

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD MEETING



Board of the City of Memphis and Shelby County Redevelopment Agency

Virtual teleconference via. Go To Meeting

Thursday, April 1, 2021

8:30 a.m.

Board Present: McKinley Martin Jr. – Chairman
Sam Cantor – Treasurer
Ann Langston – Secretary
Britney Thornton
Kevin Spragling
Dynisha Woods

Absent: Miles Mason – Vice Chairman

Also Present: Rosalyn Willis – President, CRA
Andrew Murray – Director of Planning and Community Development, CRA
Lisa Ivy – Single Family Project Manager, CRA
Cynthia Durham – Administrative Office Manager, CRA
Monice Hagler – (CRA Counsel)
V. Lynn Evans (CRA Financial Liaison to the Auditors)

Visitors:

Joe Fletcher	Attorney, City of Memphis
Andre Gibson	CAO Liaison, Shelby County
Sharon Coleman – speaker #1	President of Peabody Vance Neighborhood Association / Caller 8
Beverly A Randolph – speaker #2	South Memphis Generational Resident
Pastor Roger Brown – speaker # 3	Pastor of Greater Whitestone Baptist Church, President of The Stone Community Development Corp.
Scott Blake – speaker #4	Executive Director of Victorian Village Community Development Corp. / Caller 10
Sabrina Norwood – speaker #5	Executive Dir. of Young Actors Guild Non-profit, Memphis TN
Karl Carpenter – speaker #6	Former Nashville Restaurant Entrepreneur
J. Penelope Smith – speaker #7	JR Smith and Associates, Phoenix, AZ / Caller 11
Fran Seward – speaker #8	TN & MS Homes
Danielle Inez – speaker #9	Nashville, TN
Brat Thompson – speaker #10	Caller 5/Community Activist, Lawyer
Katrina Thompson – speaker #11	Nashville, TN/ Caller 4

Pearl Walker – speaker #12	I Love Whitehaven Corp./Chairman of Memphis Has the Power
J.W. Gibson – presenter #1	TIF Coordinator
Senchel Matthews – presenter #2	President of SRDC, Memphis, TN
Austin Harrison – presenter #3	Consultant on TIF Application, Board Member
Sonji Branch – presenter #4	CEO / Communities in Schools of Memphis / Nashville, TN
Carolyn Henry	BLP Film Studios/Nashville
Hazel Moore	Memphis, TN
Joe Fletcher	Nashville, TN
Jonathan A. Lindsey	Robinsonville, ??
Lyndon Greene	Atlanta, GA
Gerald L. Thornton	New Orleans, LA
Corinne Kennedy	Memphis, TN
Stevie Moore	
Rickey Dugger	Memphis, TN
Jacob Steimer	MBJ
Coleman Thompson	Miami, FL
R. L. Thompson	The Choose Life Project / Lakeland, TN
Felicia Corbin Johnson	
Stevie Moorer	Memphis, TN
Cherryl	Memphis, TN
Sharon Coleman	Memphis, TN
Cecilia Suzette Barnes	Memphis, TN
Jennifer Carpenter	Nashville, TN
Jason A. Farmer	Memphis, TN
Rosiland Moore	
Dr. K. Andre Brooks	Memphis, TN
Gloria Watkins	Caller 2
Leonard Dawson	Caller 6
Aaron K. Robinson	Caller 13

A meeting of the Board of Directors (“Board”) of the City of Memphis and Shelby County Community Redevelopment Agency was held on Thursday, April 1, 2021. All Board Members were present except for Miles Mason.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman McKinley Martin officially called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m. and a quorum was present.

II. Approval of MINUTES – March 4, 2021 (Board Action)

Chairman Martin called for approval of Board minutes from March 4, 2021. Board Member Ann Langston made a motion and Board Member Kevin Spragling provided a second. March Board meeting minutes were approved unanimously by the Board via roll call.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Martin began the meeting by giving instructions on how the meeting would flow. He asked that all 54 participants, other than Board Members, please mute their phones. CRA staff Andrew Murray announced that he had received requests from various participants who wished to speak. Chairman Martin stated that each speaker, when announced, would be unmuted and given a time limit of two minutes.

Speakers:

Guest Speaker #1, **Sharon Coleman**: stated that her constituents and the stakeholders that she represents have asked not to be a part of the TIF boundaries due to it being a financial threat as well as a hindrance to their twelve-year plan for their neighborhood.

Guest Speaker #2, **Beverly Randolph**: stated that she is a South Memphis generational resident. She is concerned with the fact that South Memphis has been left unattended for quite some time and the notion that most residents were unaware that this meeting was taking place today. She encouraged her neighbors to call in and voice their opinions on how South Memphis should be re-generated. She looks forward to this being a very successful opportunity.

Guest Speaker #3, **Pastor Roger Brown**: representative of the South Memphis Communities and Pastor of Greater Whitestone Baptist Church for 10+ years. He is also President of The Stone Community Development Corp. who has partnered with residents and other community leaders to survey the community and hear the voice of South Memphis. They are excited about partnering with the SERC and helping to bring about much needed change. As the major thoroughfare entry into the State of Tennessee, on the West side, it is time for their neighborhoods to look better.

