



CITY OF BARTOW  
**CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING**  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026 AT 6:00 PM  
OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE  
450 NORTH WILSON AVE., BARTOW, FL 33830

**AGENDA**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL
2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON
3. ROLL CALL
4. PUBLIC COMMENT
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
  - a. February 6, 2025 and Febraury 12, 2026
6. NEW BUSINESS
  - a. Public Hearing and consideration of use of Community Development Block Grant Funds for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 in the anticapted amount of \$102,630.19.
7. ADJOURNMENT

Please be advised that if you desire to appeal from any decisions made as a result of the above hearing or meeting, you will need a record of the proceedings and in some cases a verbatim record is required. You must make your own arrangements to produce this record. (Florida Statute 286.0105) If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the City Clerk's Office at 450 N. Wilson Avenue, P.O. Box 1069, Bartow, Florida 33831-1069 or phone (863) 534-0100 within 2 working days of your receipt of this meeting notification; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 1-800-955-8771. Posted at City Hall, Bartow Public Library and the City's Website [www.cityofbartow.net](http://www.cityofbartow.net) on \_\_\_\_\_.

CITY OF BARTOW  
CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 6, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M. (EST) OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE  
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS, 450 NORTH WILSON AVE., BARTOW, FL 33830

**MINUTES**

The Citizen's Advisory Committee met in a Regular Meeting on February 6, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers located at City Hall, 450 North Wilson Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830. Notice of this meeting was posted at City Hall, Bartow Public Library and on the City's website [www.cityofbartow.net](http://www.cityofbartow.net) and advertised in the Polk Sun Newspaper.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

CRA Executive Director Howard Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. SWEARING IN NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

- Alvin B. Smith, Jr.
- Lyn Bryan

Asst. City Clerk Fussell administered the Oath of Office for Committee Member Alvin B. Smith, Jr. and Lyn Bryant.

**3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

**MOTION** was made by Committee Member Brennan, seconded by Committee Member Riggio to nominate Committee Member Ann Rivera as the Chairperson. Committee Member Rivera accepted the nomination.

**VOTE TO THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:**

**AYE:** Brennan, Harbin, Riggio, Rivera, Smith,  
**NAY:** None

Motion carried.

**4. ROLL CALL**

Asst. City Clerk Fussell called the roll, attendance was as follows:

**Board Members Present:** Michael Brennan, Lyn Bryant, Wes Harbin, Robin Riggio, Ana Rivera, and Alvin B. Smith, Jr.

**Board Members Absent:** Wendlyn Barnes

**Staff Members Present:** CRA Executive Director Howard Smith, Public Works Director Billy Groover, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts (PRCA) Director Jason Hargrove, Business & Community Engagement Coordinator Cheryl Baksh, City Clerk Jacqueline

Poole, Grants Administrator Sarah Jones, Parks and Recreation Manager Kyle Lasek & Asst. City Clerk Kaylee Fussell, Finance Director Peter Lear

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Matters not appearing on this agenda.

There were no comments.

- Matters appearing on this agenda but not scheduled for separate public hearing.

There were no comments.

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- February 27, 2024

**MOTION** was made by Committee Member Riggio, seconded by Committee Member Brennan to approve the minutes of February 27, 2024, as presented.

**VOTE TO THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:**

**AYE:** Brennan, Bryant, Harbin, Riggio, Rivera, Smith

**NAY:** None

Motion carried.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Public Hearing and consideration for use of Community Development Block Grant Funds for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 in the anticipated amount of \$201,413.

Director Smith expressed appreciation to the Committee Members for their willingness to volunteer and participate in the Board's activities. He presented a slide presentation outlining the permissible uses of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and detailed the eligible expenditure areas.

*(A copy of the presentation is on file and attached hereto as Exhibit A.)*

Parks and Recreation Manager Lasek presented the proposed projects, summarizing the key elements and objectives of each initiative as follows:

Carver Recreation Center – Multipurpose Field: Estimated cost \$52,000.

Nye Jordan Park: Construction of 12 additional pickleball courts, extension of poured playground surface, and installation of an ADA-accessible swing; estimated cost \$153,297.

*(A copy of the presentation is on file and attached hereto as Exhibit B.)*

Committee Member Smith asked whether the proposed project would utilize all available funding and expressed a preference for distributing funds among multiple projects to benefit a broader range of community initiatives.

