetings:

Meeting location: Johnny & Freda Brooks Resource Center

- September 3, 2024 (**Tuesday**) at 6:00 p.m. – due to Labor Day holiday
- December 2, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Minutes transcribed by:

Tabitha Alpers

CRA Administrator
Budget & Management Services Division
Polk County Board of County Commissioners