

ANNOUNCER: You've tuned in to another edition of The Break Room. A

weekly conversation about how the City of St Augustine

works from those who do the work everyday. Hosted by the

City of St Augustine's Communications Director Melissa

Wissel. The Break Room offers a closer look at the different

city departments and provides updates on current and upcoming

projects and events. And now your host, Melissa Wissel.

Thanks for tuning in. I'm Melissa Wissel, Communications

Director for the City of St Augustine. Recently, the City

of St Augustine was awarded nearly \$900, 000 through

the Florida African American
Cultural and Historical Grants

Program for the funding of the
Lincolnvile CRA Institutional

Rehabilitation Grant Program.
Specifically, this money will be

used for the Fountain of Youth
Elks Lodge number 684, which is

located at 100 Washington
Street. This was no small feat

to submit a grant application
of this scale, so I've invited

the City's CRA Administrator
Jaime D Perkins to join me this

week, not only tell us about the
CRA program in Lincolnvile, but

we're also going to talk about
another CRA in St Augustine.

People may not be as familiar

with the Historic Area CRA.

Jaime, welcome back to The Break
Room. JAIME: Hi Melissa. Thank you so
much for having me again. MELISSA: A lot
of lot of, that was a lot. JAIME: It was. MELISSA:

So we'll recap, which I always
like to do when we get started,

because I'm never sure if folks
really know what a CRA is. And

of course you and I both know
there's two levels of a CRA.

There's an agency in an area.
So, just real quick, help help

get us all on the same page
here. JAIME: Sure. So, CRA Community

Redevelopment Agency is
actually the board, or the

agency that oversees the
specific areas. The

community redevelopment areas
are the boundaries that are

within that particular agency.

So, in our case, we have the

Lincolnville Community
Redevelopment Area and the

Historic Area Community
Redevelopment Area, which covers

the downtown district and some
some other parts of the

historic area of St
Augustine. MELISSA: And for the agency,

who is that board? JAIME: It's our
board of City Commissions.

So it's, the chair is of
course Mayor Upchurch and and

then the remainder of the board
is our Commissioners. MELISSA: Okay. So

the, so basically the City
Commission oversees the agency.

JAIMIE: Correct. And we have to

have like those special

meetings. So, if we're having a

CRA meeting, our agency or our

commissioners have to take off

their commissioner hat and

kind of put on their agency hat,

so they kind of change their

role, so that they can conduct

the agency meetings. MELISSA: Okay and

we hear a lot about the

Lincolnville CRA or at least I

feel like we do. We, because

there's a lot going on in

there. You spend a lot of time

since you started. Tell us

about what all is happening,

what's been happening, and then

of course, let's talk about

this huge pot of money that you

were. We were granted
that you work so hard to get.

JAIME: Thank you. So, yeah. It's it's
a lot going on in Lincolnville

Area because that's kind of the
foundation of of the agency, as

of right now. With the Historic
Area, we haven't done so much

work in that area because the
the garage, the garage has

kind of been our platform and
our our main project within

that area. With the LCRA. We
have the Institutional Rehab

Program, which is really doing
great. We have completed

completely one project, which is
St Paul AME, their roofing

project. We are turning into
phase two for First Baptist.

So, we're hoping to mobilize
for that project in the
upcoming month, and then have
that completed by early part of

the physical year next year. MELISSA:

What is the, what is the work

that's being done there? JAIME: So,
First Baptist, it's kind of a

complete rehab overhaul, HVAC
work, mechanical and electrical

repairs, roofing, façade
treatments, ADA compliance

stuff. We did some historic
preservation repairs with their

windows, masonry work,
structural rehabilitation.

It's just been a complete over
haul with First Baptist.

MELISSA: And that's not something they
would have necessarily, they

don't have the money to go do
all that. JAIME: No that's why they

have the opportunity to apply
for this grant. So. MELISSA: Now did you,

did the C, did the agents, or
excuse me, did the CRA, the LCRA

apply for that grant money?

That's your, that's your job. JAIME: So,

with First Baptist, they didn't
receive a external grant. That

was actually a grant from
within the Lincolnville

Community Redevelopment Area.

That money had a crew

throughout the years and we
were able to apply that toward

their grant. And that was the

same for St. Paul. Now, this new

grant that we recently were
awarded through the AACH, which

is a state grant, the African
American Cultural and Heritage

Grant. I'm sorry, Historic
Grant. I'm so excited about.

That was an external grant that
we applied for. And we were

awarded a little over \$891,000
to apply toward the Elks Lodge.

