



# MINUTES

## Housing Committee Meeting

5:30 PM - Thursday, October 10, 2019 - City Hall

---

**CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 P.M.**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF QUORUM AND PROPER NOTICE**

**PRESENT:** Marie Aliberti, Nan Cobb, Daniel DiVenanzo, Alan Holden, Vice Chair Emily Lee, Karen LeHeup-Smith, Carole Martin, Robert Morin (arrived 6:03 p.m.), Victorious Wright and Chairman Michael Holland

### **1. DISCUSSION ITEM**

#### **1.1 Presentation by Lake Community Action Agency (LCAA)**

Ron Neibert, City Manager, introduced Michael Roberson, the LCAA Director of Energy Services.

Mr. Roberson provided an overview of the program they offer in cooperation with the cities of Mount Dora and Leesburg. He commented they have noticed that once the agency comes into a neighborhood and provides the weatherization services, other neighbors begin to take better care of their homes as well. He stated that the average age of a home in Eustis is from the 1970's. He indicated that most of the homes they have improved were from the 1990's. He explained that the weatherization funds cannot be used to do other improvements to a home and so some other cities including Casselberry and Mount Dora have provided funding for additional improvements. He commented on the need for programs for residents with median income as they do not meet the low income criteria.

Mr. Roberson stated that he is a certified energy auditor and quality control inspector. He stated all of the programs they have run in conjunction with other cities have worked very well. He added that the weatherization program saves the residents as much as \$50 per month. He emphasized the level of inspection they perform on a home and explained how they handle homes that have additional issues that the weatherization program cannot repair. He stated they send out letters to each home owner detailing what will be done to the home and all contractors are required to have insurance. He indicated that the cities will not be liable for anything that occurs within the homes during the construction.

Mr. Roberson then explained the program they have in place with the City of Mount Dora. He stated they provide up to \$10,000 per household for rehab and up to \$2,000 for health and safety items. He added that they provide

referrals to the USDA Rural Development for issues they cannot handle. He recommended that Eustis follow Mount Dora's model if they wish to implement a program. He explained that Mount Dora implemented their program due to the number of homes in the City with blue tarps on their roof. He stated that if the repairs include the weatherization program then they can get up to \$17,000 in improvements per home.

Mr. Roberson further explained that there is a waiting list for the weatherization program. He stated that, if the City has a separate program, LCAA cannot use their vehicles to inspect the homes.

Mr. Neibert commented on the delay that may occur due to the two waiting lists if they are tied to the weatherization program.

Mr. Roberson stated that, if a client is already on their weatherization list, and their home comes up for repair, they could possibly be combined with the City's program.

Mr. Neibert asked if the City would want to give additional preference to someone who is already on the weatherization list.

Ms. Lee asked what they do to help make sure the resident's home doesn't deteriorate again with Mr. Roberson explaining that during the final inspection they provide recommendations and education and then re-inspect in 60 days to make sure they are doing what is recommended.

Ms. LeHeup-Smith confirmed that LCAA would get a percentage for the administration of the program with Mr. Neibert stating they get 10% plus \$2,000 per home.

Mr. Roberson explained that it takes about \$1,000 for the paperwork, qualifying and initial inspection process and then there is a \$2,000 fee for the actual management of the construction process.

Mr. Neibert explained that LCAA handles everything. They will send invoices to the City from the contractors and the City just writes checks to the contractors. The contractors will apply for the building permits.

Mr. Roberson stated his recommendation that, for the program, the permit costs are waived with Mr. Neibert indicating how that could be done to stay within state statutes.

Ms. Martin questioned how long they have been doing the program with Mr. Roberson stating they have been working with Mount Dora since 2014 with a total expended for that program of approximately \$184,000. She questioned how long their waiting list is with Mr. Roberson stating that it is not very long for Mount Dora and they have been completing approximately six homes per year.



Mr. Neibert explained the City has set aside \$250,000 for the program which should allow the program to do approximately 20 homes.

Vice Chair Lee asked if they perform an evaluation to see how successful the program has been with Mr. Roberson further explaining they send a follow-up letter to check their electric bill and if there is a major shift upward in the electric bill, then they conduct a follow-up.

