

Eloise Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

Johnny and Freda Brooks Resource Center
710 Snively Avenue
Eloise, FL 33880

Tuesday, September 6, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER – Lee Castillo, Chairperson – Called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

Attendance:

Advisory Committee Members Present:

Lee Castillo, Chairperson
Eugenia Barton

Polk County BoCC Staff Present:

Delia Jouppi
Elizabeth Voss
Boris Rodriguez
Michael Callender
Jay Jarvis

Polk County Sheriff's Office Staff

Deputy Jordan Owens

Public:

Hope Musselwhite

No. 1 on Agenda: Welcome to Stakeholders

Delia Jouppi, CRA Manager, welcomed stakeholders and guests

No. 2 on Agenda: Requests from the General Public and opportunity to be heard

No one had anything to address.

No. 3 on Agenda: Approval of June 13, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Did not have a quorum.

No. 4 on Agenda: Old Business

Snively Brooks Park Restoration Projects – Parks & Recreation Manager Mike Callender gave update. Several items on the work list: Soccer field rehab, refurbishing the restroom building, repair the walking path and exercise area, construct a sand volleyball court, and refinish the basketball court and install new goals. Due to unforeseen challenges with contractors, we do not have a firm date. These estimates were done almost a year ago, so the prices have changed. Contractors are not holding to their quotes very long and the annual bids vendors are not holding to their bids. The rehab on the restrooms should start anytime now. The contract was on the board. We will coordinate with the school about the basketball courts, so we do not interrupt the school schedule. The volleyball courts we have already sourced the sand that will be used for it, and we will be constructing it in house. Plus, the in-house crews will be working on the

soccer field, but they have to finish the jobs on the schedule for this year. They will lose funding come October 1 for the existing projects, so they must be completed. We will be purchasing a lot of the items in the next few weeks, the equipment for volleyball will be ordered since we have a contract for that already. The in-house crew is booked up until January, maybe we can free up sometime. The one good thing is the rainy season will be over before we start on it, so we do not have rain delays, at the end we will have to try to get the sod which can become a challenge. To get sod we are at the mercy of mother nature. It has been a real challenge construction wise the last several months, it has thrown kinks in our system as far as things we use to rely on. The county is very adamant about spending tax dollars wisely, fairly, and evenly distributed throughout so we have a robust procurement process to do every time we have to go to get services, materials, or goods. The good thing is we have made it through a lot of that, moving forward it is just a timing effort at this point and time. Would be happy to answer any questions you have of it, would be glad to come back at each quarter to give an update on the progress on where they are at. Will give you my business card to have access to me. Always glad to communicate with you and do whatever I can. But some things you just do not have answers for, right now we do not have a schedule set with everything we have going on & planned but I can give windows, with the heavy side it looks like January. The sidewalk and that stuff looks like the holidays time, but the contractors are doing their thing by then. Beside the restrooms you probably will not see other thing starting until January. This is a very important project to us along with a lot of other important projects, October 1 starts new budget year, so I am trying to finish up old jobs and start new jobs for the year. This is a very important project to us, and we are anxious to get started. We will try to get the walking trails done and basketball court done, if we can get the contractors to schedule it around the Thanksgiving or Christmas break so we do not impact the school.

Lee brought up she has been hearing the contractors talking about having issues with getting the materials. Michael answered that we are finding out the materials are easier to get now but the fuel prices are affecting everything.

Roads & Sidewalks Questions – Roads & Drainage Director – Jay Jarvis to talk about repainting the lettering on the road near the school, additional signage around the school, and extending the turning lane.

Jay Jarvis said he has to say the same thing about the contracts and contractors issue that Michael talked about. That the contracts are coming in 30% to 60% increases above what they were. The contractors can not hold to the prices. School markings in the roadway is on schedule to get it, running in problems with contractors having material issues and stretched very thin. The last guess he had was about 2 months out for the markings and for that type of things within the roadway. Not sure if you all know about the Thompson Nursery Road Extension project from Highway 27 to Highway 17 (right where A & E Auto is) it will be a four-lane highway that will go from 27 to 17. This project was designed back in the early to mid-2000's but it was put on the shelf in 2012 due to the economy taking a downturn. It has now been pulled off the shelf and we are updating the plans. The plans were initially dividing into 4 segments and 2 phases, the first phase was from West Lake Ruby Road over to Highway 17, that was in 4 segments. Now the 1st phase is in just 2 segments, and they are trying to fast track the first segment which goes from Rifle Range Rd over to Highway 17. This is the segment we are really pushing because the alignment is set. We are buying right of way, and we bought A & E Auto, we own their property, but they are currently under extended occupancy. They have asked for additional extended occupancy that we are currently evaluating because they want to rebuild somewhere else. So that is moving forward, and we are currently negotiating. We bought the large piece of property north of what Lake Regions bought, purchased by us. We bought a grove in the Eagle Lake area that has been bought and

