

City struggles to define successor agency

By Chris Frost
Bulletin Staff Writer

COMPTON—Multiple resolutions determining the future of the successor agency that will replace the Compton Redevelopment Agency left council members confused and searching for additional information during the Feb. 21 City Council meeting.

The group decided to table the items and look at them in greater detail at a workshop on Feb. 24.

On Dec. 30 the California Supreme Court Decision invalidated Assembly Bill 27, which allowed cities the right to pay a fee to continue redevelopment efforts, while upholding AB26, establishing the state's right to end redevelopment.

AB26 authorizes successor agencies to wind down the affairs of redevelopment, and return the proceeds from the liquidation of redevelopment properties to the county auditor and controller for subsequent distribution to the relevant taxing entities in the county.

The workshop featured a video from the state about redevelopment and a PowerPoint presentation from former Community Redevelopment Director Dr. Kofi Sefa-Boakye.

"The role of the successor agency is to oversee the enforceable obligations for development in the city, including housing, and the implementation of the Local Agency Investment Fund, a program offering local agencies the opportunity to participate in a major portfolio," he said.

The successor agency cannot spend any money until it creates an account and submits a LAIF resolution.

The debate focused on seven redevelopment properties.

"If the city had a housing development with 25 percent dedicated to low- and moderate-income families, the Council must de-

cide if the local housing authority, the county housing authority or the city itself manages the properties," City Attorney Craig Cornwell said. "No money is currently following the obligation."

This confused council members.

There are seven properties purchased with low-income housing money with no enforceable obligations. It is unclear if they would be liquidated or developed.

"If an Assembly bill currently under consideration at the Statehouse passes, the money we have for low- and moderate-income housing can be used for development of those projects," Cornwell said. "If it fails, it gets divided up by the taxing entities."

Without the money, the obligation falls to the general fund.

"The city is working on strategies ensuring that these properties are not a general fund obligation," Cornwell said.

He said the possibility of going over budget on housing projects is not an issue because the developers will own the parcels.

"Once a developer purchases a property it incurs the cost of development," Cornwell said.

The only enforceable housing obligation is the META housing project.

"This document says there is no ongoing funding for housing," Councilman Willie Jones said. "Then it says the city will subsidize the cost of development, operation and maintenance."

Cornwell said many of the items involving redevelopment have cities fumbling around in the dark trying to find the best course of action.

"It is trial and error right now," he said. "Many outstanding questions have not been answered."

Jones said money for first-time home buyers remains an outstanding issue.

"The agenda on Tuesday said there is

money for home rehabilitation and first-time buyers," he said. "How does this fit with the successor agency?"

Cornwell said those programs have nothing to do with the money involved with the former CRA.

"Redevelopment took over federal programs for first-time buyers and other rehabilitation programs like neighborhood stabilization," he said. "They have no tax increment money, and can move to other city departments if the Council chooses to do so."

Sefa-Boakye advocated local control. "If the Council delegates this to the county, that puts them in charge of development in Compton," he said.

Cornwell advised council members to make it a city responsibility because the local housing authority is a City Council function.

The agenda listed six housing developments, caused some confusion. Former Assistant CRA Director Michael Antwine told the Council that one development consists of two parcels, making seven altogether.

"The successor agency will receive 5 percent of its tax increment dollars in the first year," Sefa-Boakye said. "The money caps at \$250,000 by the end of the third year."

Councilpersons Janna Zurita, Yvonne Arceneaux and Willie Jones expressed concern about a proposed budget in the document containing \$1 million in salaries. City Attorney Craig Cornwell said the group was confusing multiple agenda items.

"The salaries are a separate item under the successor agency agenda," he said. "It has nothing to do with this item pertaining to AB26. Tuesday's document represented prior decisions before the demise of the CRA."

Jones said he wants an analysis of the current situation before he votes on a resolution.

Cornwell said that a consultant is being considered to advise the Council on the best course of action.

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» City Attorney
Craig Cornwell

Ongoing challenges include the fate of the former CRA employees.

"The city is assessing the remaining work, the employees in the department, and the projected \$1.3 million of tax increment dollars owed to redevelopment," he said. "The state has not informed us whether we get the entire amount or a pro-rata portion of the money."

Arceneaux suggested a budget workshop involving successor agency money.

The next City Council meeting is on Tuesday, March 6.

Keith Curry addresses City Council

Compton Community College District CEO updates council on redistricting plan.

