

Eloise Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

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

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

Attendance:

Advisory Committee Members present:

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

Advisory Committee Members not present:

- Janie Torres, CRA Committee Member

Polk County BoCC Staff & Invited Guests present:

- Tabitha Alpers, Budget & Management Services
- Lisa Urban, Budget & Management Services
- Sandi Howard, Deputy County Attorney
- Mark Bennett, Land Development Senior Planner
- Jennifer Cooper, Housing & Neighborhood Development Manager
- Jody Smith, Housing & Neighborhood Development Rehabilitation Manager
- Autumn Fenton, Code Enforcement Director
- Caroline Benitez, Community Health Care
- Hunter Poulakos, Parks & Recreation
- Jenna Wilkinson, Parks & Recreation
- Katie Hayes, Executive Director, Keep Polk County Beautiful

Residents present:

- Hope Musselwhite, Eloise Resident

CALL TO ORDER –Tabitha Alpers, CRA Administrator called the meeting to order at 6:08 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 September 3, 2024 Minutes

- Motion to Approve: Eugenia Barton
- 2nd Motion to Approve: Martha Paul

Minutes unanimously approved.

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

No. 4 on Agenda: Old Business

No. 5 on Agenda: New Business

FY 24/25 Strategic Spending Plan Update

Tabitha provided the Committee with an update on the Strategic Spending Plan, starting with Affordable Housing/Foreclosures. Eight parcels in the Eloise community have been identified as potential candidates for the Affordable Housing/Foreclosure program. Polk County's Real Estate Services Division ordered title searches on the parcels and are in the process of vetting the properties for possible foreclosure through their office and the County Attorney's office. These properties will be presented for the Committee's approval at the March meeting.

The agreement with Keep Polk County Beautiful has been approved for the Eloise Community Clean-Up and Tire Recycling event which will take place on Saturday, January 11, 2025. County staff and Katie Hayes will be distributing flyers in the community and at local events to encourage residents to put their unwanted appliances, furniture, construction debris, and large tree limbs curbside for pickup and drop off old tires at the Center. Vacant and/or dilapidated properties will also be serviced. Chairman Williams asked if there are any additional clean-up events scheduled for this year. Katie stated there are three events: the clean-up event specifically for the Eloise CRA in January, the Great American Clean-Up – during the months of March - May the community may request a dumpster for Saturday cleanup to take place at the Resource Center, and in April the Eloise/Wahneta community will have its annual Curbside Clean-Up and Tire Recycling event. Katie also explained that if residents notice any properties were missed during the curbside pick-up in January to please call or email her office right away. She is allowed up to three days after the clean-up to request the hauler go back and pick up any missed properties. Autumn Fenton reminded the Committee that the hurricane debris haulers have collected yard debris and are now focusing on construction and demolition debris, fencing, etc. One of the issues the haulers are facing is mixed piles of both yard debris and construction debris. She asked the Committee to remind residents to separate those piles so the hauler can pick them up the first time and not have to come back.

Tabitha explained that staff is not seeing a lot of movement with the housing repair program and sewer connections. The biggest challenge with the home repair program is that many of the residents are renters. One of the requirements of the program is the home must be owner occupied for a minimum of one year. Currently, only one application is in process for a sewer tie-in. Housing and Neighborhood Development staff will be attending the Eloise Community Festival on Saturday, December 7th to answer questions and assist residents with applying for these programs. Communications staff is finalizing the flyer to send out to residents in Eloise who are not connected to sewer. This may be the last opportunity for residents to connect to the sewer and because the City of Winter Haven can no longer waive the impact fees, one property could cost \$10,000 or more to connect.

Approval of 2025 Meeting Schedule

Chairman Williams shared the proposed meeting dates for 2025 as below:

March 3, 2025

June 2, 2025

September 2, 2025 (Tuesday)

December 1, 2025

Before opening a motion to approve the meeting schedule, Chairman Williams requested the Committee and staff consider moving to monthly meetings based on how funds are being spent in each initiative.

Staff will update the Committee on the budget at the March meeting and decide at that time if the Committee would prefer to move to monthly meetings and/or hold a special called meeting.

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

Motion unanimously approved.

Open Discussion

Chairman Williams asked Caroline Benitez, Community Health Care, to provide the Committee with information related to the Eloise Community Festival on Saturday, December 7th. Caroline explained that staff from Community Health Care and Housing & Neighborhood Development will be on-site to help residents learn more about County services offered to the community and local vendors to perform free health screenings. Flyers were provided to the Committee to share with the community and left at the Resource Center for visitors.

ADJOURN

Meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Minutes transcribed by:

Tabitha Alpers

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