Guest Speaker #4, **Scott Blake**: Executive Director of Victorian Village Community Development Corp. for 15 years. He stated that he has questions about 1) the boundaries of the TIF -- he wants to see a graph, and 2) infrastructure improvements. He mentioned the great strides, created from a grassroots effort, that have been made in that area over the past 16 years. He stated that the tax payers of the 2,300 individual units of the multi-residential high-rise development within the community would be compromised and that they do not see the advantage of being part of the new TIF.

Guest Speaker #5, **Sabrina Norwood**: Executive Dir. of Young Actors Guild, a performing arts non-profit organization in Memphis since 1991. She stated that to date they have impacted over 30,000 young people in the city of Memphis by offering youths the opportunity to grow and develop as leaders of their community. She said the community is excited about the awesome opportunity to support the TIF district and the development of an Arts District in South Memphis. They are also thrilled about the renovation of a historical church in order to transform it into a Performing Art Center. They believe it will be wonderful for the community.

Guest Speaker #6, **Carl Carpenter**: Former North Nashville, TN restaurant entrepreneur for ten years and originally from Summerville, TN. He and his wife's vision was to bring jobs to that Nashville area while teaching young people entrepreneurship. Their business thrived and they saw and became a part of a successful change in that area. They lost the business last year due to tornados and Covid19. They are currently hoping to expand in the Memphis area. They met Mr. Gibson, learned his vision/strategy for the area and are excited to be a part of and see the TIF move forward.

Guest Speaker #7, **J. Penelope Smith**: called in on behalf of the Lucy Simpson Project Inc., whose mission is to build and maintain affordable housing in communities targeted for gentrification by empowering community members through education and access to housing. She owns a second organization located in the Raleigh area. They first became aware of the need in South Memphis in 2019 while looking for commercial space in order to expand their Raleigh location. She said that the community spoke to her heart because it reminded her of the community that she grew up in. In 2019 they began acquiring properties to address the blight. They have since developed relationships with the neighbors. They believe TIF is greatly needed and addresses many issues. The community is happy to lend their support and is excited that someone is actually addressing the economic, vacancies and blight issues. They are looking for an opportunity and ways to access resources to improve their community. She added that her organization is paying individuals in the community to maintain the lots.

Guest Speaker #8, **Fran Seward**: has been a realtor for 21 years. She grew up in South Memphis. She has seen neighborhoods decline. They are working on getting some revitalization projects in White Haven. She said that South Memphis needs to be resuscitated in order to empower the people to want to do better and to be proud of their community. She thinks that the TIF is a great opportunity for the people and the city.

Guest Speaker #9, **Danielle Inez**: Chief of Staff to Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris. She offered the Mayor's office's enthusiastic support of the revitalization and redevelopment of South Memphis and specifically the newly submitted TIF application. She spoke about the needs of South Memphis – the decades of blight, crumbling infrastructure of schools, loss of key businesses and disinvestments of leaders who should have the backs of the residents. She stated that times are changing. She said that when County government learned about this wonderful opportunity to take action, Mayor Harris joined others, including city leaders, to champion this new investment in South Memphis. Shelby County has secured an attorney to offer expertise in this area in order to be able to offer the best possible solution to the residents of South Memphis. Meetings with the key leader of this group have taken place for the last 3 months. This application is considered to be well rounded, thoughtful and only the beginning. The Mayor' office looks forward to the partnership in this work and playing an active role in engaging the families of South Memphis in charting a path forward, giving South Memphis residents more access to the communities that are more beautiful, livable and thriving.

Guest Speaker #10, **Brat Thompson**: was born, reared, raised, lives and plays in South Memphis. He has known J.W. Gibson for over 40 years and considers he and his family to be "gems". Mr. Thompson has been in public office as a State Representative, practiced as an attorney, is a community activist, a consultant and a lobbyist. He has looked at both TIFs. He pointed out that this is not Mr. Gibson's first development and that he has seen his work. Mr. Thompson said that the community speaks of how passionate Mr. Gibson is about this TIF project. Mr. Thompson also said that Mr. Gibson has a giving heart and is an awesome individual. He named some of the organizations that J.W. Gibson has supported. He mentioned Mr. Gibson's service as well. He said that Mr. Gibson has the vision and the wherewithal, in this county, to develop, matriculate, assist and make this happen. Mr. Thompson is in full support of this effort to get this TIF. He ended by thanking God for J. W. Gibson.

Guest Speaker #11, **Katrina Thompson**: local President of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, past President of Lemoyne Owen College Alumni Association, Alpha Chapa Alpha Sorority, organizer at the State and Federal level, Community Activist and member of the Board of Directors for the National Alliance of Black School Educators. She stated that it is rejuvenating to hear of the work that is underway under Mr. Gibson. She looks forward to hearing more about the project and hopes to look and see the progress that Memphis has the opportunity to make. After living in 8 other states and returning to Memphis in 2010, she is aware that there is a tremendous need for revitalization in the area around Lemoyne Owen College. She is in support of the TIF and looks forward to the opportunity to be of assistance in any way possible.