Vice Chair Lee asked if they inspect any of the repairs with Mr. Roberson responding that he had inspected two homes that were done two or three years ago and they still looked good. He indicated that the City of Mount Dora does not require that; however, Eustis could include that as part of the program. He explained that every home is inspected before work is done and once the work is final. He confirmed they do not have a follow-up education program.

Vice Mayor Lee stated she would want to know how successful is the program and are the funds being used properly.

Mr. Neibert asked if they had received feedback from Mount Dora about the results with Mr. Roberson stating they have just been told about residents thanking them for the program.

Mr. Neibert asked how much Mount Dora budgets with Mr. Roberson indicating they initially budgeted \$225,000.

Chairman Holland confirmed that LCAA has the ability to handle the program.

Mr. Roberson indicated they offer a free one year warranty.

Ms. Cobb questioned if the contractors are from Lake County with Mr. Roberson stating some are from in Lake County and some from outside.

Mr. Wright stated his belief that most people that sign up for the program won't let their homes deteriorate again.

Mr. Roberson indicated that most people let their homes deteriorate due to financial issues and the program targets low income residents.

Ms. Cobb asked if there is a time limit on living in the home with Mr. Roberson confirming that the homes must be home owner occupied and they must continue to reside within the homes for at least five years.

Vice Chair Lee asked how bad a home's condition has to be before they say "no" with Mr. Roberson responding that if a wall has shifted or if there is extreme mold, LCAA will give referrals but will not touch those repairs.

Ms. Cobb asked if they can be given a timeframe to fix the problems and still stay on the list with Mr. Roberson stating they are given 180 days to rectify what is found on the initial inspection.

Vice Chair Lee asked about the cast iron piping issue with Mr. Roberson stating that is under health and safety and would be up to the City whether or not to cover that. He cautioned that repiping an entire house could take up all the funding. He recommended only including minor plumbing repair.

Mr. Neibert asked about how they handle contract for deed with Mr. Roberson indicating they make sure the property has a clear title.

Mr. Neibert confirmed they could have a mortgage but it must have clear title free of encumbrances which would prevent a landlord from trying to get a home repaired by stating it was under a "contract for deed".

Ms. Martin questioned how the information about the program would be disseminated with Mr. Roberson recommending they distribute the information through the utility bills.

Chairman Holland confirmed LCAA would be willing to attend a community meeting to help inform the public.

Mr. Roberson stated that once the information goes out in the bills and the first house is completed, the City will not have to worry about getting the word out.

Discussion was held regarding various ways to disseminate the information.

Mr. Roberson provided a Powerpoint explaining their weatherization program and construction management services to local municipalities. He explained the Leesburg CRA program and the qualifications for the program. He then reviewed the Sanford Goldsboro program. He noted their requirement that the property owner must attend a two-hour workshop regarding energy efficiency and homeowner upkeep.

Ms. LeHeup-Smith recommended having a checklist that the resident would have to sign off on with Mr. Roberson stating that could be during the final inspection and Mr. Neibert stating that could be included as part of the contract as well.

Mr. Roberson then reviewed the Mount Dora NECRA program citing items included and not included under the program. He indicated they would send a letter to the property owner if they are disqualified for the program and why they were disqualified. He stated they give them six months to fulfill a lien so they can be reconsidered.

Mr. Neibert suggested that if the homeowner can satisfy a lien within 30 days, they can maintain their place on the list.

Mr. Roberson explained that first the inspector checks out the house to see if the program can cover work, then the contractor looks at the house and can say they can't do the work. Then the property would be disqualified.



Mr. Neibert stated he likes the Mount Dora program; however, his only concern is whether or not to do roofs due to the cost. He questioned if a \$5,000 maximum for any roof repairs would be adequate with Mr. Roberson stating that would not be sufficient. He commented on the cost of roof replacement. He noted that if they used all the available funding for their roof, then they could apply for the weatherization program wait list.

Mr. Neibert suggested dividing the funds up and setting aside money for combined City/weatherization projects.

Discussion was regarding the amount of funding available per home through the weatherization program.

Ms. Aliberti asked what would occur if they go into a home and find that it is not habitable, and if they are under any obligation to report the home as uninhabitable. He stated they would make the homeowner and the City aware of the situation.

