

**MEETING MINUTES  
 BEACH REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
 100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
 8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
 FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA  
 MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2008 – 2:30 P.M.**

<b>BRAB MEMBERS</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>CUMULATIVE</b>	
		<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Ina Lee, Chair	P	6	0
Shirley Smith	P	6	0
Miranda Lopez	P	6	0
Carlos Molinet	P	5	2
Judy Scher	A	3	4
Amaury Piedra (arr. 2:40)	A	4	1
Aiton Yaari	P	5	1
Ramola Motwani	P	6	0
Jordana L. Jarjura	A	4	1
Melissa Milroy	P	3	0

**Staff**

Donald Morris, Beach CRA Director  
 Jeff Modarelli, Economic Development Director  
 Earl Prizlee, Engineering Design Manager, CRA  
 Eileen Furedi, Economic Development Representative  
 Hilda Testa, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**I. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Chair Lee called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. Roll was taken and a quorum was present.

**II. Approval of Minutes: July 21, 2008**

**Motion** moved by Vice Chair Molinet, seconded by Ms. Smith, to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2008 meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**III. Beach Walk at Bahia Mar Site Plan Presentation**

Chair Lee introduced Courtney Crush, Land Use Attorney, and Peter Henn of LXR Resorts, who gave a presentation to the Board regarding the Beach Walk at

Bahia Mar. This project is located on the Bahia Mar property, and is the first phase of redevelopment of a 38-acre site.

Ms. Crush described the project as a “pedestrian-friendly” two-building complex, housing two ground-floor restaurants and two upper levels of offices for yacht brokers. It is separate from a site plan for the larger Bahia Mar property, which is still in lease negotiations. Ms. Crush stated that Mr. Henn hopes the two restaurants will increase the pedestrian feel of Sea Breeze Boulevard and A1A.

She presented a slide of the property, noting that the two restaurants will be “high-end” establishments, one open for lunch and dinner, the other for dinner only. The yacht brokers’ offices are in an ideal location, as they overlook the marina.

Ms. Crush continued that she and Mr. Henn spent a good deal of time working with the City on the property’s redevelopment, and working with Mr. Prizlee and Mr. Morris on the streetscape. She noted that the streetscape South of Las Olas Boulevard was generally agreed to be “less than friendly” at present, and that the Beach Walk designation, hopefully, will extend from Las Olas Boulevard and the Swimming Hall of Fame down to the Fire Station.

Another slide showed the open plaza area within the property, which is 10,000 sq. ft. and is located between the two restaurant buildings, connecting to the Beach Walk. Benches are included in the area, and it is designed to be friendly to those visiting the marina and/or the restaurants. The ADA-accessible open space, Ms. Crush advised, had been a key inclusion for the City.

Because the Beach Walk is on the Intracoastal Waterway, the property is comprised of a very thin strip of land, and another request from the City was that this area be made more attractive to pedestrians and drivers. The site plan raises the Beach Walk so the boats are visible from the walkway and the restaurants.

The property is 596 ft. along Sea Breeze Boulevard, Ms. Crush stated, and will be a minimum of 10 ft. in width, equipped with benches. She noted that the developers have been asked by the City to make the walkway slightly less meandering and more usable and accessible.

A great deal of landscaping is planned, Ms. Crush said.

She noted that currently, Sea Breeze Boulevard has a sidewalk of approximately 5 ft. and is directly adjacent to the travel lanes. The developers have met with FDOT, she said, and asked if the sidewalk could be relocated onto the actual

property and expanded. The bike lane will remain in its current location. Overall, she said, this will contribute to a much more positive pedestrian experience.

The Western elevation of the property will be called "Marina Walk," Ms. Crush said, and it also runs along Sea Breeze Boulevard and cuts in toward the marina. Ultimately, this will run along the perimeter of the area.

Planners have asked LXR Resorts to develop the property as if the larger Bahia Mar property were not part of it, Ms. Crush stated. She stated that they believe they have met that particular goal.

The separation between the two buildings at the Plaza level is 92 ft., Ms. Crush advised. The height of the buildings is 49.5 ft. from grade. This is actually 7.5 ft. lower than on the original plan presented to the Central Beach Alliance, she pointed out.

Along the Marina Walk, there will be outdoor dining at the restaurants, where patrons may dine with a view of the marina and pedestrians may walk along its perimeter and look out at the boats.

One unique feature of the property, Ms. Crush noted, is the parking garage, which is beneath the property. This will be a valet parking area for the restaurants and designated parking for the offices.

Ms. Crush added that LXR Resorts had met with neighboring condominium owners, who had questions about how the view would be affected from various floors. Although some owners still have questions, at least one building board had approved of the project.

