

Cuyahoga Falls City Council

Minutes of the Community Development Committee Meeting

June 7, 2004

Chairman: Ken Barnhart; Vice Chair: Doug Flinn; Member: Debbie Ritzinger.

Mr. Flinn brought the Community Development Committee Meeting to order at 7:42 p.m. The meeting minutes of May 17, 2004 were corrected to read “We are beginning to receive interest in this site. Through CIC redevelopment, we have less control on the projects that are proposed”.

Scheduled legislation (second reading):

A-91	An Ordinance implementing Sections 3735.65 through 3735.70 of the Ohio Revised Code, establishing and describing the boundaries of a Community Reinvestment Area in the City of Cuyahoga Falls and designating a Housing Officer to administer the program and creating a Community Reinvestment Housing Council and a Tax Incentive Review Council, and declaring an emergency.
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Sue Truby indicates the CRA concept is not new to the city. Through the consolidated plan, we are speaking tonight of the Cuyahoga River Section. The Community Reinvestment Area comes from our charrettes. We want to increase owner occupancy (currently it is 48% in this district), increase housing upgrades and construction investment in this area. South Front St. has new developer potentials and we have 3 ½ years to make things happen down there. Liz Rogers explains there are five categories in the matrix:

- 1) Remodeling and New Construction of Commercial sites
- 2) Remodeling and New construction of Industrial Facilities
- 3) Remodeling owner occupied, one unit dwelling
- 4) Remodeling Historic owner occupied, dwelling, 2 unit maximum
- 5) New Construction owner-occupied single family dwelling units (including condominiums/townhouses)

Mary Ellen indicates the areas came out of the master plan and questions on Seventh St. is it one side of the street or both sides? Fred indicates it is on one side and that the housing inspectors had some input in defining the lines. In most cases, it is not in the middle of the street. Fred will check about the numbers and try to alter to include both sides of the street. Mrs. Pyke indicates she and Mrs. Klinger traveled this area and there are problems with several houses. It is an area of modest homes that have a couple of homes that will become a problem. Mary Ellen questions if someone purchases a house from Sheriff’s Sale and fixes it up and resells, who gets the abatement? According to Sue, it must be owner occupied and it can transfer to new owners. The tax abatement on the new construction is for the new facility and not the land. The tax abatement would transfer to the new owner. The first person would have to occupy it. Mr. Walters asks how we establish a historic home? Fred states we will look at age, location, and significance. What is excluded for home improvements? Sue feels anything that is an improvement to the house, whether it is the roof or the basement or landscaping is an improvement. The properties all must be owner occupied and the Board will review these annually. George questions the way the tax abatements will work. Carol acknowledges that residential abatement is new to this council. There are 19 districts in Cleveland and 17 of them have CRA’s with abatements starting at \$2500. We have set the bar higher and want to see bigger improvements. The goal of this legislation is to keep that one home from falling apart. Mrs. Hummel indicates her issues with this legislation is on line 51-53 where it states “Only residential, commercial and/or industrial properties consistent with the applicable zoning regulations within the designated CRCRA will be eligible for exemptions under this Program.” Which and what properties have to meet applicable zoning regulations? Which regulations are these? Fred states the current zoning regulations are in effect when the abatement takes effect. Kathy inquires as to how the 45 properties in the attachment were determined. Sue

indicates the housing inspectors went out and helped assist us define properties. This public survey needed to identify the area, not only or solely this house/commercial property according to Pam. Has the owner occupancy law been tested in court? Pam states there has been little court action on this issue. There are two references to ORC rules that need to be followed. Kathy asks if there is a list or guidelines for residents on how the process will work and what mechanisms are in place. Sue indicates the homeowner will have to fill out an application and an outline will be provided to the homeowner. The property must stay owner occupied and these properties will be reviewed annually. The Board will have the ability to revoke the abatement. We will require receipts for landscaping & home improvements. Mrs. Truby indicates that Community Development will also put together a solid list of things that can be included and defined as "home improvements". Liz Rogers will educate the realtors and contractors who perform work in the city to make them aware of this CRA. Kathy questions the abatements for developers and new construction. She feels we won't have a hard time selling these areas since they will not be paying taxes on the structure. She states a resident could purchase a new home at Kempple Pointe with a kindergartner and not pay taxes on the structure for 15 years, in essence providing a free education for one or more students (plus police/fire). This community is very popular to live in and if Manchester Square takes off, we will not need abatements on the south end of Front Street. This scenario will be difficult to explain to her neighbors who are paying their taxes. I don't feel we can approve this for new construction. Sue indicates we can change the date of the ordinance to 2006 vs. 2007. We are looking at 3 ½ years and we can revisit this and make amendments. Out of the box, there are few parcels for new construction in this area. The school district is in favor of this program and Community Development met with the Superintendent. Mrs. Hummel states she will not support further tax abatements in the south Front Street area. If it were not for the new construction, she may reconsider her support. She will support Manchester Square but hesitates on further tax breaks in this area. Carol questions if a developer would buy ten homes and redevelop, would Kathy support that? Mary Ellen states there aren't any huge parcels of land for new construction. Kathy questions why we would approve tax abatements on Taylor Ave/Kemppel Pointe? Under this scenario(CRA Matrix), there is an automatic approval. Pam indicates the way the statue works, the classification carries throughout the area. Mary Ellen asks if we changed the classification to need Council Action, would that change Kathy's opinion? Pam states this classification cannot be done this way. Fred indicates there are not a lot of parcels of vacant lots for development, but there is potential and corridors that have opportunities. Kempple Pointe is a major storm water plan that will control a massive amount of water coming off Tallmadge Road and the developer is investing a lot of money into our infrastructure to handle this. Mary Ellen reiterates she sees only good things coming from this legislation. Kathy asks if we can lessen the term of the abatement of the new construction to maybe 5 years? Council can dictate, according to Pam, the type of units eligible and the length of the abatement. Pam also states it would be easier to correct the map by adjusting the boundaries to exclude new potential construction. George indicates he feels the builder will have an enormous advantage with these proposed abatements. He would like to see increasing the remodeling portion of the proposal vs. the new construction. Sue feels she would like to fine-tune this ordinance. Adjusting the time to 5-7 years according to Ken would benefit everyone. Ken would like to hold this legislation and Sue will "tweak" this. George would like to see the remodeling amount of abatement changed to 100%.

The committee recommends holding Temp. Ord. A-91

Held legislation: None.

Other business:

Valerie Wax-Carr indicates that Summit County has been approved for FEMA aid due to the recent storms. We will be getting flyers out to the residents along with contact information.

The Community Development Committee Meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.