



Board of County Commissioners

Office of Operations and Projects

3600 W. Sovereign Path, Suite 266, Lecanto, Florida 34461

(352) 527-5240 Fax (352) 527-5204

Website: www.bocc.citrus.fl.us

June 28, 2010

OPL – 10 – 13

Ms. Theodora C. Rusnak, President
P.O. Box 925
Lecanto, FL 34460

RE: Objection – CDBG Application
Wal-Mart Store #1029-06

Dear Ms. Rusnak:

Please accept this letter as the County's formal response to your June 18, 2010 letter (received June 21, 2010) regarding the CDBG Economic Development application seeking FY 2008 funding to assist with infrastructure improvements to serve a proposed Wal-Mart Supercenter at the corner of Cardinal Street and U.S. 19.

The main focus of your letter centers on the fact that the retail corporation Wal-Mart, Inc. is the initial and primary beneficiary of the assistance (if it is approved). This point was previously made by Mr. Jim Bitter at both the Citizen's Advisory Board meeting of May 10, 2010 and the Board's May 11, 2010 public hearing.

Grants of this type are offered to provide financial assistance to extend public infrastructure to facilitate development (or redevelopment) that creates new jobs. In this specific instance, the developer seeks to build a \$16M project that will result in 22 additional jobs, but the site requires a water main extension for the project to be viable. Wal-Mart is prepared to invest \$15.6M of private dollars (\$140,000 directly to the water main component) as their match to the available \$750,000 provided by the grant.

This line, if constructed, will be utilized by any additional businesses which choose to develop within the Cardinal Street commercial node, a description created within the County's Comprehensive Plan in 1992 in conjunction with the U.S. 19 commercial node plan. To reject such an opportunity based solely on the fact that Wal-Mart is the initial beneficiary is contrary to good public policy and the Board's commitment to extension of central utilities.

Both the Board and the Citizen's Advisory Council found the prospect of 22 additional jobs of merit and, as you noted in your letter, the Florida Department of Community Affairs' evaluation also recognizes this projection as qualified jobs.

The score achieved by the application was sufficient to qualify for consideration, a sobering fact when one considers that the grant funding is available to all local Florida governments and the 2008 cycle has been opened for some time.

Ms. Theodora C. Rusnak, President
June 28, 2010
Page Two

In conclusion, while the Council's position is similar to that of Mr. Bitter in regards to Wal-Mart as the applicant, the information provided by Mr. Bitter and referenced within your letter provides no documentation that Wal-Mart is an unqualified applicant or that the County has failed to follow and comply with the standards governing CDBG grants. It was and is the position of both the Citizen's Advisory Board and the Board of County Commissioners that the application in question is sound and the construction of the water line extension, which would be funded by the grant, is a valuable investment in public infrastructure and of direct benefit to our local economy.

Respectfully,

Gary W. Maidhof
Operations and Projects Officer

GWM/cjo

cc: Patrick Howard, DCA-ED
Brad Thorpe, County Administrator