

MINUTES  
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA)  
FOR THE DOWNTOWN TARPON SPRINGS REDEVELOPMENT AREA  
JANUARY 10, 2017

THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA) OF THE CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA, MET IN THE CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM, 324 EAST PINE STREET, ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2017 AT 6:36 P.M. WITH THE FOLLOWING PRESENT:

CHRIS ALAHOUZOS  
TOWNSEND TARAPANI  
DAVID BANTHER  
REA SIEBER  
SUSAN SLATTERY

MAYOR/CHAIR  
VICE MAYOR/VICE CHAIR  
COMMISSIONER/MEMBER  
COMMISSIONER/MEMBER  
COMMISSIONER/MEMBER

ALSO PRESENT:

MARK LeCOURIS  
JAY DAIGNEAULT  
IRENE S. JACOBS

CITY MANAGER  
CITY ATTORNEY  
CITY CLERK & COLLECTOR

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Alahouzos called the meeting to order at 10:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

City Clerk Jacobs called the roll.

## **1. PROPOSED PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AT 57 W. TARPON AVENUE AND 61 W. TARPON AVENUE**

City Manager LeCouris was given direction to bring this back and explained the background and that the Community Redevelopment Agency had money to do this from their funds. He said that currently there was no willingness from owners to sell the hotel or the Hoffman property. City Manager LeCouris said decision on how to proceed would be with items 2 and 3. He reminded the Board that eminent domain cannot be done because of a nuisance or because it is blighted.

Commissioner Sieber wanted to make clear that her views were based on facts and research, what was best for the City of Tarpon Springs, and not on emotions. She advised that she called Tallahassee regarding the hotel and how they were licensed and passing inspections. She found out that there had not been many violations and was told that the state would be going out this week to check again for violations. Commissioner Sieber also spoke to a Judge and found that there were two processes for eminent domain. One was a quick take process and one was a slow take process, and explained differences. She felt the city did not need to rush on this. Commissioner Sieber did not agree that CRA funds should be used. She said the city needed to listen to the business people and residents. Additionally, she would like to delay motion on this until more information was received as she did not want to start a bad precedence.

Mayor Alahouzos announced that the City Manager was given instructions to move forward from the BOC and he would not be able to start negotiations unless he knew the value of the properties. He asked if the comprehensive plan calls for a park in that area, and City Manager LeCouris said the plan calls for a park in the Downtown Character District, and the area in discussion was in the Spring Bayou Character District.

Vice Chair Tarapani apologized to residents that the regular meeting lasted longer than expected. He thanked the City Manager for moving forward in the manor he did based on the unanimous direction of the Board of Commissioners. Vice Chair Tarapani felt that the last time this was discussed there was a healthy dialogue and could not believe the amount of past officials that spoke on this issue. He stated his vision did not change and would still like the City to move forward on this issue with the Board's direction for the City Manager to formally negotiate with both property owners. By approving these agenda items this would allow a formal way to negotiate. It is not the intent of the Board to take properties but to purchase properties. He felt a park in this location would promote economic development and would hopefully redevelop the Tarpon Inn sooner. Vice Chair Tarapani said he was on the Board when the Economic Development Director was hired and when Façade grant programs were developed.

ORIGINAL MOTION: VICE CHAIR TARAPANI

SECOND: COMMISSIONER BANTHER

To continue to move forward with this project and authorize the City Manager to do what he needs to do to formally negotiate and hire an eminent domain attorney as well as an appraiser of his choice.

**(Continue)**

**1. PROPOSED PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AT 57 W. TARPON AVENUE AND 61 W. TARPON AVENUE  
(Continued)**

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Commissioner Banther appreciated Commissioner Sieber's comments and research, but felt no new information would change anything. He said this was just a formal process for the Board to be able to use CRA funds, and a respectful way to handle property negotiations.

City Attorney Daigneault reminded all that the CRA is statutorily prohibited and cannot authorize eminent domain, it would have to be authorized by the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Slattery felt that a lot of residents had misinformation regarding this issue. She clarified the Board would not be taking anyone's property this evening. She said that Mr. Hoffman was a true asset to the community.

Commissioner Sieber was concerned that a park would not change activities and opposed a park idea.

