# COLNVILLE

Keeping you informed of what's happening in St. Augustine's historic Lincolnville.

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## FIX-IT-UP PROGRAM LAUNCHES IN LINCOLNVILLE

Less than a year after it was launched, the Lincolnville Community redevelopment Agency's (LCRA) first major initiative is already paying dividends in the community. Called Fix-It-Up the grant program helps homeowners make needed improvements on their homes.

Earlier this spring, 64-year-old Lincolnville resident Willie Brown was the grant program's first recipient when repairs were made to his Twine Street house. Fix-It-Up provides up to \$7,000 to homeowners who qualify for emergency repairs services for sub-standard housing. The program is administered by the St. Johns Housing Partnership, which handles eligibility reviews and construction services.

"I'm excited to see fix-it-up already in place. The steering committee was eager to allocate funds from the first year's budget to put back into Lincolnville in a meaningful way. Joining with the St. Johns County Housing Partnership to implement Fix-It-Up made sense on so many levels. We could learn from SJHP's experience, rely on their expertise and when possible leverage funds from the program's modest grants to make fast, tangible improvements in the quality of life for Lincolnville residents while also helping to preserve the existing housing inventory" said Theresa Segal, Lincolnville CRA Steering Committee Chair.

The Lincolnville CRA decided in 2014 to make the Fix-It-Up program its first major initiative. The CRA was established by the City of St. Augustine to address conditions of economic distress in Lincolnville. The agency uses tax revenues from increases in property values to tackle community improvement projects that were outlined in its approved plan.



Lincolnville resident Willie Brown and St. John's Housing Partnership Construction Project Manager Susan Giddens, in front of Mr. Brown's Twine Street home that benefited from the area's new Fix-It-Up repair grant program.

The CRA's Steering committee chose to partner with the Housing Partnership because of the strong record of helping homeowners in the community. The St. Johns County non-profit works to make housing more affordable for citizens in need. The organization partners with other private and corporate donors, government entities and various foundations to expand its service offerings and reach a wider geographical area.

Through those partnerships the organization is able to leverage additional funds from other programs, meaning it can often do additional repairs beyond the available Fix-It-Up funds.

For Brown, a veteran who sustained injuries during his military career in Germany, the Fix-It-Up grant with the installation of a new roof. Lazar said thanks to the Affordable Housing Program for veterans,

Brown also qualified for energy conservation and accessibility improvements. That helped replace flooring, cabinets, plumbing fixtures and exterior doors.

Lincolnville residents can apply for the Fix-It-Up program through the St. Johns Housing Partnership, which evaluates applications and inspects the home. The organization prioritizes the repairs needed and performs the work as an independent contractor. Of the \$75,000 dedicated in this year's budget for the Fix-It-Up Program, \$40,600 has already been allocated.

For information call St. Johns Housing Partnership at (904) 824-0902.

To learn more about the Fix-It-Up-Program, turn to the back page.

## WELCOME TO THE LINCOLNVILLE CRA'S FIRST NEWSLETTER

By Theresa Segal

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am pleased to introduce the first edition of Lincolnville News. My name is Theresa Segal and I chair the steering committee for the Lincolnville Community Redevelopment Agency (LCRA). I have lived in Lincolnville for over twenty-five years with my husband Joe and am happy for this opportunity to serve my community. I look forward to getting to know you if I don't already.

This newsletter is intended to keep you informed about the LCRA, but it is also a vehicle for keeping our neighborhood connected. It will be distributed quarterly to let you know about the agency's activities, offer information and opportunities to participate and also highlight organizations, projects and events in Lincolnville.

How did Lincolnville become a CRA? Lincolnville has a laundry list of conditions that need addressing including narrow streets, poor drainage and

an inventory of small lots and deteriorating structures.
Several years ago City staff began working with a consultant and designated the Lincolnville Community Redevelopment Area. They created a document that identified and studied the area's specific needs. This is referred to as the Finding of Necessity. A Redevelopment Plan was created based on the

Plan was created based on the Finding that outlines strategies for making improvements to address the identified problems. In 2013 the St. Augustine City Commission passed ordinances to establish the Lincolnville Redevelopment Agency (LCRA), adopt the Finding and Plan and set up a Trust Fund.

In January of 2013 residents came together to give input that would help create the Redevelopment Plan the LCRA. Do you remember that series of meetings at the Galimore Center with presentations, focus groups and little orange dots for casting votes? Those meetings were instrumental in developing the current plan. A pool of money will accumulate in a trust fund to use towards putting the Plan into action. Keep in mind that this process will span thirty years and we are just getting started.

The LCRA Steering Committee was appointed by the CRA Board, which is really the St. Augustine City Commission wearing another hat. The five-member committee is made up of your neighbors. We are tasked with guiding the implementation of the Plan and will communicate with you every step of the way. Please come to our monthly meetings at the Galimore Center which are held every second Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Welcome Continued, p.3

## The Lincolnville Community Redevelopment Agency

#### WHAT IS A CRA?

The Community Redevelopment Agency is a public agency established under the guidelines of the Community Redevelopment Act (Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes) to implement community redevelopment activities.

A powerful redevelopment tool, the CRA uses the growth in assessed property values (tax increment financing funds) to reinvest within their boundaries. The Community Redevelopment Act outlines the complete process for creating a CRA.