Director Smith stated the available CDBG funding for FY 2024–25 is approximately \$104,000, which must be expended within the fiscal year or forfeited. He explained that under new guidelines, municipalities may carry unspent funds forward for only one year. The total available amount of \$201,000 represents a combination of current and prior-year allocations. He noted that combining proposed projects could fully utilize the funding.

Chairperson Rivera inquired about the Kiwanis Club's contribution toward the ADA swing project.

Manager Lasek responded that the City could further discuss the matter with the Kiwanis Club, which has expressed interest in providing additional funding.

Director Hargrove confirmed speaking with Kiwanis Club representatives, who expressed interest in supporting installation of an ADA-accessible swing for individuals with special needs.

Committee Member Riggio inquired whether Nye Jordan Park currently has any ADA-accessible swings. Manager Lasek responded that it does not and further confirm there are no ADA-accessible swings located within the City.

Committee Member Brennan expressed a preference to allocate the available funding to a single project.

Director Smith then reviewed the scoring categories contained in the Rubric Scoring System and explained the evaluation process for the presentations.

Public Works Director Groover presented a proposal for Project Safe, which involves sidewalk and curbing improvements along Golfview Avenue from Georgia Street East to MLK Boulevard. The project includes installation of approximately 2,200 linear feet of new sidewalks within the designated CDBG area, at an estimated cost of \$201,413.

*(A copy of the presentation is on file and attached hereto as Exhibit C.)*

Director Groover reported that Public Works replaced three miles of sidewalk infrastructure on the east side of town last year. He explained that Project Safe focuses on replacing deteriorated sidewalk areas and that CDBG funds would help offset costs not covered by the City's paving budget.

Committee Member Brennan asked who is responsible for repairing sidewalks and whether such improvements are typically funded as a standard City expense.

Director Groover stated that the Public Works Department receives approximately \$1 million annually in transportation funding, a figure unchanged for the past nine years which also covers staff salaries. The department consists of three employees and

includes a concrete budget that increased from \$25,000 to \$50,000 this year. No additional funding has been allocated for this project, but he noted willingness to work within any funding amount awarded.

Chairperson Rivera asked how long it had been since improvements were made within the project area. Director Groover responded that in his 24 years with the City, no improvements have been made. He further noted the area has a mix of age groups.

Committee Member Bryan inquired about the current use of the former Gibbons Street Elementary School site, and Director Groover stated that the facility now serves as a Boys and Girls Club.

CRA Director Smith presented Project SPARK (STEM Preparation Advancement for Resilient Kids), a youth-oriented STEM education initiative aimed at developing science, technology, engineering, and math skills in teens through hands-on, inquiry-based activities. The program proposes a summer LEGO Learning System for middle school students at an estimated cost of \$96,781.

*(A copy of the presentation is on file and attached hereto as Exhibit D.)*

Committee Member Brennan asked whether future years would require additional funding for supplies and personnel.

Director Smith explained that the program equipment would remain City property and could be utilized by other departments, such as Parks and Recreation, if the program continued. Additional staffing, however, would still be necessary.

Chairperson Rivera asked about potential collaboration with LEGO or the School Board and whether LEGO could sponsor the program. Director Smith stated that the equipment would be sourced from LEGO, but instructors would not be affiliated with the company. He noted plans to contact LEGO for sponsorship opportunities and confirmed that the School Board would not be directly involved; the program would be offered free of charge.

Committee Member Brennan mentioned that Bartow High School's International Baccalaureate (IB) students are required to complete community service hours. Director Smith stated he would explore possible volunteer participation from IB students.

Committee Member Riggio asked whether transportation costs would be used for field trips, and Director Smith confirmed that they would.

Chairperson Rivera expressed strong support for the project, emphasizing the importance of providing STEM opportunities for local youth.

Director Smith reported the evaluation results as follows:

Project SPARK: 59% (Ranked third)

Parks and Recreation Project: 79% (Ranked second)

Project Safe: 88% (Ranked first)

He noted that Project Safe would advance for presentation before the City Commission.

Committee Member Smith asked whether all remaining funds would be allocated to Project Safe or divided among other projects.

Director Smith responded that Public Works would retain approximately \$30,000 in unused funds, which could either carry over to the next fiscal year or be applied toward the Parks and Recreation project.

**MOTION** was made by Committee Member Smith, seconded by Committee Member Brennan to use funding for Public Works Project Safe.

**VOTE TO THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:**

**AYE:** Brennan, Bryan, Harbin, Riggio, Rivera, Smith

**NAY:** None

Motion carried.

**MOTION** was made by Committee Member Smith, seconded by Committee Member Brennan to utilize remaining funds to the Parks and Recreation Project.

