

Eloise Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

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

Tuesday, September 3, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Advisory Committee Members present:

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

Advisory Committee Members not present:

Polk County BoCC Staff & Invited Guests present:

- Tabitha Alpers, Budget & Management Services
- Lisa Urban, Budget & Management Services
- Noah Milov, Assistant County Attorney
- Mark Bennett, Land Development Senior Planner
- Mike Callender, Parks & Recreation Manager
- Jennifer Cooper, Housing & Neighborhood Development Manager
- Jody Smith, Housing & Neighborhood Development Rehabilitation Manager
- Emmanuel Dones, Parks & Recreation
- Jenna Wilkinson, Parks & Recreation
- Katie Hayes, Executive Director, Keep Polk County Beautiful

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 –Tabitha Alpers, CRA Administrator called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

No. 1 on Agenda: Welcome to Stakeholders

Tabitha welcomed stakeholders, Committee members and staff to the meeting.

No. 2 on Agenda: Approval of June 3, 2024 Minutes

- Motion to Approve: Eugenia Barton
- 2nd Motion to Approve: Minerva Gil

Minutes unanimously approved.

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

No. 4 on Agenda: New Business

Mark Bennett updated the Committee on the latest information regarding the FY 24/25 Strategic Spending Plan. On August 16, 2024, the Plan was presented to the Board of County Commissioners at their Agenda Review in advance of the FY 24/25 Eloise CRA budget approval request on the August 20, 2024 Board Meeting agenda. Staff will begin working on adoption of a Resolution that will adopt Polk County's Purchasing policy and allow the County Manager to execute contracts on behalf of the Eloise CRA Board. The three initiatives approved by the Eloise CRA Board are summarized below:

Affordable Housing

This initiative will take the longest; therefore, staff met right after the budget approval to begin working on the foreclosure of vacant parcels with active Code Enforcement liens. Several parcels have been identified as potential candidates, but no action will be taken until the proposed policies are in place.

Housing Repairs/Sewer Connections

The housing repair initiative will focus on roof replacement or handicap accessibility for homeowners in the Eloise community. Several years ago, Community Development Block Grant funds were allocated for sewer connections but not everyone proceeded at that time. This will likely be the last opportunity for residents to take advantage of a no-cost connection to the City of Winter Haven sewer lines. This program will cover the cost of abandoning the resident's existing septic tank and tie-in to the sewer. Tabitha explained to the Committee that the FY 24/25 budget includes the replacement of approximately four new roofs and handicap accessibility for six homes. The best way to disseminate this information is by word of mouth and staff will rely on the Committee to get the information to the community. Chairman Williams asked for information related to the application process and requirements for the housing repair program that can be shared with the community. Tabitha explained that she will be working with Housing and Neighborhood Development and Communications staff to create a flyer (English/Spanish) that will provide the basic requirements to apply for the program. Jennifer Cooper added that to qualify for the program, the applicant must be the homeowner and have homestead on the property for at least one year. This program does not allow for roof replacement on mobile homes. The property must also be mortgage free.

Neighborhood Clean-Up

This initiative will focus on the revitalization of the Eloise community through increased Code Enforcement presence and abatements/lot clean-ups as well as a partnership with Keep Polk County Beautiful to host a Curbside Clean-Up and Tire Recycling event. In that past, these events were held in Wahneta due to the amount of space required for the tire recycling event. This event will be held in Eloise at a location conducive to easy access and drop-off for the Eloise residents. Katie Hayes explained that there will still be an annual event in Wahneta like in prior years, but this event will be specifically for the Eloise community. Keep Polk County Beautiful will work with area haulers to drive through community and collect any waste that would not be collected as part of the routine garbage collection. Residents are asked to have any items for pickup at curbside by 6:00 a.m. the day of the event. The trucks will run until 10:00 a.m. to get back to the North Central Landfill before it closes at noon. Katie also explained that the curbside clean-up will pick up items such as furniture, appliances, construction/remodeling debris, fencing, tarps, tree logs and limbs that exceed the County's limitations. Residents will drop-off tires at the designated location on the day of the event. She offered two dates for the Committee's consideration: January 11, 2025 or February 22, 2025. The hauling limit for tires will be lifted for this event. She also made note that the annual clean-up that is usually held in December for the Eloise/Wahneta communities has been moved to April 12, 2025.

The Committee chose January 11, 2025 for the event, due to the proximity to the holidays and need to clear out old furniture, boxes, etc. Katie also explained that staff will be out canvassing the community, passing out flyers about the date and sending out a phone and text notification through Alert Polk.

No. 5 on Agenda: Old Business

Update on Snively Brooks Park Renovation – Basketball and Play Court Resurfacing

Tabitha explained that based upon discussions from prior Committee meetings related to the the Snively-Brooks Park basketball courts, Mike Callender will provide the Committee with the cost estimates and ask the Committee to vote on whether to proceed with the resurfacing of the courts. Funds in the amount of \$120,000 were allocated for the renovations as part of the FY 24/25 budget and would not take away from the three initiatives also planned for this fiscal year. Mike began with some history of the renovations already approved by the Eloise CRA Advisory Committee. These renovations included the recently installed digital sign for the Johnny & Freda Brooks Resource Center, shade coverings at the Resource Center as well as the Snively-Brooks playgrounds, restroom renovations at the park, and repairs to the walking path. The basketball courts need restriping, but staff is proposing a new alternative to restriping by laying plastic interlocking tiles on the courts. These tiles are warrantied for life, reducing the expense of restriping the courts now and in future years, and are water resistant and reduce strain on the player's legs by offering some bounce when ran upon. Mike explained that the estimated cost for resurfacing the basketball court is \$48,800 and \$40,950 for the play court, for a total of \$89,750. He requested approval from the Committee to move forward with the formal quote. The Committee unanimously denied the proposed court resurfacing. The consensus among the Committee is that for many years CRA funds have been used for renovations to the Resource Center and parks; they would like to see the funds be used for neighborhood improvements and want funds to be allocated to the three initiatives.

Open Discussion

Chair Williams asked staff to provide the Committee with the information on how to apply for the housing repairs program and the qualifications. Staff will also reach out to the City of Winter Haven about a potential impact fee waiver with a lien on the property for a designated number of years. A resident of Eloise shared concerns about traffic congestion due to the drop-off route at Snively Elementary School. Staff will reach out to Roads and Drainage and the Polk County School Board and follow up at the next meeting.

Remainder of 2024 Meetings:

Meeting location: Johnny & Freda Brooks Resource Center

- December 2, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Minutes transcribed by:

Tabitha Clpers

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