

WILLIS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Willis, Texas

April 13, 2021

5:30 p.m.

The Willis Community Development Corporation of the City of Willis, Texas convened in special session at city hall on the date and time aforesaid, with the following members present:

Mary Reed, President
Tamara Young-Hector, Board Member
Sonda Toliver, Board Member
Yolanda Harris, Board Member
Sharon Luster, Board Member
J. Rice Board Director
Marissa Quintanilla, City Secretary
Robert Evans, City Manager
Taylor Whichard, Public Works Director
Derek Wind, City Engineer
Officer Murphy, Willis Police Department

And the following members absent: Lisa Toliver; constituting a quorum at which time the following business was transacted to-wit:

1. Call to order the special meeting.
Mary Reed called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance, and Invocation
I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Honor the Texas Flag. I pledge allegiance to thee Texas; one state under God, one and indivisible.
Ms. Reed called roll; Lisa Toliver absent: Pledges were recited. J. Rice gave the invocation.
3. CITIZENS INQUIRY
 - a. Public Comments
No public comments.
4. CONSENT AGENDA
 - a. Approval of minutes of the previous meetings: January 26, 2021 and March 4, 2021
 - b. Approval of financial statements
Ms. Reed asked for any questions on the consent agenda. None were received. Motion was made by Tamara Young-Hector to approve the consent agenda. Yolanda Harris seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
5. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Discuss and take action on assisting with the July 4th Freedom Festival as proposed by Tre Sembera of 1097 Newspaper. Mr. Rice stated the board has been assisting with the fireworks over the last couple of the years. Mr. Rice stated there has not been an actual festival in the last few years. Mr. Rice stated that he's been speaking with Mr. Sembera concerning the July 4th festival that he's proposed. Mr. Sembera proposed a one-day event from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mr. Sembera proposed having an airplane airshow during the day and a firework show later at night. Mr. Sembera also proposed having vendor booths/trucks with food, arts and crafts carnival rides, and a petting zoo. Mr. Sembera stated there was still no location for the event as of yet. Mr. Sembera also presented the board with organizational charts. Mr. Sembera stated he does plan on soliciting for donations throughout the city. Mr. Rice stated that this is a different way of approaching this versus the past. Mary Reed asked for questions. Ms. Reed stated that she would like to know information, and did not feel comfortable in committing to anything. Mr. Rice suggested Mr. Sembera come back in May with the information.

- b. Discuss and take action on Lindley Park Improvements proposal as recommended by the Park Committee.

Mr. Rice stated that there were two options submitted by Bleyl Engineering. Mr. Rice stated option 1 was being recommended to the board by the park committee. Mr. Rice stated the cost estimates for the improvements was \$628,400. Mr. Rice stated includes building a completely new full size basketball court, replacing all playground equipment. Parking, and sidewalk improvements, and permanent bathrooms. Mr. Rice stated that the cost for the design on the park is being provided free by Bleyl. Mr. Rice stated that there are some associated costs. Mr. Rice stated they need to get some information for the design that includes soil investigation, structural, electrical, and contract administration. \$19,710. Mr. Rice stated that the board was looking at about a \$650,000 project. Mr. Rice stated if the board decides to proceed with this it would need to go before City Council. Mr. Rice stated if the Council is ok with it, there is money in the budget, that it could be started this year, but would budget for the actual improvements that would be done for next years budget. Mr. Rice asked for questions. Ms. Luster asked what was the difference between option 1 and option 2. Mr. Rice stated there was some safety issues for the playground been close to the street on option 2, and less tree loss if we went with option 1. Mr. Wind went over the design with the board. Mr. Wind stated originally thinking about trying to swap, to put the basketball court further away from the residents on the west side, they found a sewer line that goes right along the edge of where the playground area is. Mr. Wind stated that they came up with two options. Option 1 which is basically keeping the playground area where it is, changing the shape of it, replacing the playground equipment, and shifting the basketball court over, as much as they felt comfortable doing it next to the playground to get it a little further away from the residents on the west side. Mr. Wind stated that option 2, they could fit the playground over on the east side and put the basketball court where the existing playground was, the reason that Bleyl and the park committee didn't like this option much was because there is a big tree in the middle of the playground area and would have to remove the tree. Ms. Luster asked about access from Easy Street. Mr. Rice stated there is no parking on Easy Street, but can walk from Easy Street to the park. Ms. Reed stated that Mayor Reed had asked about putting asphalt parking on Easy Street along with parking on Lindley Street. Mr. Wind stated if more parking was added there would be more cost but would look into it. Mr. Rice asked if we would run into the City ordinance problem. Mr. Rice stated this was existing parking. Mr. Wind stated the correct way to go about it would be to ask City Council for a variance. Mary asked for questions. None were received. Motion was made by Sharon Luster to approve option 1 of the design to Lindley Park Improvements, and including additional parking on Easy Street. Tamara Young-Hector seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- c. Discuss and take action on applying for grant funds from the HOME program and providing the required matching funds.