**VOTE TO THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:**

**AYE:** Brennan, Bryan, Harbin, Riggio, Rivera, Smith

**NAY:** None

Motion carried.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Chairperson Rivera adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Asst. City Clerk Fussell

(City Seal)

CITY OF BARTOW  
**CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

FEBRUARY 12, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M. (EST) OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE  
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS, 450 NORTH WILSON AVE., BARTOW, FL 33830

**MINUTES**

The Citizen's Advisory Committee met in a Regular Meeting on February 12, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers located at City Hall, 450 North Wilson Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830. Notice of this meeting was posted at City Hall, Bartow Public Library and on the City's website [www.cityofbartow.net](http://www.cityofbartow.net) and advertised in the Winter Haven Sun Newspaper.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Director Howard Smith called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Director Smith stated that this Board consists of nine members. A total of five members must be present for this board to take formal action. He determined that there was not a quorum, that no formal action could take place. He instructed the board members to have a discussion only.

**2. SWEARING IN NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

- Julia Bailey

Asst. City Clerk Fussell administered the Oath of Office for Committee Member Julia Bailey.

**3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

No chairperson was appointed.

**4. ROLL CALL**

Asst. City Clerk Fussell called the roll, attendance was as follows:

Board Members Present: Julia Bailey, Michael Brennan, Robert Fowler, and Robin Riggo

Board Members Absent: Wendlyn Barnes, Lyn Bryan, Wesley Harbin and Alvin Smith Jr.

Staff Members Present: Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Executive Director Howard Smith, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts (PRCA) Director Jason Hargrove, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Assistant Director Kyle Lasek, Business & Community Engagement Coordinator Cheryl Baksh, Finance Director Peter Lear and Asst. City Clerk Kaylee Fussell.

## 5. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Matters not appearing on this agenda.

There were no comments.

- Matters appearing on this agenda but not scheduled for separate public hearing.

There were no comments.

## 6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 27, 2024**

No action was taken.

## 7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Public Hearing and consideration for use of Community Development Block Grant Funds for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 in the anticipated amount of \$201,413.**

CRA Coordinator Baksh thanked the Committee Members for volunteering to serve on this board and for their participation in the process. She reviewed a slide presentation and explained what CDBG funds could be used for and the areas where they could be spent. For the FY 25-26 in the anticipated amount of \$102,630.19.

*(A copy of the presentation is attached therein and described as Exhibit A)*

Assistant PRCA Director Lasek provided an update to the Board regarding a proposal to install a wheelchair-accessible swing at Nye Jordan Park. He noted that the park currently features an ADA-compliant merry-go-round. The estimated total project cost is \$164,108.82. This grant would cover a significant amount of the cost with the remaining balance being funded through the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Capital Improvement Projects General Fund.

Board Member Brennan inquired about the exact grant amount.

Assistant PRCA Director Lasek responded that the CDBG totals \$102,630.19.

PRCA Director Hargrove added that the city is partnering with the Kiwanis Club to help secure additional funding for the remaining balance. The Kiwanis Club is currently pursuing a grant to assist with these costs.

Assistant PRCA Director Lasek further explained that the ADA-compliant swing is designed to provide accessible recreation opportunities for individuals with mobility impairments, allowing them to engage in fundamental play experiences who are often unavailable to do without specialized equipment. The installation promotes social inclusion, enabling children of all abilities to play together while fostering community connection. He emphasized the department's commitment to creating inclusive recreational spaces.

Director Smith reported that a public meeting had been held to present the wheelchair swing concept to the community on January 22, 2026, held at Carver Recreation Center.

The committee members supported the project. Director Smith stated he would bring forth a recommendation to the City Commission for final approval at its February 16, 2026, Regular Meeting.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, CRA Coordinator Baksh adjourned the meeting at 6:16 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Asst. City Clerk Fussell

(City Seal)

DRAFT

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

The City of Bartow  
The Community Redevelopment Agency

Polk County's  
Health and Human Services Division  
Housing and Neighborhood Development