MELISSA: That's a lot of money. That's
great. JAIME: Yeah, I'm excited.

MELISSA: Congratulations too. That was a
lot of work. JAIME: Yeah and I want to

make sure that I shout out
Heather Sutherland of AE.

They did some consulting with
me on the grant as well. So I

want to make sure that I
recognize her. But we also are

applying \$250, 000 of our LCRA
money toward that grant, so we

give them a much larger project
budget. So, we'll be around \$1.1 million dollars on project
budget for the Elks Lodge. MELISSA: And

tell me what what is, I mean, I
know the Elks Meets there. I

think we had someone call and
say, so what did they do at the

Elks Lodge? Lots of people...They
do Elks meetings. JAIME: Yeah. So, they do

a lot of community outreach.
Most of the outreach is toward

the the youth and the elderly
population of the Lincolnville

community and outside the
Lincolnville community. So

lots of public outreach. They

host holiday events. They do

mentoring opportunities And
it's also a place for families

to meet and engage within the
community. Something that I

thought was was wonderful that
they do is they offer kind of

like a venue space for people
for weddings, maybe even

funerals, if they're not a part
of religious institution. They

can use the Elks Lodge as their
place to to go and when they

need to conduct those type of
events. MELISSA: And it's, so

essentially it's a it's a
meeting place. It's an old

building. JAIME: Yes been there.... I
believe that it was first

constructed in the late 1940s,
like 1949, 1950. So it's been

there for quite some time. And
it is a contributing building

for the National Register of
Historic Places. MELISSA: Do you, can you

tell us off the top of your
head, putting you on the spot.

What what some of the projects
are going to be? Do you have a

list yet? JAIME: So we are actually
working on our on our list of,

we're kind of doing like a
items of importance right now

with the Elks Lodge. I've been
meeting with them and our our

architect and our construction
manager to kind of determine

what are some of the things
that are really important to

the Elks Lodge that we know
that we can get done. You know,

with the rising cost of
construction. We want to make

sure that we are really really
intentional about the work that

we decide to do. So things that
are important like, of course,

you need a new roof. Roofs
protect the bones and the structure of a

building. So, we want to keep
the water out, keep the

moisture away. So, roofing will
probably be one of the first

things that we tackle on our
priority list. And of course,

any mechanical or electrical
repairs. I think, with it being

such an old structure, I don't

know when the last time they

had like an electric update
with wiring. So we want to make

sure we make the building safe.

Of course, HVAC, structural

repairs. Similar to the work
that we did at some of our

other Institutional Rehab
Projects. but just kind of

focusing on things that are
priority for that particular

institution. MELISSA: Well, keeping
Lincolnvile going and and

keeping it strong and and the
development over there is

great. JAIME: Right. MELISSA: Let's switch
gears a little bit. If you are

just now tuning in, you're
listening to The Break Room.

I'm Melissa Wissel,
Communications Director for the

City of St Augustine. And
today with me in studio, I have

Jamie D Perkins. She is the
City's Community Redevelopment

Agency Administrator. We've
been talking about

Lincolnvile. Let's switch
gears a little bit here and

let's talk about the Historic
Area CRA. And and you and I

talked about this. It's
actually called the Historic

Area Transportation and Parking,
because it really, when it was

originally created, the parking
garage was the project. JAIME: Right,

right. So, in 2006,
the parking garage was

constructed. And so let me go
back. I'll say the Community

Redevelopment Area HACRA was
established in the year of 2000

and it was established to
mitigate the parking

transportation blight that we
still see in the downtown area.

One of the ways that we, that
the city thought would mitigate

some of that blight, would be by
constructing the parking garage.
And it has helped immensely. We
have lots of traffic there. Of

course, you know, with the new
express lane that's so popular

right now. So we, the the
parking garage has done has

been a great tool and a
resource to help kind of

mitigate that transportation

blight. But we think it's time

to do more. MELISSA: More than

just parking. JAIME: Right. More than

just parking. There's so many

other things that go along with

mobility and parking and the

infrastructure of the downtown

to help kind of relieve that

area of that transportation,

what I like to call blight.

Because that's what the five of

necessity, you know, refers to it

as. So, there's so many other

things that we that we need to

do. So, what we're doing now is

preparing a plan amendment.

We're seeking public engagement

to get feedback from residents

and stakeholders that are impacted by the Downtown Historic Area so that we can develop a plan amendment that helps us to address additional problems and concerns within that area. MELISSA: So talking about this upcoming plan amendment, the one thing I want to make sure we tell folks about is the website. There's a survey on the website. I know there's been workshops but those those are going to be very short lived. So, the one thing that folks really need to know is the website. And I'm going to say first off, the easiest thing is to go to the

CRA website. Cuz the
link will be there. It's not a

real easy web address to give. But it is on the CRA
website. Which is CityStAugCRA.com.

