

HardisonInk.com

Bronson considers expanding sewer collection system



Bronson Town Councilwoman Katie Parks and Mayor Bruce Greenlee are seen Monday night at the meeting.

Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © Dec. 6, 2016 at 3:37 p.m.

BRONSON – After a 4-3 recommendation from the Bronson Community Advisory Task Force (CATF) to move forward, the Bronson Town Council on Monday night (Dec. 5) voted 5-0 to potentially seek a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the addition of residential sewer service.

Fred Fox of Fred Fox Enterprises is helping the town as it potentially seeks a \$650,000 CDBG for a project that shows a preliminary cost estimate of \$851,575. This would be for a Neighborhood Revitalization CDBG. Fox is a very well-established CDBG consultant.



Bronson Town Councilman Aaron Edmondson looks at material during the meeting.

Mittauer & Associates Inc. is the consulting engineering firm for the possible project.

While the current project cost estimate shows in excess of \$200,000 more than the CDBG would cover, Town Council members spoke

HardisonInk.com

about scaling down the quality of some lift stations from being of a high quality to something more mid-range.

With the positive vote Monday night, Fox's group will start surveying the neighborhoods where this new sewer service might occur. A proverbial bottom line on this CDBG is the need for low- to moderate-income families that would have their homes connected to the sewer service.

If there is not enough of a percentage of relatively poor families, at least 51 percent, then the project may be scrapped because the grant would not happen.

Not only is being poor a benefit to the possible recipients of the grant, but the CATF would have scored 10 positive points toward the awarding of the grant if 51 percent or more of that eight-member group was in the low- to moderate-income classification.

Of the seven CATF members voting Monday evening, only one was of the financial ilk to be of value for points by being relatively financially poor. The other six present on Monday night did not qualify as being low to moderate income.



Bronson Vice Mayor Beatrice Roberts and Town Councilman Jason Hunt consider government matters during the meeting.

Vice Mayor Beatrice Roberts asked Fox if the town had been told about how a lower income group of people as the advisory committee would have helped.

There was no absolutely clear answer to that question.

Fox said a new CATF could be formed, however to meet the deadline for this grant cycle application, with the required survey of neighborhoods, advertising, another public hearing and the like, Fox did not see that as having a high probability of being successful.

If the town was awarded the \$650,000 grant and the sewer service was added, then everyone who could connect must connect to this new service.

HardisonInk.com

While some number of residents will see zero cost, those who are not poor enough would have to pay for the cost of the pipe from the right-of-way across their property. And they would have to pay for their septic tanks to be crushed and filled.

The low- to moderate-income families would not have that cost.

The families who are connected completely cost-free, however, will still see the same monthly sewer rates and bills that all other customers see.

Town Councilman Aaron Edmondson said that the city ordinance that requires people to connect to sewer service within one year of it being available is not being enforced. Edmondson said he knew of a residence on Marshburn Avenue that has not connected, despite the service being available.

Fox said the town can absorb the cost of people who are not qualified for the free connection, but regardless of anything the ordinance would have to be enforced for this project.

If the town failed to abide by the requirements of the grant, Fox said, then the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity would be inclined to demand the return of any grant funds the town received.

For now, Fox has been instructed to continue on a track to determine if the town's affected residences include families with a low enough income for the town to successfully apply for the CDBG.