Mayor Alahouzos clarified that this was giving a formal direction to the City Manager and that there was nothing different from what was approved at the Board of Commissioner meeting last time.

MOTION: VICE CHAIR TARAPANI  
SECOND: COMMISSIONER BANTHER

To extend meeting past 11:00 pm.

Vote on Motion – Upon roll call vote the motion carried unanimously as follows:

Member Slattery	Yes
Member Sieber	Yes
Member Banther	Yes
Vice Chair Tarapani	Yes
Chair Alahouzos	Yes

(Continue)

**1. PROPOSED PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AT 57 W. TARPON AVENUE AND 61 W. TARPON AVENUE  
(Continued)**

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Public Comment:

The following were opposed to this, did not feel eminent domain was the way to go, advised that people from public housing were living at hotels, another park was not needed, hotels were needed, and that CRA funds should be used for this:

Tim Keffalas, 205 Leafwood Road  
Carol Rodriguez, 512 Westwinds Dr, Palm Harbor  
Sherri Wendt, 631 Eunice Drive  
Jack Spirk, 2008 Golfview Drive  
Ramona Fletcher, 1131 Anclote Rd.  
Marty Peters, 1702 Heritage Oaks  
Peter Dalacos, 514 Ashland Avenue  
Chris Hrabrovsky, 1602 Gulf Beach Boulevard  
Tom Frame, 624 Pent Street

The following were in favor of a park, spoke about concerns of the area, and felt the City should go forward with hiring an eminent domain attorney and an appraiser:

Dolly Vatikiotis, 49 W. Center Street  
Tod Eckhouse, 103 S. Spring Boulevard  
Jim Kolianos, Circle Drive  
Costa Vatikiotis, 49 W. Center Street  
Anita Protos, 901 Bayshore Drive

Public Comments from Property Owners:

Peter Fanoudis, owner, 57 W. Tarpon Avenue, asked for the city to work with him so he can make improvements to his hotel.

Ed Hoffman, 29 W. Orange Street, owner, 61 W. Tarpon Avenue, made the Board aware of his plans for his property; however, said that everything was for sale except his wife and his kids, but did not feel taking this property off the tax rolls was a good idea.

Jason Shah, owner of Tarpon Inn, agreed that improvements were needed and said he had personally started hotel improvements by placing cameras and guidance from Police Department. He also urged Board to allow all three property owners to work together to make improvements.

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**1. PROPOSED PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AT 57 W. TARPON AVENUE AND 61 W. TARPON AVENUE  
(Continued)**

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MOTION: VICE CHAIR TARAPANI  
SECOND: COMMISSIONER BANTHER

To extend meeting a half hour until 12:30 pm.

Vote on Motion – Upon roll call vote the motion carried unanimously as follows:

Member Slattery	Yes
Member Sieber	Yes
Member Banther	Yes
Vice Chair Tarapani	Yes
Chair Alahouzos	Yes

Additional Board Comments:

Commissioner Slattery thanked Mr. Hoffman for coming forth and sharing his plans for 61 W. Tarpon Avenue.

FINAL MOTION: VICE CHAIR TARAPANI  
SECOND: COMMISSIONER BANTHER

To continue to authorize the City Manager to move forward with this proposal in terms of hiring the eminent domain attorney for negotiations as well as property appraiser.

Vote on Motion – Upon roll call vote the motion carried 3 to 2 as follows:

Member Slattery	No
Member Sieber	No
Member Banther	Yes
Vice Chair Tarapani	Yes
Chair Alahouzos	Yes

**2. AUTHORIZATION TO HIRE EMINENT DOMAIN ATTORNEY**

**3. AUTHORIZATION TO HIRE PROPERTY APPRAISER**

Both items 2 and 3 were discussed with item 1 and the motion above covered these items in one motion.

**BOARD AND STAFF COMMENTS:**

Mayor asked for public comments and there were none.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 A.M.

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CHRIS ALAHOZOS  
CHAIR

ATTEST:

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IRENE S. JACOBS, CMC  
CITY CLERK & COLLECTOR

CITY CLERK'S NOTE: This meeting has been recorded in its entirety and the recordings are kept on file in the City Clerk's Office for the required retention period.