Guest Speaker #12, **Pearl Walker**: applauded Mr. Gibson and the Southeast Regional Development Corporation. She has had a relationship with South Memphis since 1961 as a resident student, property/business owner and activist. As the Founder/President of The I Love Whitehaven Neighborhood and Business Association, she had an off-line question about the boundaries. She is also Chairman of Memphis Has the Power, a campaign to ensure that Memphians receive clean, affordable and renewable energy options in addition to the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy and finally she is the Environmental Justice Chairman for NAACP Memphis Chapter. She wants to know about the GREEN options affiliated with the project and will follow up off-line. She extended best wishes to Mr. Gibson.

Next, Chairman Martin called for the presentation from the Southeast Regional Development Corporation. He gave instructions that all guests, except Board Members and the present speaker, be muted. Board members were invited to ask questions.

Presenters:

Guest Presenter #1, **J.W. Gibson:** CEO/Chairman of Gibson Companies, a small conglomerate of local businesses based in Memphis. Mr. Gibson, a native Memphian, born in Dixie Home Housing Project who relocated to Long View Heights in South Memphis. He gave some background information on Southeast Regional Development Corporation (SRDC) and the development of Westwood Manor, a 48-unit senior housing development across the street from Westwood High School. He said that his company became the pioneers of low income tax credits and that initially the tax credits had to be syndicated in Cincinnati, Ohio. He stated that today, low income tax credit business is booming and they're very hard to get.

Over the years his company has continued to develop real estate from single housing to multi-housing to historical properties. They have twice received the Downtown Memphis Commission's (DMC) Vision Award. Approximately three years ago he was appointed, by Mayor Strickland's Administration, to serve on the 3.0 Strategic Advisory Board and was chosen by that Board to be Chairman. He explained that in a two year period a decent plan was formed to be implemented in South Memphis. He stated that he knows this area well and at the time he was serving as Chairman of Lemoyne College Board of Directors. His company wanted to do more than brick and mortar and therefore decided on the holistic approach to deal with health, housing, economic and workforce development, social issues and education. They searched high and low for models that will work in South Memphis and discovered a program in Houston, Texas office of LISC called Go Neighborhood, headed up by Senchel Matthews, whom Mr. Gibson recruited for his Memphis team. He introduced his team of presenters.

Guest Presenter #2, **Senchel Matthews:** President of SRDC, spoke about SRDC's Outreach and Engagement. She included a slide show as her visual aide. She addressed each slide in detail (ATTACHMENT).

Guest Presenter #3, **Austin Harrison:** gave his presentation with the aid of a lengthy slide show (ATTACHMENT). He gave a detailed summary of the TIF application. His overview included 1) TIF Application Elements, 2) Qualification Analysis, 3) Cost – Benefit Analysis and 4) Redevelopment Plan goals, proposed projects and budget.

Guest Presenter #4, **Sonji Branch:** spoke about the Education component of the TIF.

Chairman Martin invited Mr. J. W. Gibson to do the wrap up of the presentation and afterwards there was a question and answer session from Board members. In closing, Mr. Gibson thanked the Board and staff for allowing him the opportunity to present this 'exciting' proposition. He mentioned that he served on the very first CRA Board of Directors and that he is very appreciative that President Willis decided to return to Memphis, TN to lead up the efforts of the CRA staff. He added that "the timing for this community development is right". Chairman Martin thanked Mr. Gibson and his team for their well thought out and informative presentation.

Chairman Martin opened the mic for Board Members to ask questions and to voice their opinions and concerns. A lengthy question and answer session followed.

A discussion took place on whether or not Mr. Gibson has submitted a completed TIF application according to CRA's policy and procedures. CRA is still awaiting a reply to four points of concern, which Mr. Gibson stated was answered verbally today as well as in written form to the CRA staff [note, as of the time of the meeting, CRA staff had not received a response to the four points of concern]. Mr. Gibson also stated that in addition, he had asked if there was an opportunity to schedule time with the CRA Staff, before today's meeting, to address the four points of concern. He stated that the reply that he received was a no and that he was instructed to present his answers at today's meeting.

Staff Member Andrew Murray said that CRA has not yet received the written response from J.W. Gibson.

Chairman Martin said that the CRA staff will respond with their input on the four questions/concerns followed by their 'next steps' recommendation(s). Mr. Gibson stated that they would again respond to the four concerns both separately and apart from the rest of the presentation. He will ask to meet with the CRA staff to hear their response to his response.

IV. STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

Due to lack of time, Chairman Martin asked President Willis to email her 10 Points update report to the Board.

Update on CRA Financials – Lynn Evans:

Chairman Martin asked that Board members email any financial related questions to guest Liaison to the Auditors, Lynn Evans.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS AND OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Martin pointed out that it was time to address Board nominations. He has contacted Board Member Kevin Spragling who will be in contact with Board members before the May 6th Board meeting.


The next Personnel Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 15th at 8:30 am.

The next CRA Board meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Martin officially adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ann W. Langston, Secretary