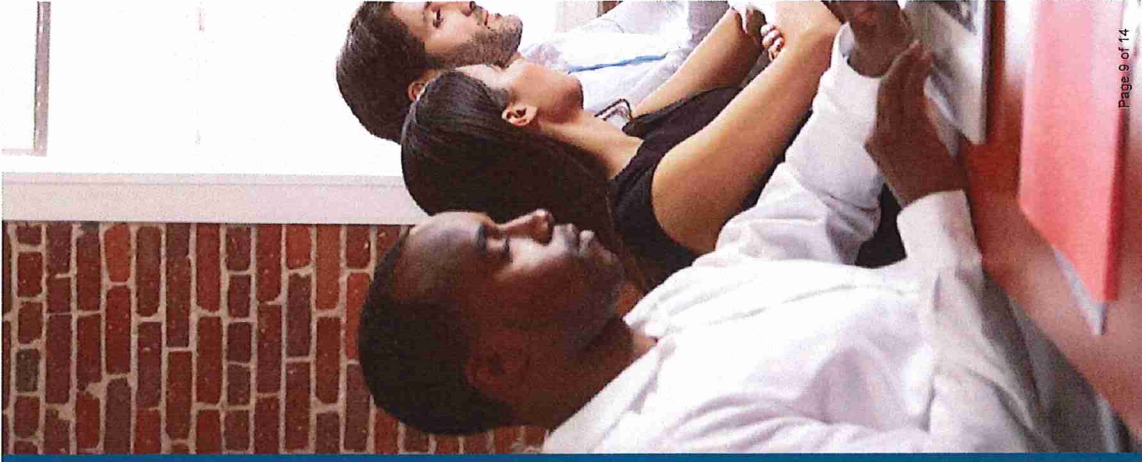
# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) REFRESHER

- CDBG – Provides Funding to Counties and Municipalities for Economic Development Initiatives and to Support Community Revitalization and Rehabilitation
- CDBG-funded projects must meet one of three national objectives:
  - Benefit low and moderate-income persons and areas
  - Prevent slums and blighted areas
  - Eliminate slums and blighted areas
- CDBG- Programs/Projects Provide Communities with Resources to Address a Wide Range of Community Development Needs



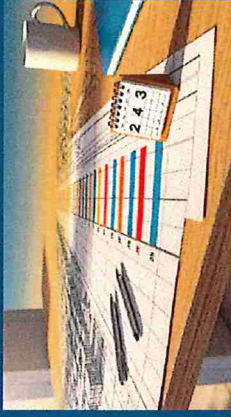
# CDBG FUNDING IS AVAILABLE FOR PROGRAMS/PROJECTS THAT ADDRESS:

- **Economic Development**  
Activities that Create Jobs for Low-and Moderate-Income People/ Individuals that Resides within a CDBG Area
- **Neighborhood Revitalization**  
Park Facilities and Community Centers, Park Facilities, and Drainage/Stormwater Improvements within the CDBG Area
- **Housing Rehabilitation**  
Rehabilitation of Substandard Housing within the CDBG Area
- **Commercial Revitalization**  
Facade Improvements, Streetscaping, and Underground Utilities within the CDBG Area
- **Americans with Disabilities Act**  
(ADA) Improvements within the City of Bartow



# TIMELINE

*CDBG Funding FY 2026-2027- Starts on October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026*



- ✓ January 22, 2026 - CDBG Community Informational Session held at Carver Recreation Center
- ✓ February 6, 2026 - City of Bartow Proposals Submissions Due by 5PM (for projects that meet the eligibility requirements)
- ✓ February 12, 2026 - Eligible Project Proposals Presented to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
- February 16, 2026 - Proposal(s) are presented to City Commission for Approval
- March 12, 2026 - Proposal Applications MUST be submitted to the County before noon **NO PROPOSALS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS TIME BY THE COUNTY**