The first step to creating a CRA is to adopt the Finding of Necessity, which is a field study that formally identifies the conditions of economic distress within the established boundaries of the designated area.

Next, a Community Redevelopment Plan must be developed and then adopted by the County Commission, The plan should address the unique needs of the targeted area and include overall goals as well as identify programs and projects to address those goals.

The primary funding source for a community redevelopment agency comes from tax increment financing.

The Community Redevelopment Act allows for the creation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district within CRA boundaries.

Once a Redevelopment Trust Fund is established, it enables the CRA Board to direct the increase in real property tax revenues to the targeted area's needs.

#### READ THE CRA PLAN

Find the Lincolnville CRA Plan online at the City of St. Augustine's website at:

www.staugustinegovernment.com Under "My Government", "City Boards", and then "Lincolnville CRA Steering Committee".

## NEWS AND NOTES

#### LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR TITLE CLEARING

One problem that affects some of our Lincolnville residents is related to the ownership of their property. Many of our residents are descendants from families that have lived in Lincolnville for generations. The problem for them is that they don't appear on the legal title to the property. This can occur for several reasons. but it can be fixed. St. Johns County Legal Aid is committed to helping our residents that cannot afford traditional legal services. They are willing to help residents with clouded titles so that they can recognized as legal owners of the property they've lived in for decades. If you or someone you know needs legal assistance, go to Legal Aid between 8:30am-5:00pm Monday through Friday and complete an application for assistance. No need to call for an appointment-just go in and complete an application.

By Clyde Taylor of Taylor & Taylor P.A.

## **Location and Contact Information:**

St. Johns County Legal Aid 222 San Marco Ave., Ste. A (904) 827-9921

If there is a genuine need for assistance in reaching the office, contact the number above and they will assist in making arrangements with Sunshine bus or in extreme cases make a home visit.

#### BUSINESSES IN LINCOLNVILLE



Terry Gamble and Jeff Sapp, owners of the new Blue Hen restaurant at 117 Martin Luther King Avenue.



Nyk-ol Smith and brother, Tony Smith, owners of the Corner Market and Tony's Barber Shop at 97 Martin Luther King Avenue.

### LINCOLNVILLE CRA SURVEY

The LCRA Steering committee has attached a survey regarding a possible overlay district. Please take a few moments of your time to fill it out and return it to the City of St. Augustine, LCRA, P.O. Box 210, St. Augustine, FL 32085 Or bring it to one of the LCRA meetings at the Galimore Center.

The deadline for submission is June 9th

## Welcome

## Continued from page 2

At our first meeting in April of last year the Committee had a long discussion about the need for preserving Lincolnville's "character" as we pursue the Plan's goals. We all agreed that African-American heritage and the inventory of historic houses play a key role in defining the neighborhood, but there is also a certain wonderful sense of community that is uniquely Lincolnville.

Residents sit on their porches, greet each other in passing and gather at the numerous churches. Lincolnville has more organizations than you can count, yet there is a sense of live and let live. We concluded that the people of Lincolnville are just as important as its architecture and history. Every decision we make as a committee needs to keep the preservation of Lincolnville's character in mind. I have read and reread the LCRA's Redevelopment Plan. I hope you will read it at least once.

You can find it on the COSA website under "Your Government", "City Boards", and then "Lincolnville Community Redevelopment Area Steering Committee". It's a good plan that has a lot of potential, but it is only words on paper until it is put into action. Resident participation is essential to shaping Lincolnville's future. Please join us in this process

Sincerely, Theresa Segal

## Other Lincolnville CRA Information

## CRA STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Theresa Segal, Chair Laura Stevenson Dumas, Vice-Chair Tony Smith Clyde Taylor Brian Thompson

### **MEETINGS**

Meetings are open to the public and take place on the second Tuesday of every month at 7pm at the Willie Galimore Center, 399 Riberia Street

#### **CONTACT US**

To contact the Lincolnville CRA, please call 904-209-4325 or email Sharon O'Keefe at sokeefe@citystaug.com

## City of St. Augustine Lincolnville Community Redevelopment Agency

## FIX-IT-UP GRANT PROGRAM

The City of St. Augustine Community Redevelopment Agency has designated a new grant program to help residents in the Lincolnville Area with essential home repairs. The Fix-it-up grant will provide up to \$7,000 to homeowners that qualify for emergency repair services for sub-standard housing. The program is funded by the CRA for eligible households. Eligibility review and construction services are provided by the St. Johns County Housing Partnership, Inc.

#### **GRANT BASICS**

The Fix-It-Up Grant Program is awarded in amounts of up to \$7,000 per home. The home must be within the boundaries of the Lincolnville CRA. Applicants will have to meet all eligibility requirements administered by St. Johns Housing Partnership, Inc. Available funds will be prioritized for life and safety essential repairs.

#### APPLICANTS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE CITY BEFORE ANY PROJECT IS STARTED.

St. Johns Housing Partnership, Inc. will evaluate the application after inspection of the home, prioritize the repairs needed and perform the work as an independent contractor. Existing materials will be replaced with the materials to preserve the architectural integrity of the structure whenever possible.

For application information, call St. Johns Housing Partnership at (904) 824-0902



City of St. Augustine P.O. Box 210 St. Augustine, FL 32085-0210