proposed for development, so we own that piece of property. We are currently working with property owners trying to get all the right of way we need from Rifle Range across. The hope is what we see is a better fit to this area is once we make that connection from Rifle Range to 17 the hope is that all the truck traffic now and even local traffic will basically go that way to get over to 17 that way rather than coming up through Eloise. I say that to address the concern we heard about the turn lane up at 17 and looking at that. Our intent moving forward once we get that built, we are going to evaluate Snively Avenue as far as what we can do. A few years ago we looked at trying to reduce Snively down to a three lane section and I think that is probably what we are going to move forward with once we get the other connection made because it takes a lot of that traffic off of that roadway that way we can accommodate some of the things that you are worried about in regards to the traffic and the school and how we can set that up to try to address some of those things, coming through there and then we can also evaluate the intersection there at 17 to see what improvements if any we have to make just based upon the amount of traffic we see after that connection has been made. So, I think that is one of the things I know we are 2 to 3 years probably from getting that segment open, but we are pushing as fast as we can to try to get that done. When we were inquired about that, that is why we were like, we were waiting to see what happens. We hope that this will take place, and this will change the flow of traffic. We can then restrict truck traffic through Eloise basically making it where it is no thru trucks. Then we will be able to do that because there will be an alternate way for people to get to 17 using a 4-lane facility across to there. So those are kind of the major things that are kind of going on.

Does anyone have questions? I will be more than happy to try to answer them.

Lee Castillo asked about the lights that are put on certain roads to tell people how fast they are going. Jay responded yes; the radar feedback signs. Lee asked; Do you think we could get some on this road? I know they have one at the entrance at this road here coming into the school, you know it tells you how fast you are coming. She could tell you that some of those cars sometimes are at least going 70 to 80 miles per hour. Jay responded we can look we actually have 2 or 3 sets that we call quote temporary, but they do get installed in the ground, but we move them around every so many months from various areas where we get complaints, and we are experiencing those types of issues. So, we have those that we can set up, but I have to see where we are currently are with where they kind of got already preassigned, where they're going to be over the next several months. But yes, that is definitely something we can look in to. Lee commented that these were permanent it is like a. Jay said this look permanent, what you would see will look permanent, but they are actually not. Lee said oh they are not permanent, but they look permanent. Jay responded what we found is that people adjust, they adjust to it, initially it is like oh gosh I am going that fast well then after a while people get used to it, they see it and it's like no big deal then you have the kids trying to see how fast they can clock it out at and those types of things. It is one of those things that is more of a move it from place to place then permanently having them there, type thing, is what we found that is best so that is what we do. We typically try to not put them up for a location forever and ever.

Lee Castillo asked about down on 17, how the road kind of has a turning lane, one turning lane going this way, but they have two turning lanes going that way, coming this way. Which the majority of the traffic kind of backs up more this way than it does that way. But there is hardly anyone coming from over there, there are more people coming from this side trying to go to that side and instead of having one turning it backs the other two lanes that are supposed to be going straight. Jay responded, that will be part of what we look at in the future because the assumption is the traffic is going to reduce on Snively once we make the other connection and depending on how that works out. We have looked at that once again when we started looking at reducing Snively down to

a three-lane section. But at that time the State actually controlled Lake Shipp on the other side, so the coordination effort, well, now we have made a swap with them now Lake Shipp is now a county roadway, so we now control both sides of 17. But once again our thought process is lets, wait, and see, don't want to go try to go do something that we are going to spend a couple of years and getting ready to do something then we build this other connection and all of a sudden there is a big change we don't need as much turning, as many turning lanes or how that works out for people moving forward. So that is kind of what we are looking at and that is they way I presented to the Commissioners and everything like that because we do get inquiries about that. It is the usual, we can't do things in months, we do things in years and its, we are going to look at those things moving forward.

Officer Owens asked if he was correct in thinking, that this first phase of that new four lane project is the first part that is funded also, that already has funding? Jay responded It all has funding now, we are funded over the next five years to build everything from 27. So, but what happened was the segment that goes, we originally had an alignment the segment that came up on the Logistics, CSX Logistics side of the railroad track actually almost all the railroad tracks up well there was a development built there that we weren't able to basically work out anything to acquire that so now we are having to look a whole new alignment once we cross over the logistics over the CSX railroad with a bridge. Once we cross that now we got to look at, well how are we going to get to Rifle Range, so that is kind of the thing. And what that has done is put doing an alignment study in line with doing with this phase two which is from West Lake Ruby out to 27 kinds of runs parallel pass, so we are going kind of doing all of that at once. At the same time, we are still looking at the other middle segment of the existing road and the realignment through the new development Villa mar, Villa mar is what I think is, Cunningham Road all that is being developed there. That is the way the new road comes down comes in just North of the Logistics, CSX Logistics and it flies over, turns up Pollard Road in that general area, and now we are looking at we are going to probably, we don't think we are going to bridge Lake Gwen, so we are probably going to go around the North side of Lake Gwen. And then come in somewhere on the other side where the creek is and Rifle Range somewhere around Eagle Lake Loop Road, is what we are looking at. So, but the one, (interruption) we are looking at that, well that may create some connections and different things, especially we think it is going to open up Lake Gwen Park as well. That connection as far as it will be right there at the north side, we could probably make a real easy connection to Lake Gwen Park, that part of it, so I think that will open that up to better utilization, I am sure it is being utilized a lot, a man said better access, Jay said better access. So that is what is being looked at. Lee commented that is great.