With the presentation concluded, Ms. Crush opened the floor to questions from the Board.

Chair Lee asked where the Beach Walk at Bahia Mar currently stood in the approval process.

Ms. Crush stated they had been to the Development Review Committee and obtained all but one DRC sign-off. They hoped to appear before the Planning & Zoning Board in October if this final DRC approval is granted. They are also requesting a parking reduction, she said, and City staff had worked with the project's traffic engineer to study patterns in the area and learn if a reduction is appropriate.

They must also meet requirements for Beach permitting, Ms. Crush added, noting that they are “well within what is permitted” by the South Beach Marina and Hotel Area (SBMHA). She also noted that they meet all setback requirements.

As a “development of significant impact,” under which designation restaurants are included, Ms. Crush stated that LXR has asked to bring the project out toward Sea Breeze Boulevard. In some areas, the garage is slightly above grade, she said, but this is mitigated by the plaza and the overall pedestrian experience, which would be interrupted by adjustments to grade. In their meetings with staff and neighboring properties, Ms. Crush advised that they had been urged to proceed with the site plan.

She added that LXR had presented the site plan twice to the Central Beach Alliance and had received a vote of support from that group.

Chair Lee asked what the financial impact of the project on CRA was expected to be in years to come. Although the Beach Walk remains separate from the larger Bahia Mar project, she noted that its value would have some impact on the CRA budget.

Mr. Henn stated that because his analysis, to this point, has been focused on the entire redevelopment area, he did not have a figure specific to the Beach Walk area.

Chair Lee noted to the Board that, as a group, the BRAB is not permitted to vote on the project. They are allowed to give input and recommendations only, as they are a “commenting body,” but they may take no official action.

Ms. Motwani asked about the distance from Sea Breeze Boulevard to the Beach Walk. Ms. Crush estimated that, due to the “meandering” nature of the walkway, it varies from 10 to 20 ft.

Chair Lee asked if the sidewalk surfacing would be the same as the surfacing used across the street from the Beach Walk project. Mr. Morris affirmed that City staff hopes this will be the same material. He noted that he and Mr. Prizlee had met with the Beach Walk developers many times and had consistently found them cooperative with the City’s requests, with the clarification that this applied only to the public portion of the plan, not the site plan in its entirety.

Ms. Smith asked if the 49.5 ft. height of the building includes the garage beneath the property as well. Ms. Crush replied that this includes the garage at the point at which it becomes level with grade, but not the area beneath grade.

Ms. Lopez asked for the width of the sidewalks. Ms. Crush answered that the minimum width was 10 ft. She also confirmed that the existing bike path was in the right of way, as FDOT had not embraced the combination of bike and pedestrian paths into one.

Vice Chair Molinet felt the project was a “complete transformation” of the property as it stood today, and congratulated the architects and City staff on their input in the development.

Chair Lee added that during the BRAB’s own Beach Walks as a group, the area being developed had been visually lacking. She felt the development would greatly improve the area.

Ms. Lopez noted that she would miss the view of the boats in the marina from the highway. Ms. Crush explained that the setbacks on the building would allow for some view to be experienced.

Mr. Henn stated that the Southern portion of the Bahia Mar property would not be developed, save some landscaping. He pointed out that the Auxiliary Coast Guard was stationed in a “dilapidated” building to the North of the property, and had asked to be housed somewhere in the redevelopment. Mr. Henn had agreed to this in exchange for adding 80 ft. to the Bahia Mar property, with the condition that this 80 ft. be used only for surface parking and additional landscaping.

Ralph Riehl, President of the South Florida Tourism Council, asked for an estimate of the construction time for the project.

Mr. Henn replied that if the project is approved during calendar year 2008, after further necessary permitting and documentation, the building would be turned over to the restaurateurs in 2010. He expected they would be ready to open by the 2010 holiday season.

Fred Carlson, also of the South Florida Tourism Council as well as the Central Beach Alliance, thanked Ms. Crush and Mr. Henn for their willingness to meet with these organizations and compromise with them where necessary. He asked for the number of parking spaces allocated in the proposed garage.

Ms. Crush responded that there will be 69 spaces in the garage proper, and 936 in external parking.

Mr. Carlson explained that he had wondered how many employees would work at the proposed site, including restaurant employees and managers, office workers, Coast Guard employees, visitors, and others.

Ms. Crush pointed out that this is partially factored into "existing operations" on Bahia Mar, and that the only additions to the property will be 19,000 sq. ft. of restaurant space and 32,048 sq. ft. for the yacht brokers. She noted that these brokers are not expected to generate a large amount of parking.

