



**WEST TAMPA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA  
 COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
 Meeting Summary**

February 27, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

Hillsborough Education Foundation, TECO Hall, 2306 N. Howard Avenue, Tampa, FL 33607

**Meeting Called to Order** by Joseph Robinson, CAC Chair at 5:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

CAC Member	At-Large or Ex-Officio Seat	CAC Term (FY)	Present or Absent
Joseph Robinson, Chair	West Tampa Community Development Corp.	2025	P
Carlos Ramirez, Vice Chair	North Hyde Park Alliance	2025	P
Michael Braccia	At Large	2025	P
Sandra Sanchez	At Large	2025	P
Janice Williams	At Large	2025	P
Bobby Wilson	Old West Tampa Neighborhood Association and Crimewatch	2025	P
Jeanette LaRussa Fenton	West Tampa Chamber of Commerce	2024	P
Cynthia Maloney	North Hyde Park Civic Association	2025	P
Heem Baisden	West Tampa Alliance	2024	P
Delphine Jones	West Riverfront Crime Watch Group	2025	P
Tina Young	Project Link Inc.	2024	A
Walter Smith II	Greater West Tampa Community Council	2023	Expired
Vacant	Tampa Housing Authority		

**Staff present:** Erica Moody, Melisa Martinez, Brenda Thrower, Dee Reed, Andrea Roshaven, Corine Linebrink, and Vanassa Ross

**Sign In Sheet:** David Vinokurov, Lue Sheared, Ayesha Burney, Andrea White, Gaynelle Williams, Keith Johnson, Joe Patterson, Cheryl Patterson, Clay Walkup, Gayle Williams, Michael Bufda, Ron Black, Dwight Bolden, Julia Palaschak, Linda Saul-Sena, and Angela Watkins.

**Opening Comments:** There was an announcement by CRA Director Erica Moody that Brenda Thrower, Interim Ybor City CRA Development Manager will be additionally assigned to the West Tampa CAC as its manager. There was a question if this was interim or permanent and she replied permanent. In addition, we would like to explore changing the date of the West Tampa CRA meeting to another day since both Ybor and West Tampa CAC meetings are scheduled on the same day. Chair Robinson asked to defer this discussion to later in the agenda.

**Public Comments:** Several members of the public attended the meeting and spoke during public comments. These included Michael Randolph; Clay Walkup; Gayle Williams; Dwight Bolden; George Smith; James Galvin ; and Nick Hagen.

**Action Items: Approval of January 23, 2024, CAC Meeting Minutes – *There was a motion (Wilson/Braccio) to approve the approve the minutes with changes. The vote was unanimously approved.***

### **Community Policing Updates**

**Tampa Police Department- Officer Gig Brown** addressed the CAC with a request to fund memory cards for the video cameras to support the video cameras installed in the district. He explained that there was an issue recently on Main Street where the cameras lost connectivity and the ability to record. Detectives realized that the solution was to upgrade the memory cards. Officer Brown researched the issue, and the cost is \$28.96 per SIMS card, and they need 10 cards. The total cost would be under \$300. It was confirmed that this expense is eligible under community policing. There was an audience member, Mr. Omar, who raised hand and was acknowledged by Chair Robinson. He offered to purchase the 10 SIMS cards as a donation to Tampa Police Department to speed up the process. Chair Robinson suggested the motion be voted on at this time and then they can work out a separate agreement. ***There was a motion to approve up to \$500 for Tampa Police to purchase SIMS cards for the West Tampa video cameras. The vote was unanimously approved.***

**Lieutenant Carlos Houston** provided the monthly police report and crime stats. He said the top crimes they *are monitoring include robberies, burglaries, aggravated assaults. Last month there was only one robbery* and there was an arrest made. There was a residential burglary that is being investigated. There were no stolen vehicles but has eight vehicles break ins. Two were arrested and one case is pending evidence. There were several arrests made at the convenience store at 2518 N. Albany following a long investigation. They recovered 2 firearms, multiple narcotics and seized 10 illegal slot machines. There were questions about the timing of the arrests and if helicopters were used. Houston said that TPD does deploy helicopters regularly depending on the situation, and sometimes at night. There was additional discussion about deployment and patrols.

### **Presentations**

- A. **Water Efficiency Rebates** – Julia Palashak, Tampa Water Department and David Vivokurov, Tampa Bay Water, shared information about a water conservation campaign that they are promoting to homeowners and multi-family residential buildings. They provided handouts and directions to receive a free water conservation kit per household. They stressed that saving water will save homeowners money. They mentioned rebates (\$100) that homeowners can get by upgrading their toilets to the new smaller tanks to save water. There are also rebates for upgrading shower heads. Handouts were left in the back of the room for the public to take and more information at [www.tampabaywaterwise.org](http://www.tampabaywaterwise.org).