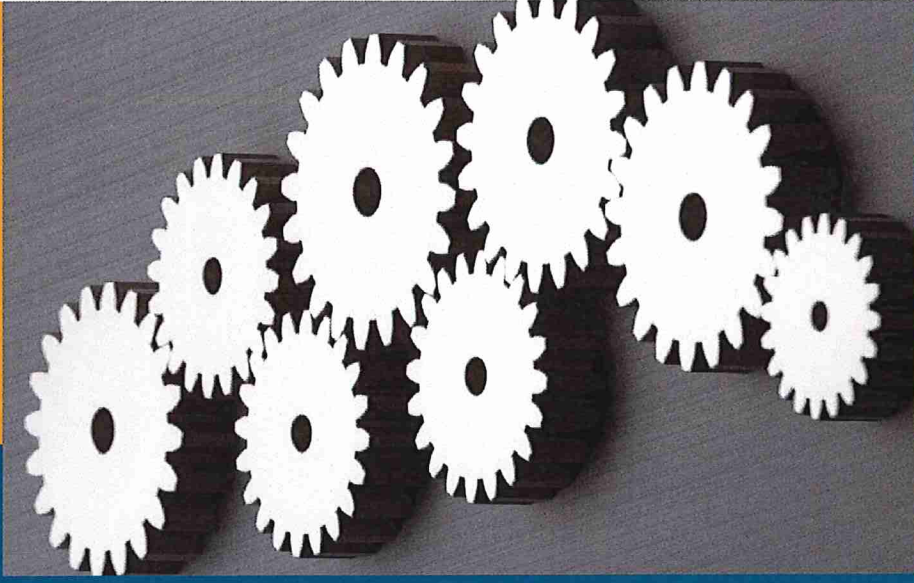
# CDBG PROCESS

CDBG Funding Est. FY 26/27 = \$102,630.19

## Applicants Must:

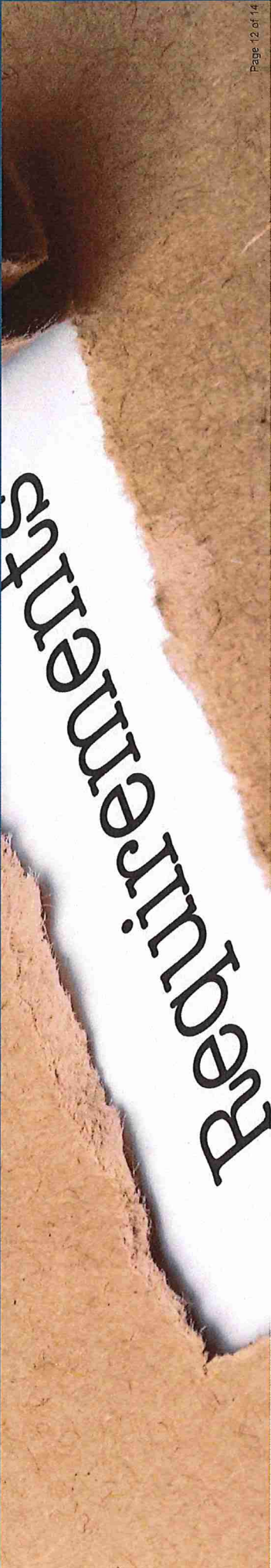
1. Complete an application cover sheet with supporting documentation.
1. Develop the proposal using CDBG grant guidelines.
1. Complete two attachments proposals to be considered for funding
  - a. Two copies of collated materials (one original and one (1) copy) to be mailed to:

Housing and Neighborhood Development  
Post Office Box 9005, Drawer HS04  
Bartow, FL 33831-9005



# PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Proposal Cover Sheet
2. Required Documents
  - Financial Audit (most recent year-end)
  - Completed proposal narrative with attachments
  - List of City Commissioners/City Council members
  - Job descriptions of service delivery positions for which salaries and benefits are requested
  - Certificate of Insurance (Polk County listed as certificate holder)
    - Polk County Board of County Commissioners
    - Housing and Neighborhood Development
  - Construction plans (if applicable)
  - Appraisal report(s) for proposals involving purchase or renovation of building(s)
  - Documentation of public participation (Proof of ad publication, Board meeting minutes, etc.)
  - Map depicting project's service benefit area
  - Procurement Policy (current/most recent version)



Requirements

# PROPOSAL

## CDBG Project Addresses:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) @ Parks Wheelchair Swing @ Nye Jordan Park

Estimated Cost: \$153,297

A wheelchair-accessible swing provides:

- ADA-aligned access to recreation, allowing individuals with mobility impairments to engage in a fundamental play experience that is often unavailable without specialized equipment.
- Social inclusion, enabling children of all abilities to play together, reducing isolation, and strengthening community bonds.
- Equitable access to public facilities, supporting the City's commitment to providing safe, inclusive spaces where every resident can participate
- Support for caregivers and families, many of whom currently must leave the neighborhood or city to find accessible play equipment

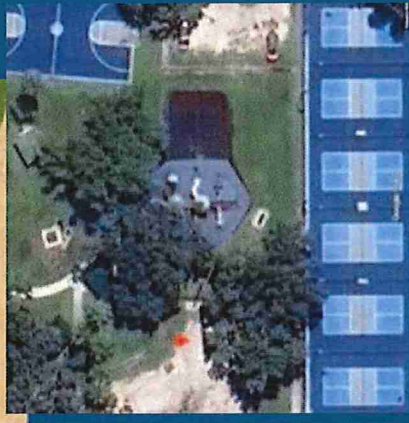


Image Credits

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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