

Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA)

Ninety-Fourth Meeting

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 – 4:04 PM

Proceedings:

The CRA meeting being held at Gude Mansion was called to order at 4:04 pm with Chairwoman Crary presiding. Roll was called with Donna Crary, Chairwoman; Sean LaVere, CRA Member present, and Mike McGowan, CRA Member present. Robert Love, Community & Economic Development Director and Charise Liggins, Economic Development Coordinator were also in attendance.

Motion to approve CRA meeting minutes of July 19 , 2023. Mike McGowan motioned; Sean LeVere seconded. Motion carried on a unanimous roll call vote 3-0.

Old Business:

a) Introduce the new Economic Development Coordinator, Charise Liggins

- Director Love introduced the new Economic Development Coordinator and she shared updates on some of the projects that she is working on, including Laurel Eats initiative to promote restaurants in the city.
- CRA member McGowan suggested that the city create a map with all the restaurants.

b) Farmers Market Season Recap and New Umbrellas

- Chairwoman Crary discussed the following:
 - Talked about the upcoming farmers market and suggested that everyone attend since it is the last one.
 - Shared feedback that next season should be easier to plan taking best practices for this first season.
 - Inquired about the solar light for the pole light.
 - Shared that people have been inquiring about the development of a regular food truck event.
- CRA member LeVere applauded the efforts of the city in running the market, diversity of offerings and an overall pleasant atmosphere among the vendors.
- Director Love gave the following updates:

- Gave an update on the farmers market and the overall season. He discussed the growth in turnout.
- Discussed sending out a survey to obtain feedback to help aid planning next season.
- Thanked the CRA for use of The Laurel Quill Lot for the market.
- Shared update about obtaining quotes for electrical work.
- CRA member McGowan suggested finding new vendors by visiting other farmers markets at Maple Lawn and Olney. Also suggested a butcher that recently opened in Maple Lawn as a potential meat vendor.

New Business:

a) Main Street Committee

- Director Love shared updates about the development of the Main Street Committee:
 - Hosting first meeting on Tuesday, September 26th
 - Focus on green initiatives, design, safety, grant opportunities, wayfinding signage, etc.
- CRA member McGowan suggests that the more people that come to Main Street, for dining and shopping, the more everyone benefits. When people come to Laurel to dine, for example, they can come and experience other benefits that the city has to offer.
- CRA member LeVere suggested the idea of a wine festival to drive traffic in and around Main Street. He also mentioned that one of the challenges with Main Street is that many of the businesses are closed on Sundays and it could be a missed opportunity since there are still people patronizing many of the businesses that are open.
- Chairwoman Crary suggested bridging the gap between Main Street and other parts of the city by having events (i.e., wine festival) on Sundays. Standalone food trucks could also be an option for Sundays.

Closed Session:

- The CRA commenced a closed session with the city attorney at 4:31 p.m.

The CRA Meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m. The next meeting will take place October 18, 2023.