

**POMPANO BEACH COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT
AGENCY**

**EAST CRA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

EMMA LOU OLSON CIVIC CENTER

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

2:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Jack Rogerson called the workshop to order at 2:00pm.

ROLL CALL

Present

Jack Rogerson – Chair
Judy Niswonger – Vice Chair
Paul Fisher
Ray Lubomski

Absent

David Mingus
Corey Staniscia
Rafael Katz
David Mingus
Fred Stacer

Staff in Attendance:

Nguyen Tran, Director
Kimberly Vazquez, Sr Project Manager
Sarah Mulder, Project Manager
Vince Wooten, Program Specialist
Elizabeth Pinto, Dept Head Secretary
Cassandra Rhett, Housing and Social Services Manager

BSO

Deputy Michael Carabine
Sergeant Tony Hopkins
Deputy Robert Ferrelli

Businesses

Phil's Heavenly Pizza

AGENDA

1. Discussion with CRA Staff, East Advisory Committee members, Broward Sheriff's Officers and FPI Security on Vagrancy and Loitering in front of the Harbor Village Businesses

Nguyen Tran presented the issue of vagrancy and loitering in front of Harbor Village Businesses to the Committee. He stated it started as a Facebook post by Rossitto's, an Italian restaurant in Harbor Village, regarding the homeless people who sleep outside their business and create a hazard for them. **Mr. Tran** stated that Advisory Committee member Corey Staniscia brought this to the Committee's and Staff's attention and that there should be a meeting to discuss this. **Mr. Tran** restated that FPI, can be called up until 11pm for safety issues and that BSO non-emergency or 911 should be contacted after 11pm.

Livia Walters from Phil's Heavenly Pizza talked about Phil, their business and how Phil's Heavenly Pizza try to help or inform the actions of the unhoused that stay near their business. **Ms. Walters** stated that newer people tended to be more of a problem and that the amount of homeless people has risen greatly over the past year. **Ms. Walters** stated that Phil's Heavenly Pizza tries to enforce guidelines for behavior and only hands out pizza before 10am. Conditions for the free pizza include no panhandling, drinking, or smoking nearby.

Nguyen Tran stated that **Cassandra Rhett**, Housing and Social Services Manager is very familiar with most of the chronically homeless people in Pompano and offers services to them, but cannot force people to choose the help.

Jack Rogerson voiced his disappointment in Harbor Village business representation at the workshop.

David Hall, a concerned citizen who frequents many businesses in Harbor Village voiced his concerns about the area. **Mr. Hall** stated that he has seen people urinate in plants and litter all over the plaza. He stated that his upset was not with people who have experienced challenging economic difficulties, but with drug addicts and others who do not want help. **Mr. Hall** was pleased with the CRA for the changes in the East CRA and with BSO for having more of a presence in the area but thinks more can and should be done. **Mr. Hall** stated he thought using drug dogs in problem areas would be a way to deter drug users from staying in Harbor Village or parks in Pompano.

Jack Rogerson agreed with Mr. Hall's statements about drug dogs, and stated that he believed the economy and significant raised to the cost of living is contributing to the vagrancy problem.

Sergeant Toni Hopkins gave a talk regarding homelessness:

1. Being homeless not illegal it is a larger societal issue. Not everyone wants help and that cannot be forced on them
2. Community Court is for people who want help. Four people have graduated recently, but if you go to Community Court and don't progress, you end up downtown instead. Details have to be kept private because of HIPAA laws.
3. Panhandling. There are ordinances in place but most people don't stay in one spot all day. If an officer is not witnessing the problem, panhandling ordinances are difficult to enforce.
4. Regarding drug dogs. There has to be justification for using them, the dogs cannot be used like in TSA. There are also laws in place for what dogs can and cannot do.

Sergeant Hopkins stated that transient homeless do not qualify for Broward County Services. She also informed those present that a new law may go into effect Oct 1st where homeless cannot stay in unauthorized places. This would enforce incarceration of camping and holds cities accountable for not providing services. Broward County is looking at creating temporary shelters and holding focus groups. Whatever shelter option is decided can only be created for a year.

Deputy Michael Carabine stated that the people who are seen every day are the chronic homeless, drug users etc. He stated that the people who want help, get help from Cassandra Rhett or whatever other services are offered to them. **Deputy Carabine** made the point that feeding the homeless is not helpful as it encourages congregation. He also praised CRA efforts in cleaning up the area and encouraging homeless to move elsewhere. **Deputy Carabine** stated that he also notices after 11pm more people are staying and sleeping in Harbor Village, but the businesses need trespassing affidavits for BSO to be able to help.

Sergeant Hopkins stated that road patrol has extended hours and increased patrols at night but you cannot stop people from existing. Businesses need updated trespass affidavits. If business call for trespass but the affidavit is more than one year old the state attorney will not uphold the charge. If someone is genuinely afraid, please call 911.

Tom McMahon asked about the homeless shelter on Blount Rd and why people are asked to leave during the day. **Sergeant Hopkins** answered that the facility needs to be cleaned and there are strict rules on who can stay and for how long. **Mr. McMahon** voiced his concerns with the large amount of homeless people sent away from that area to potentially be an issue somewhere else. He believes there needs to be a respite program.

Kimberly Vazquez stated one of the reasons homeless people congregate at places like Harbor Village is that they can charge their phones. **Sergeant Hopkins** proposed letting businesses know to turn of outdoor electricity and wi-fi at night.

Ivan Montero representing FPI stated that he has received a lot of reports and complaints from his staff about certain people becoming more of a nuisance, he believes their warrants aren't being checked.

Nguyen Tran appreciated Sergeant Hopkins and BSO having a more aggressive plan because citizens want action. Mr. Tran stated that on the City side, an ordinance might need to be changed to help this as the City owns the public space and sidewalk.

There being no other business, the workshop of the East CRA Advisory Committee with BSO and Harbor Village Businesses was adjourned at 3:04pm