Mr. Neibert indicated they could refer them to the Lake County SHIP program which can pay for demo and possible rebuild.

Mr. Wright asked about the divided program with Mr. Neibert explaining that by setting aside some funds for a combination program, then those people waiting on the weatherization program wouldn't lose out. Mr. Roberson indicated they would look at what a home needed and then advise the homeowner as to which program would be better for them to apply for.

Mr. Morin questioned how much funding is available under the weatherization program with Mr. Roberson stating they currently have \$700,000 for all of Lake County.

Mr. Roberson stated LCAA would prefer all City funds in one pot and not divided. He indicated it probably would be very rare that someone comes up on both lists at the same time.

Ms. LeHeup-Smith asked how quickly does the work begin with Mr. Roberson responding work usually begins within about one month after the initial process is completed.

Mr. Morin asked if any homes have already been identified within the City with Mr. Roberson indicating there are Eustis homes on the weatherization list but he did not know if they are located within the CRA.

Ms. LeHeup-Smith asked if LCAA could provide regular reports on the program with Mr. Roberson responding affirmatively and indicating they already do that for Mount Dora. He stated they would provide a list of addresses under construction.

Mr. Neibert responded how disputes are handled and confirmed that disputes would not be taken back to the Commission for resolution with Mr. Roberson explaining their appeal process.

Chairman Holland commented on his previous concerns regarding the possibly bureaucracy and cost for hiring someone to administer a program and how contracting with LCAA will eliminate those concerns. He recommended keeping the process as simple as possible.

Mr. Neibert recommended adopting the Mount Dora structure. He stated it accomplishes most of the goals he heard expressed. He stated he would create a resolution codifying the program and processes to take to the CRA Board after which a contract would be approved by the CRA for the administrative services.

Vice Chair Lee asked that the education requirement from the Sanford program be included with Chairman Holland concurring.

## **2. PUBLIC INPUT**

Gail Isaac-Thomas asked about the building permits and how long it would take to pull a permit.

Mr. Roberson indicated it doesn't take too long, usually within one day and Mr. Neibert explained that since they are not doing anything structural they wouldn't require architectural drawings.

Ms. Isaac-Thomas asked if homeowners would receive up to \$40,000 per home with Mr. Neibert responding that each home could receive up to \$10,000 with another \$2,000 for health safety and possibly another \$7,000 in weatherization funds.

Ms. Cobb stated her preference that the program include a set dollar amount for plumbing instead of "minor plumbing" with Mr. Roberson recommending a \$500 cap. He indicated they could later increase that cap if it is deemed necessary.

Reva Monroe Hutto asked how soon the City will start the process with Mr. Neibert explaining they should be able to quickly prepare the necessary documents and get the CRA approval and may be able to start after the first of the year.

Ms. Hutto asked how participants will be identified with Mr. Neibert responding the City will publicize the program and then residents will apply with Lake Community Action Agency.

Mr. Roberson further explained that LCAA will set up a separate telephone extension just for the City of Eustis program.

## **3. COMMITTEE DIRECTION**



**CONSENSUS:** It was a consensus of the Committee for staff to draft the appropriate documents based on the Mount Dora program and to include the education requirement and the \$500 cap on plumbing.

Ms. Isaac Thomas questioned the number of smoke detectors allowed under the Mount Dora program with Mr. Roberson stating it is based on the number and placement of the bedrooms. He indicated they also install CO detectors and ensure proper ventilation. He stated they have to prove to the Dept. of Energy that the resident deserves the specific measures included in the home.

Ms. Cobb announced that the previously discussed Community cleanup has been changed to Saturday, November 23rd.

Vice Chair Lee read a notice from Red Apple Media regarding the League of Women Voters campaign to encourage women to participate in the 2020 election.

Mr. Neibert noted he is coordinating with Waste Management on placement of the dumpster for the cleanup.

**4. ADJOURNMENT: 6:46 P.M.**

*\*These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to [www.eustis.org](http://www.eustis.org) and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording or verbatim transcript of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*



CHRISTINE HALLORAN  
City Clerk



MICHAEL L. HOLLAND  
Chairman