By Cheryl Scott
Bulletin Staff Writer

COMPTON—Compton Community College District CEO Dr. Keith Curry attended a City Council meeting on Feb. 14 to update the Council and the community on the plan to redraw the district's trustee areas and other issues.

The district, along with many other public agencies and school districts in California, is required to review and modify its elected trustee area boundaries every 10 years. The district currently has four trustee areas. Each has one vote except Compton, which has two. The other areas are Carson, Lynwood and Paramount.

By terms of the Voting Rights Act, the district must have five separate trustee areas, with each area having one vote. Depending on which of the redistricting options is chosen, Compton may still have two votes because there would be two distinct areas in Compton.

Special Trustee Thomas Henry recently appointed a Redistricting Committee to explain the redistricting options to the public. A public meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 21, at 6 p.m. at the college. Community members are invited to give their input regarding the proposed boundaries.

The goal is to finalize the new areas by May. Election for the new areas will be in 2013.

At that time five trustees will be elected. Once elected, the trustees will draw lots to determine which will serve for two years and which will serve for four. This is to avoid having all five seats determined at once in future elections.

Curry said that his top priority now is solving the financial issues that were cited in the most recent evaluation by the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT).

"The top three issues in the evaluation were financial," said Curry. "That's what I am focusing on now."

In response to a question from Mayor Eric J. Perrodin regarding when "the community will get its college back," Curry said that there remains a great deal of work to be done and that it will be at least seven years.

"People don't understand the accreditation process," he said. "People often ask me why we cannot move forward with accreditation now. We cannot do that because the district is not yet ready and, more importantly, the timetable is set by the ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges), and it is very long. There are specific steps that must be taken and there is a specified time that must pass between steps. ACCJC is in complete control of the timeline."

The district is forming a Bond Oversight Committee to monitor the use of \$100 million in funds from Measure CC passed in 2002. An updated report on the use of the bond money and other funds provided by the state will be issued in two weeks.

Curry said that current enrollment at the Compton Center is more than 12,000 students. After accreditation was revoked 2006, enrollment dropped to a low of just over 1,000.

"There is a new energy at Compton Center," he said. "It's obvious to anyone who spends any time on the campus. Students are enthusiastic and the atmosphere is charged and revitalized. We've been through some rough times, but we've turned the corner. The future is bright."

Proposed redistricting maps can be viewed at district.compton.edu.



Photo courtesy of Compton Unified School District

The Compton Conservatory of Music's String Ensemble opened its annual fundraiser with a selection of classical music favorites before giving way to the jazzy grooves of performers including Everett Turner's Nova Troubadours Big Band on Feb. 24.

Compton Conservatory of Music annual fundraiser draws hundreds

From staff reports

COMPTON—More than 300 community members and local leaders enjoyed live music performances, Friday, Feb. 24, at the annual Compton Conservatory of Music Fundraising Dinner.

The event was held at the Carson Community Center, 801 E. Carson St., from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Musical performances included 17-piece jazz group Everett Turner's Nova Troubadours Big Band, singer Anqui Relise, altoist Curtis Brooks, and the Conservatory's Violin Ensemble.

The Compton Conservatory of Music meets every Saturday from 9 to 11 a.m. at Compton High School, 601 S. Acacia St.,

and is open to all area children, ages 3 through 12. Admission is \$100 per student, per semester. Courses include music theory and instrumental music, which introduces students to instruments including violin, cello, and horns. The district also offers a summer music camp on Monday through Thursday throughout the month of July.

Past CUSD board member and Compton Conservatory of Music President Fred Easter said the fundraiser exceeded his expectations. "It was a wonderful event and I think it was very successful in enabling us to raise the funds needed to supplement our music program," he said. "Everyone had a great time, and it's always a pleasure to hear the musical per-

formers, especially the children."

McNair Elementary School third-grader and member of the Conservatory Violin Ensemble Jeffrey Arredondo said he is a big fan of classical music. "I like Mozart and I also like Vivaldi's 'Cannon,'" he said. "My favorite thing about the music classes is that I get to learn about new music."

Keisha Logan, a ninth-grader at Life Line Educational Charter School and ensemble violinist, said she loves attending music courses at the Compton Conservatory of Music. "I feel I gain a lot from the classes. I'm really learning more about how music works, but I'm also becoming a better violinist," she said. "They really help us improve as musicians."