



# City of Pensacola

222 West Main Street  
Pensacola, FL 32502

## Memorandum

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**File #:** 2020-30

City Council

9/10/2020

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### **LEGISLATIVE ACTION ITEM**

**SPONSOR:** City Council Member Sherri Myers

**SUBJECT:**

PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 2020-30 - COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY EXTENSION

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That City Council adopt Resolution No. 2020-30:

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PENSACOLA, FLORIDA APPROVING THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF PENSACOLA THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2046, WHICH SHALL BE CONDITIONAL UPON MEETING CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS TO LOW INCOME AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS INSTITUTIONALIZED AND SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE URBAN CORE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA. AMENDING CITY RESOLUTION NO. 55-80 TO PROVIDE THAT THE AGENCY SHALL SUNSET OR TERMINATE ON SUCH DATE; PROVIDING FINDINGS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**HEARING REQUIRED:** No Hearing Required

**SUMMARY:**

The history of African Americans in the United States, including the city of Pensacola, is one of displacement. African American ancestors were displaced from their homelands and brought to the United States as slaves. During hundreds of years, African American slavery families were ripped apart. Women and men were forced to have children that were sold into slavery. Even after the abolishment of slavery and the passage of numerous civil rights laws and US Supreme Court decisions, African Americans continue to be displaced and uprooted from their communities.

Urban revitalization has continued to negatively impact African American communities through government policies and actions that result in relocation and displacement of entire African American communities. Millions of dollars of taxpayer funds have been used and continue to be used, to incentivize economic development, improve infrastructure, housing and beautification projects that have not benefited displaced residents of low income African American neighborhoods. Instead benefits have gone to upper income white newcomers to gentrified African American neighborhoods.

In 1980, the City of Pensacola CRA was approved for the purpose of removing “slum and blight” in the CRA urban core. However, since 1980 African American communities in the Urban Core Community Redevelopment Area (UCCRA) have been disappearing. The Aragon Court, a low income housing project that was predominately African American, was replaced with one of the most expensive housing developments in the City of Pensacola; ironically, named Aragon. The African American neighborhoods in the Hawkshaw area, the Governmental District, and Tanyards communities have disappeared. More gentrification is on the horizon in other neighborhoods, including Long Hollow.

As a result of years of segregation, Jim Crow laws and disenfranchisement, African Americans were forced to live in communities exposed to some of the world’s most dangerous environmental toxins such as Dioxin, Pentachlorophenol and other toxins associated with wood treating and fertilizer production. The health impact of environmental injustice policies of the city of Pensacola allowed citizens to be exposed to cancer causing neurotoxic chemicals that surely resulted in the loss of life, disabilities, and harm to adults and vulnerable children. The exposure to toxic air and soil by pregnant women in African American communities would have exposed their undeveloped preborn to chemicals that are known to have a harmful outcome on the developing fetus.

From 1943 to 1982, Escambia Treating Company (ETC) operated in Pensacola in an area zoned industrial/residential in the African American community called Rosewood. ETC was allowed to dump creosote and pentachlorophenol (a chemical that has been banned in most western countries) into uncovered pits. The toxins were carried by stormwater runoff into the residential community of Rosewood. As a result the entire African American neighborhood was relocated - some 385 households - the 3rd largest relocation of citizens from a Superfund site in the United States.

During the CRA’s forty years of existence, it cannot point to one low income African American community that has benefited from the millions of dollars spent on projects in the CRA Urban Core. Most of the citizens in the city of Pensacola do not live in CRA districts. The CRA is funded by property taxes that would go to the general fund, but for the CRA. Using tax payer funds for projects that do not stabilize, support, preserve and improve low income African American neighborhoods cannot be morally justified.

According to the city finance director, the property values in the CRA urban core have increased substantially, which translates into increased revenue from city and county taxpayers. These funds should be used to right the wrongs of the past, to fund programs that allow low income African American families, individuals and seniors to live in areas that have the amenities the CRA urban core has to offer. Further, the funds should be used to address the poverty, substandard housing, and lack of affordable housing, child care, and health care needs of low income African American communities that still exist in the CRA urban core.

In order to secure the funds necessary to develop programs needed in the low income African American communities, CRA funds over and above payment of the current bond debt and basic maintenance, should be exclusively used for projects that stabilize, support, preserve and enhance low income African American neighborhoods and that provide job opportunities and development of African American owned businesses in the Urban Core Community Redevelopment Area and the other areas of the city that have been designated CRA redevelopment areas.

#### **PRIOR ACTION:**

September 25, 1980 - City Council adopted Resolution No. 55-80, creating the CRA and establishing the CRA Charter and Resolution No. 54-80 designating the boundaries of the Urban Core Community Redevelopment Area.

March 8, 1984 - City Council adopted Ordinance No. 13-84, creating and establishing the Redevelopment Trust Fund for the Urban Core Redevelopment Area.

March 27, 1984 - City Council adopted Resolution No. 15-84 approving the Urban Core Community Redevelopment Plan, which has been subsequently amended, repealed and replaced by the 2010 Urban Core Community Redevelopment Plan on January 14, 2010, pursuant to Resolution No. 02-10, as amended.

October 26, 2000 - City Council adopted Ordinance No. 46-00 designating the boundaries of the Eastside-Urban Infill and Redevelopment Area and 47-00 adopting a Community Redevelopment Plan for the Urban Infill and Redevelopment Area, as has been subsequently amended.

October 17, 2005 - City Council adopted Ordinance No. 16-05, establishing the Redevelopment Trust Fund for the Eastside-Urban Infill and Redevelopment Area.

May 24, 2007 - City Council adopted Resolution No. 13-07, adopting a Community Redevelopment Plan for the Westside Community Redevelopment Area.

January 17, 2008 - City Council adopted Ordinance No. 01-01, creating a Redevelopment Trust Fund for the Westside Community Redevelopment Area.

August 19, 2010 - City Council adopted Resolution 22-10, amending Resolution No. 55-80, providing for the continuation of the CRA in conformity with the provisions of the 2010 City Charter effective January 10, 2011.

July 13, 2020 - CRA approved continuing the CRA through September 30, 2046.

August 13, 2020 - City Council adopted Resolution No. 2020-29, continuing the CRA through September 30, 2046.

**FUNDING:**

TBD

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

TBD

**STAFF CONTACT:**

Don Kraher, Council Executive

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1) Proposed Resolution No. 2020-30
- 2) Underlined Proposed Resolution No. 2020-30

**PRESENTATION:** No