Delia said, he is Roads and Drainage, so he does sidewalks so anything you were thinking about he does it all. He does the majority of the roads, drainage, sidewalks, anything.

Eugenia said that used to have trouble with ditches, but we don't have ditches except for the big one back there.

Lee said, well that is a canal, Jay said yes, we maintain that canal. Eugenia asked how often are they cleaned? I mean is it a routine? Jay responded, well, it is routine it is just probably 2 maybe 3 times a year, is probably the routine. Just because we have so much that we have, we will never maintain the level that somebody maintains their yard, or anything like that even doing it once a month. We really concentrate a lot on the growing season and then of course also in the growing season when it is wet sometimes, we can't get in there because it is so wet. Eugenia and another member live on the end of Eloise where the community center is but the other end, people are constantly complaining that people are still throwing appliances in the canal and tires, which plugs it all up. It is unfortunate, you know you wish you knew who was doing it.

But it is a problem, Jay agreed and said that it is a big problem all around the county. Litter dumping is a big issue and had grown.

Eugenia told Jay that they, appreciate what they do, we surely do. Jay said Thank you. Jay said any time you all want him to come back, or somebody wants to know anything, he will be more than happy to.

Delia asked if everyone was happy, and Lee said yes. Then asked if they had any more questions for anybody.

- **Delia Reminded everyone about next Advisory Committee Meeting on: Monday, December 5, 2022 – 6:00 p.m. at the Johnny and Freda Brooks Resource Center**

Eugenia asked if we had a police report? Officer Owens replied, no new crimes, still looking good. Lee said that is the good news. Officer Owens said still good. Eugenia said that is what she tells everyone you are in the wrong, she hears people, her friends, tell me about crimes and I tell them they live in the wrong subdivision that is all she knows. That is good news, though, no report.

Eugenia asked if there were problems down in the homeless village down by the bridge. Officer Owens said Well, part of that is in the City of Winter Haven, there are always problems in there, but they are not stuff that the Sheriff isn't already working on solving and it is not trickling into your streets. So that is a good thing. Eugenia started talking about a new homeless man near 9th, that goes down by the canal and goes way down in there. He comes around about dusty dark on his bicycle with his junk and goes down there. It just a shame. Officer Owen said they have walked that area with Sheriff Judd and that they just don't want to do anything different that is exactly what they want to do. Eugenia said that is their lifestyle and she has tried to work with them. She worked for the school system, and they had a lot of homeless parents with children, and they didn't see anything wrong with it. It is just a shame but that is their lifestyle, they couldn't except our lifestyle anymore then we can accept theirs. Officer Owens said the Sheriff's department just works with them and tries to help if they need it and keeping them from committing crime at the same time.

Eugenia told Officer Owens she some of the same old faces down there panhandling again. They get out jail and go right back to their old walking path. Eugenia told Officer Owens that they appreciate what they do too. Officer Owens said Thank you.

Lee asked if there were reports from the Loise Center. Boris replied he wants to let everyone know about the Spanish Heritage Festival on September 17th from 11 to 3. Wants everyone to come and enjoy their selves, we have food vendors, entertainment, kids' area and much of the exhibitors dueling out information for the community from Health Dept to other organizations, Peace River. We have a total of 25 vendors in total. Lee said that is good, that is a really good turnout. Boris said for the after-school program we had over 52 kids registered at this point, which hits compacity of all the classes for prodigy and as we speak, we have a parenting class going on for the Health Department in the other room. Lee said that is great.

Lee asked Hope if she had anything to say. Hope replied look I hang around and do what they tell me to do and that's all I do anymore. If you all need something tell me and that is what I do. If they don't tell me what to do, I am lost.

Eugenia said her daughter is the Director of Faith Extreme the program that is over here that was defunct a while and they are having class for Eloise on Tuesday evening. She wanted to come introduce herself tonight, but she is over there, she was in Inwood for a while and now she is here. It is for teens and the center is for elementary and middle school. We are trying to get these kids in this neighborhood busy doing the right things.

Lee said they have had a lot of the kids her children's age that are grow up and have their own businesses and have done really good. A lot of good kids have come out of Eloise and done good things. We try hard to keep this community where they children will proposer and take care of the kids, they are our future. They brought up that the kids might stay but the housing costs going up from \$250K

to \$300K it will be hard for anyone to own a house. They would have to make a lot of money to make their payments.

Eugenia said she took a tour and is shocked at the vacant lots in Eloise, she had no clue there was that much. Eloise used to partner with Habitat for Humanity, but they are having funding issues and all that, but it is just a shame that we can't build more affordable housing you know for poor people. Lee said People would buy if the house was in their price range and they had the down payment with reasonable month payment but now you can't even rent a room for that amount let alone a house. But we will see what the future brings.

Lee told everyone she appreciated everyone coming and appreciated all the information that was given with real knowledge of what is happening in the community.

6:35pm The meeting is adjourned.

Mr. Jarvis and Mr. Calendar was asked to come back to the next meeting in December.