Mr. Rice stated that last year when discussing the budget, the question was brought up about affordable housing, which the board budgeted for every year. Mr. Rice stated the board had asked if there was something that they could do in affordable housing and he stated this was something they could do. Mr. Rice stated the affordable housing through the HOME Program a good program. Mr. Rice stated several years ago the City participated in a similar program, where there were people living in run down houses, mostly very low-income people, usually elderly or disabled. Mr. Rice stated the houses were torn down and new ones built. Mr. Rice stated that the CDC can participate directly also since it is a non-profit. Mr. Rice stated the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) operates the HOME program through a Reservation System, the first step to implementing the program is for the CDC to apply to be accepted into the Reservation System, upon approval of the application, the CDC would enter into a 36-month contract with TDHCA. During the contract period the CDC could take applications from homeowners and apply for funds during the periods specified in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Mr. Rice stated the current NOFA allows for four funding periods, spanning December 8, 2020 to June 21, 2021. Mr. Rice recommended that the Willis CDC apply for the Reservation System in 2021; we can begin working on this application immediately. Mr. Rice stated his firm, CommEcoDev, can complete the Reservation System application and have the CDC prepared to apply for funds during the

first funding period of 2022. Mr. Rice recommended that the CDC apply for funding for the reconstruction of two houses in 2022, taking into consideration that the CDC will be able to apply for funding for 36 months under the Reservation System contract, most likely Fall 2021-Fall 2024. Ms. Young-Hector asked once the applications are filled out how do you select who gets the houses. Mr. Rice stated the two major things are they have to meet the income criteria; they have to own the home. Ms. Young-Hector asked what if 20 applicants meet the criteria, then how would you select. Mr. Rice stated the board would have to establish a set of guidelines. Mr. Rice stated that first of all you have to determine whether or not they are going to allow you to apply for the funds, then the board will have to adopt guidelines. The board discussed the possibilities of doing more than two houses, but maybe more like eight houses. Motion was made by Tamara Young-Hector to apply for grant funds for the HOME program for eight house and to apply the matching funds. Sonda Toliver seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

d. Discuss the proposed FY 2021-22 proposed budget

Mr. Rice stated that this draft budget is not something that needs to be approved at this meeting, but would like to present the budget to Council in June to discuss with them, and by August 1, 2021 would like to have it approved so that the 60-day waiting period can start and can start using funds October 1, 2021. Ms. Reed asked if the board could schedule a budget workshop to discuss the budget in detail and present any ideas the board may have. Mr. Rice asked the board to review the budget and the board agreed to a budget workshop for April 27, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

e. Discuss and take action on replacing the basketball goals at MLK Park

Mr. Rice stated that this is something that has come up in various conversations. Mr. Rice stated that Taylor Whichard have spoken about this. Mr. Rice stated there's been an idea to replace the basketball goals as is or to replace them and hang them from the ceiling. Mr. Rice stated that hanging them from the ceiling is going to be more expensive. Mr. Rice stated that Mr. Whichard stated that hanging from the ceiling would be an estimate of about \$7,500 each. Mr. Whichard stated he has not gotten anyone to go out and provide an actual quote. Mr. Whichard stated he was looking for input and direction from the board to see if the board wants to replace as is or from the ceiling. The board discussed how long the basketball goals had been at the park. Mr. Rice stated that they'd been there for about 20 years. The board asked Mr. Whichard to get quotes for the replacement of the goals as is and not from ceiling, for the meeting in May.

f. Discuss and take action on the Juneteenth Celebration

Ms. Reed stated that she had received several calls to see if the Juneteenth Celebration would take place this year. Ms. Reed stated that she wanted to go ahead and hold the celebration since it was canceled last year due to COVID-19. Mr. Reed stated that everything would be free. There would be food, games, and entertainment. Motion was made by Tamara Young-Hector to proceed with the Juneteenth Celebration. Yolanda Harris seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

g. Elect officers for 2021

Motion was made by Tamara Young-Hector to appoint Mary Reed as President. Sonda Toliver seconded the motion. Motion was passed unanimously. Motion was made by Tamara Young-Hector to appoint Sharon Luster as Vice President. Sonda Toliver seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Motion was made by Tamara Young-Hector to appoint Sonda Toliver as Treasurer. Yolanda Harris seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Motion was made by Sharon Luster to appoint Marissa Quintanilla as Secretary. Tamara Young-Hector seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Officers for 2021 are as follow; Mary Reed President, Sharon Luster Vice President, Sonda Toliver Treasure, and Marissa Quintanilla Secretary.

6. REPORTS

Ms. Reed asked about the seconded water fountain at MLK Park, she would like it installed before the Juneteenth Celebration. Mr. Whichard stated he would have it installed before the celebration.

7. ADJOURN

Motion was made by Tamara Young-Hector to adjourn. Yolanda Harris seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Marissa Quintanilla, City Secretary