

STAFF REPORT
City of Lancaster
Lancaster Redevelopment Agency

Date: May 10, 2011

To: Mayor Parris and City Council Members
Chairman Parris and Agency Directors

From: Elizabeth Brubaker, Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization Director

Subject: **Extension of the Term regarding the Real Property License Agreement with Grace Chapel Church in the Piute Vision Plan Area**

JPH 1
05/10/11
MVB

Agency Recommendation:

Adopt **Resolution No. 09-11**, a resolution of the Lancaster Redevelopment Agency, Lancaster, California, approving the extension to the term of the License Agreement for the use of Agency-owned real property in the Piute Vision Plan Area.

City Recommendation:

Adopt **Resolution No. 11-22**, a resolution of the City Council of the City of Lancaster, California, approving the extension to the term of the License Agreement for the use of Agency-owned real property in the Piute Vision Plan Area.

Fiscal Impact:

Revenues generated by using Agency property will be deposited into Account No. 938-3601-100. This revenue will be used for future housing projects.

Background:

On August 14, 2007, the Agency Board approved the implementation of the Neighborhood Foreclosure Preservation Home Ownership Program (the "Program") citywide. The purpose of the Program was to reclaim vacant, abandoned properties for sale as affordable housing, and to renovate the physical appearance and function of the homes in an attempt to reverse declining conditions and blighting effects these vacant properties have on the community.

On January 13, 2009, the City Council and Redevelopment Agency directed staff to undertake actions necessary to begin implementing programs for the revitalization of properties within a specific older area of Lancaster referred to as the Piute Area neighborhood. The area was experiencing a high level of physical decline and numerous foreclosures. The subject area is generally located between Avenue H-8 and Avenue I, and between Division Street and 10th Street East. Prior to this time, the Piute neighborhood was part of an effort supported initially by volunteers and members of several local churches under a program known as "Neighborhood Impact".

This organization took on the challenge of trying to reverse declining trends affecting neighborhoods by offering assistance in beautifying and strengthening the neighborhood for residents who either physically, or financially could not afford the making the required improvements.

As program participation grew, the coalition of churches expanded the range of services offered to not only deal with property improvements, maintenance and repairs, but they also began working with the local school to encourage neighborhood commitment to children and education, and assisted law enforcement and neighborhood watch groups to help promote safe neighborhoods and reduce crime. Neighborhood Impact's mission was to focus on servicing residents wherever possible, by improving the general conditions of the neighborhood not only physically, but also socially.

As a result, several large-scale community clean-up events were planned through Neighborhood Impact, helping to expand the support beyond the original group of volunteers. The City assisted in several of these events by offering support in coordinating trash and debris pick-up and haul off, along with providing equipment and trash dumpsters. The expanded effort brought out hundreds of volunteers and residents that worked together to create dramatic changes within some of the older declining areas of several neighborhoods.

In early 2009, members affiliated with the Neighborhood Impact program approached the Agency about the potential use of one of the recently rehabilitated foreclosure homes as a way to establish a more permanent centralized presence within the Piute neighborhood. A cooperative partnership with the Agency would support the work program already started by Neighborhood Impact in Piute and would also help promote the City's interest of working with civic groups to connect with residents, local organizations, and law enforcement to encourage positive changes within the neighborhood(s).

A site was selected as a pilot program for the Neighborhood Impact home, and on March 1 2009, the Agency and Grace Chapel Church, entered a Real Property License Agreement (the "Agreement") for property located at 45304 5th Street East. This new location would provide the facilities needed to expand Neighborhood Impact's existing program with the use of a larger and more desirable home and location. The original License Agreement term was for a period of one year with the ability to extend the Agreement in monthly increments upon administrative approval. The initial term ended approximately a year ago and the Neighborhood Impact home has been operating under the limitations of monthly extensions.

At this time, both parties desire to continue their relationship through a more secure "long-term" commitment. The Agency and Neighborhood Impact each have mutual interest and benefit in supporting the continued operation of the designated home within Piute, and now seek Agency approval to extend the term of the Agreement. All terms and conditions of the original Agreement would remain the same except for the extension of time, which will include an additional one-year term with one-year renewals upon written consent of the Director of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Department.

The continuation of Neighborhood Impact's service within existing neighborhoods and their expansion into additional older neighborhoods has been positive among residents and is consistent with the Agency's programs for neighborhood revitalization and the City's efforts for building safer and stronger communities. Collaborating with responsible civic groups and agencies through programs like the Neighborhood Impact program sends a strong message promoting good welfare among residents and a strong sense of community. By encouraging these type of partnerships, there are greater opportunities to make positive change with less liability and impact on existing resources, not only improving the neighborhood, but also creating a better quality of life for local residents.

Attachments:

1. Amendment No. 1 to Real Property License Agreement
2. 33433 Report
3. Agency Resolution No. 09-11
4. City Resolution No. 11-22
5. Location Map