- B. West Tampa Strategy Group** – Linda Saul Sena, former Tampa City Council person, shared information about the newly formed West Tampa Strategy Group and its members. They are focused on preserving the historic character of West Tampa and concerned about the overlay district and its status. Saul-Sena wrote an article in Creative Loafing about the historic buildings in West Tampa and brought copies to share with CAC members. She spoke with Dennis Fernandez, City’s Historic Preservation Manager, who said he has limited resources but recommended asking the CRA to assist with completing a study of West Tampa’s historic structures to help support a local historic district designation. ***There was a motion (Ramirez/Maloney) for staff to explore doing a new historic structure survey in the West Tampa CAC. The vote passed with one nay.*** There was further discussion about the West Tampa overlay district and design revisions that were recommended that have not been implemented yet. CAC members would like to have an update on the status of those revisions. ***There was a motion to request staff to provide a response as to whether they will undertake the revisions recommended for the West Tampa overlay district and if not possible, can an outside consultant be hired to perform the task. The vote passed unanimously.*** There continued to be discussion about the overlay and its implementation. ***There was another motion to request staff to respond as to the status and how they plan to implement the overlay district. The vote was unanimously approved.***
- C. CRA Commercial Grants Portfolio Audit and Recommendations** – Dee Reed, CRA Grants Coordinator, kicked off the grants presentation and introduced the grants team: Andrea Roshaven, Corine Linebrink, Vanassa Ross, and Brett Burk who was not present. They played a video presentation and distributed notepads to the CAC members to solicit their comments and questions. After the presentation, there was a 15-minute question and answer period. Robinson recognized that several members of the public were present in the audience and interested in the residential grant programs, including residential grant programs. City Council and CRA are holding a special workshop on 2/29 to discuss affordable housing and assistance programs. Reed explained that those programs will be shared at another time and be administered by a different team. The specifics of each grant are still going through legal review, and then, will be presented to the CRA Board. There was a question about grants being suspended since February and Reed said that is not true with commercial grants. They are processing grant applications until new programs and policy is adopted. There was a question about grants and partnership with banks and staff is researching. Moody mentioned the legacy credit proposal to assist long standing owner with relief on the grant matching dollars. Today’s presentation was about commercial grant programs only. The Grants Team is presenting this presentation to all CAC to get their feedback prior to presenting it to CRA Board on March 21, 2024.

## **Reports**

- a. New Interim West Tampa CAC Manager:** Robinson asked Ms. Thrower to introduce herself to the CAC members. She provided her background working with the City of Tampa and Ybor CRA as well as her experience with historic districts. She also said she is current President of the Florida Redevelopment Association and interacts with CRAs across the State of Florida. She looks forward to working with West Tampa and helping

them implement their community redevelopment plan. Fenton complimented Thrower and Moody but feels that West Tampa CAC needs a dedicated CRA Manager since West Tampa has so much to do. Maloney asked if Thrower could be assigned solely to West Tampa, but Moody explained that each manager serves multiple districts. The new model for the department shifts the heavy load of administrating projects, programs, and grants to other dedicated teams allowing the manager to focus more on community outreach and engagement.

- b. Proposed CAC Meeting Date Change:** There was discussion about establishing a new meeting date since Ybor CAC meets on the same day. One suggestion was to move the meeting to a different Tuesday of the month since the Hillsborough Educational Fund building is available. Maloney asked why West Tampa needs to change their date, not Ybor. Thrower explained that Ybor CAC recently changed meetings to the Entrepreneur Collaborative Center, a popular community venue with very limited availability. The Hillsborough Educational Fund building has more flexibility to accommodate a date change. Fenton suggested that we poll the members to get their available meeting dates. ***There was a motion (Fenton/Ramirez) for staff to send an email to the CAC members asking for their availability to meet on another date, preferably Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. The vote was unanimously approved.***

There was discussion about holding a West Tampa meeting to listen to community concerns and ideas. It was mentioned that need to communicate better and expressed frustration with not being able to close the loop on things and get projects completed.

- c. Capital Projects Update-** Melisa Martinez, CRA Senior Projects Supervisor referenced the Capital Projects report provided in the CAC agenda packet. She highlighted several park projects including the Rey Park new design and Salcines Park improvements. There were questions about the fencing of Freedom Park.

The CAC members mentioned a multi-page report that Jesus Nino used to provide. Some projects like WIFI were on that list and others that they would like to review.

**Residential Parking Program-** There was discussion about the recent parking study and establishing a residential parking program. Some of the residents would like to have parking decals in their neighborhoods. ***There was a motion to have staff explore implementing a Residential Parking Program in the West Tampa neighborhoods north and south of I-275. The vote was unanimously approved.***

## Announcements

- A. CAC Membership Orientation- March 25 or April 1
- B. Next CAC Meeting: March 26, 2024, at 5:30 p.m., Hillsborough Education Foundation
- C. Next CRA Board Meeting: March 21, 2024, at 9 a.m., Tampa City Hall

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.