



COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, July 26, 2023
SAM KING ROOM
2:30 P.M.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jim Bojo (Chair), Bonny Askew, Jamie Doss, Sammy Rich, Bekki Fox, Meredith Ulmer, Toni Rhinehart, David Crowder, Becky Smyth, Mary Hardin Thornton, Logan Drake, Walt Busby, Terri Mayes, John Mayes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairperson Jim Bojo called the meeting to order. The minutes of the May 24, 2023, Community Redevelopment Committee meeting were approved by common consent.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORTS:

Director Fox provided updates on the Floyd Training Center Improvements Project. The bid was awarded to Brandon Construction for \$486,235. The construction contract has been reviewed and approved by the attorney. An on-site pre-construction meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 27th at 10:30 AM. Federal requirements will be discussed, and the contract will be signed. Due to material production, work is expected to take approximately 259 days from the start of construction.

Fox moved on to discussing the Banty Jones Park Improvements Project. Staff continues to work with TSW Planners on the final design. Fox provided handouts showing a map, aerial perspective, and plan view. The project is still on track according to the schedule submitted last year. TSW will soon provide their final documents and plan. The project will then go out to bid. Construction is estimated to last around eight months with a Summer 2024 opening. Various features were discussed, such as the stage, loop path, playground, seating, etc. Fox reminded everyone that the project has a \$4.4 million budget made possible through various funding sources like Community Development Block Grants, Choice Neighborhood Action Activity funds, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds (local), and Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) from the Department of Community Affairs and Improving Neighborhood Outcomes (State ARPA). Fox and Rich said the size would be more suited to informal sports/family picnics versus organized sports. In the end, the plan is to stay within budget, but certain aspects can be scaled back if deemed necessary.

Fox gave details regarding the CDBG Program. Both the 2022 Action Plan Amendments and 2023 Action Plan have been submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Staff is awaiting HUD approval. The 2022 amendment involves reallocation of funds to the Floyd Training Center project. The Housing Rehabilitation Program continues to do well. While the Exterior Paint Program has proven to not be as popular, the Roof Repair Program has been quite successful. In 2023, five roofs have been completed, two are pending and one application is open. The Spring Creek Street and East 14th Street

Sidewalk Improvements Project was put out to bid. Four bids were received with Crete LLC being the lowest at \$119,035. While they were the apparent low bidder, City staff will make sure everything adds up before awarding them. Due to the bid amount being lower than the \$145,000 budget, extra sidewalk will be added to Spring Creek.

Fox updated everyone on the Rome/Floyd Land Bank Authority (LBA), which is managed through the Community Development Department. Two new housing construction projects are taking place. The house at 1 Orchid Place looks great so far and is less than 30 days from completion. The house at 7 Forsyth Street has been delayed due to weather and grading issues. Progress has been made though and the home should be finished in 60 days. The house plan is high quality and can even be customized in the future. The goal is to sell at market value with the possibility of offsetting the cost with a second mortgage. Staff is working to identify the next two parcels to build on. Code Enforcement looks out for potential options for the LBA. Fox brought up the property located at 216 E. 20th Street, which the LBA bought through the Judicial Tax Foreclosure Process. The property is located right by the future trail system that will extend from Rome to Lindale. There would be a partnership between the City of Rome and Trails for Recreation and Economic Development of Rome/Floyd Co. (TRED). Discussions are being had on who will own the property. One idea is for the City to maintain ownership so that TRED does not have that burden. Either way, the plan for the parcel remains the same. City Public Works will clean up the lot. TRED and Eagle Scouts would work together to create a pocket park with picnic tables and a trailhead. The LBA has taken in a house across the street that has burnt down twice. The acquisition process is in progress so it can be demolished. All in all, these actions should help E. 20th Street out. The LBA is getting ready to kick off their Facebook page and social media presence. This will help keep the public informed of the good the LBA is doing for the community.

Fox informed everyone of previous and upcoming staff training. After being invited by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC), some of Staff took a field trip to Madison, GA to tour successful housing projects. Fox said that her takeaway was that their pocket neighborhood model would do well in Rome. Some of Staff attended Planning and Zoning 101 Training. The event was hosted by NWGRC and the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the Georgia Highlands College Cartersville Campus. Fox and LBA Manager Amanda Carter will be attending the Georgia Association of Land Bank Authorities Summit in Macon, GA in September and the National Land Bank Network Summit in Cleveland, Ohio in October.

OTHER BUSINESS:

City Project Manager Mary Hardin Thornton provided a brief update on the Rome-Floyd E.C.O. Center. She and Georgia Power have been discussing what it would take to move a telephone pole that is in the way. Georgia Power will provide an estimate of how much it would cost to remove the existing pole and replace it with an underground transformer. She has also been in contact with those who are working on getting sprinklers and proper lighting installed. Progress continues to be made.

City Manager Sammy Rich welcomed Walt Busby, Terri Mayes and John Mayes, who were in attendance to provide insight and assistance. A discussion was had on the logistics of a previously discussed project involving 2017 SPLOST funds designated for a playground/recreation facility. A survey has been completed. The Mayes family explained how they envision the changing of locations for the project. Rich showed everyone a map of the area in question. While the North Rome Youth Center currently operates out of the church, the goal is to eventually build a separate physical location. The church will give the property over to the City. The playground/recreation facility will serve the same purpose as it would have before, but it will now be located slightly further north. It would be open to the public until it is time for the Youth Center children to use it. The contract will be drafted later. The Committee asked Fox to investigate any grant opportunities available for the Mayes family. After discussion, the Commissioners did not take a formal vote but voiced their approval.

Rich led another discussion about the North Rome Tax Allocation District (TAD). The City and their consultant, the KB Group, will continue to work out the details of the redevelopment plan as it evolves. Rich was not asking for an action to be made but just wanted to provide updates. All were in agreement that North Rome has serious potential to thrive with a redevelopment area and TAD Districts, which should then encourage private investment. Updates will be given later.

The Committee decided to change the meeting time to 2:00 P.M from here on out.

Chairperson Bojo adjourned the meeting at 3:41 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Logan Drake, Community Development Administrative Program Assistant