Right and and then. Tell us
about the survey. JAIME: Yes. So, the

survey basically is just an
opportunity for people to

answer some some really easy
questions that'll probably take

you less than five minutes to
kind of go through. It's

multiple choice. But for the
most part. And the survey was

developed by myself and our
consultant that we hired, SNME,

working with the consultant
Laura Canary and and her team down

at at that consulting firm. And

so they developed this survey

that kind of addresses some of
the the issues that we think

residents want to talk about
and that want to address. And so

it's a really quick survey. All
they have to do is go on,

multiple choice click. But
something that also was really

exciting about the website is
the interactive map. I

think that's a really great
tool that our residents are

going to love and will use
to kind of pinpoint certain

areas that they find are areas
of concern. So they can

literally go on to interactive
map, put in an address, or or

even click around for a specific area, and leave a very

detailed comment about what they think should be happening

in that part of the Historic Area. So, if there's like a

street corner that they say, hey, this area is really busy.

We should maybe put a traffic light here or there

should be some type of mitigation for traffic in this

area or less parking and more parking here. You know, they'll

be able to address those in that interactive map. So. MELISSA: So, I

can click on the map and I can point out to a piece of a

sidewalk that I think needs to be repaired. Or there's

a street light that's missing
or maybe there's not any kind

of lighting on something.

JAIME: Correct. MELISSA: And put that in there.

So that'll be on the city, the
CRA website, which is CityStAugCRA.com. You
can go out to the CRA website.

And just so folks understand,
any resident can fill out the

survey? I mean. JAIME: Yeah actually
any resident can. It does ask

you about your your stakeholder,

you know, status. What is your

status? What is your
relationship to this community?

But it is open to the City of
St Augustine. Because

ultimately I think everybody
who lives in this area is

impacted by the downtown area.

We like to go out and enjoy,

even if we don't live in the

Historic Downtown Area. We

still want to enjoy it. There's

so many things that are

happening in our in the heart

of our city. MELISSA: Absolutely. JAIME: So

most of us are impacted by it.

So we encourage anyone to go in

and fill out the survey.

MELISSA: Business owners, landlord,

JAIME: Right. MELISSA: All that and the, what

what like you just said,

stakeholders. And the Historic

Area, it in and of itself, just

so people understand. It's the

that downtown historic core

area that what was referred to

as the Spanish Quarter. If

you're on NextDoor you'll know

what these mean. It's a little

bit of the Uptown Neighborhood.

A little bit of Flagler Model

Land. JAIME: Charlotte Street

area. MELISSA: Little bit of Charlotte

Street area. JAIME: Some of

Lincolnville. MELISSA: Little bit of

Lincolnville. JAIME: That's right.

Some of Lincolnville is in

there. And you know we also

have a, if you visit the city

website, you can actually go on

to our GIS system and you can

put your address in and

determine if you live in a CRA.

So, you can find out if you

live in the Lincolnville CRA or

if you are a stakeholder or

live in the Downtown or

Historic Area CRA. MELISSA: Right. Great information. Lots going on.

You're a very busy lady. JAIME: I am.

MELISSA: You, you're doing so much to

help us though and and to
really make a difference. So, I

I thank you for that. JAIME: I love my
job. You know, I do feel

good projects for the City. I
think and that's what's really

important It's like, you know,
we get to to do the exciting

stuff. Some of it is, you
know, it can be tedious but

it's actually, you know, the
the bright side I think of the

city and that's what I love
about it. So, it's really

exciting work. MELISSA: We are a bright side to our staff. So, we're

glad to have you on board.

JAIME: Thank you, Melissa. MELISSA: Thanks for

coming. We're out of time.

JAIME: Alright. MELISSA: If you missed part of

this broadcast and want to go

back and listen from the

beginning, you can now find us on your favorite podcast app.

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Until next time, thanks for
tuning in. ANNOUNCER: You've been

listening to The Break Room, a
weekly program addressing

projects and programs offered
by the City of St Augustine.

Join us each week as the City's
Communications Director Melissa

Wissel has in-depth
conversations with the people
who make our town work to meet
the needs of our community. The

Break Room is produced by
Communication Specialist for

the City of St Augustine,
Cindy Walker. See you at this

time next week for another
edition of The Break Room.