When the property is finished and the Coast Guard is included, she allowed, a new site plan would be submitted to staff and a further breakdown would be presented to the BRAB and other groups.

Mr. Yaari thanked the Blackstone Group for coming to Fort Lauderdale and investing in the Beach community.

Chair Lee thanked Mr. Henn and Ms. Crush as well for appearing before the Board, particularly as they did not have a voting capacity.

Mr. Henn added that he would like to return to the Board and show the plan for the Waldorf and other areas of development.

#### **IV. Old/New Business**

Chair Lee asked for an update on the BRAB's ongoing projects.

Mr. Morris raised the issue of beach cleanup, noting that a great deal of seaweed has recently accumulated on the beaches. The DEP has informed the City that mechanical cleaning equipment cannot be used right away on the beaches, as turtle nests have suffered due to erosion and a number of nests have been lost. Locating the turtles must take place before any mechanized cleaning can be done.

This means the Parks Department must "hand-pick" a four-mile area of beach, Mr. Morris said, which will make the cleanup process take longer. They are focusing their attention, at the moment, on cleaning up items larger than seaweed, which could pose a hazard to persons walking along the shore.

At the moment, he continued, it is not known when mechanized cleaning can be scheduled. Mr. Morris felt it could possibly take place in October.

In addition, a recent green turtle nest has been discovered on the beach, which could make the turtle season longer than usual, Mr. Morris said. He asked for the BRAB's patience in dealing with the cleanup and hoped that it would proceed as quickly as possible.

Chair Lee asked for the status of the turtle lighting project. Mr. Morris said the City has not yet received confirmation from the Department of Fish & Wildlife that the prototype lights have been approved. They hoped to have an answer soon, as the lighting issue also affects the progress of the South Beach Parking Lot project.

The South Beach project, Mr. Morris went on, is now at 60%, although he noted that on any such project, issues arise that were not originally planned for or anticipated. The CRA and Parking Division plan to present the current status to the City Commission at its next meeting, and hopes to finalize the plan soon so the project can get underway.

Two issues may arise that could affect the schedule, Mr. Morris said. He pointed out that there may be mitigation requirements regarding the replacement of the wall, as the current wall has no foundation and the replacement must be constructed properly. This could result in an initial expense paid to the DEP, he explained, if mitigation was necessary.

Hopefully, Mr. Morris concluded, the plan can be finalized at the City Commission and the permitting process completed at the beginning of 2009.

Chair Lee inquired as to whether the mitigation issues could impact the BRAB's budget, which has already been determined for fiscal 2009.

Mr. Morris noted that \$1.3 million of new money had been set aside for this project. At this time, he said, he could not estimate what mitigation might cost.

Chair Lee informed Mr. Morris that she would like to acknowledge the City's quick cleanup of sand that washed up from the most recent hurricane. This had minimized the impact of the storm season on the beach, she said.

Mr. Morris stated that a cross-arm struck by a truck four months ago had recently been repaired, with only the pavers remaining to be replaced. He pointed out that

staff had been unaware whether this could happen with the current round of budget cuts, and felt it was good news that this project had been concluded.

He stated that Mr. Prizlee had been working with Broward County contractors to re-stripe sections of A1A, including crosswalks. He also said the City was partnering with Public Works to address some issues involving trash cans, and hoped to resolve this by March 2009.

Chair Lee noted that the issue of “friendlier” signs for the next Spring Break season was still outstanding, and hoped this would be addressed by the proper department. Mr. Morris noted that this project had not yet begun, but should be undertaken in time for Spring Break 2009.

Ms. Smith wondered if the planting of sea oats might help control the sand issues, noting that this might mean less work and less money spent by the City. Mr. Morris deferred to the Parks Department, as he felt he was not sufficiently knowledgeable about this issue to address it.

Ms. Motwani announced that the Holiday Lights will be on November 19, 2008, at the Atlantic Hotel, poolside from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Chair Lee added that, due to Ms. Motwani’s diligence in pursuing the Holiday Lights project, it had been enhanced for this year. She also acknowledged Ms. Motwani’s work in having a new “Fort Lauderdale Beach” sign placed on I-95.

Ms. Motwani added that with money from the Beach Business Improvement District (BID), lights will also be placed in the trees along Las Olas Boulevard.

Mr. Morris introduced Eileen Furedi, who is the new secretary of the Beach CRA office, to the Board.

Chair Lee reminded the Board that Sasaki will return in October to appear before the City Commission once again. She pointed out that when the date is set for their presentation, the BRAB will reschedule its October meeting for that same date so they may see the presentation beforehand. Mr. Morris agreed to let Chair Lee know this date as soon as it is set.

## **V. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 3:11 p.m.