

**DRAFT**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**BEACH REDEVELOPMENT BOARD**  
**100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE**  
**8<sup>th</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301**  
**MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2014 - 2:30 P.M.**

MEMBERS	FEB 2014/JAN 2015				
		REGULAR MTGS		SPECIAL MTGS	
			Present	Absent	Present
Anthony Abbate, Chair	P	4	0	2	0
Ina Lee, Vice Chair (l. @ 3:51 pm)	P	3	1	2	0
Thomas B. McManus	P	1	1	2	0
Dan Matchette	P	4	0	2	0
Melissa Milroy	P	2	2	2	0
Judith Scher	P	4	0	2	0
Tim Schiavone	A	4	0	1	1
Andy Mitchell, Jr.	P	3	1	2	0
Shirley Smith	P	4	0	2	0
Aiton Yaari	A	3	1	1	1

**Staff**

Lee Feldman, City Manager  
 Don Morris, Economic Reinvestment Administrator  
 Diana Alarcon, Director of Transportation and Mobility  
 Jenni Morejon, Director Designee, Department of Sustainable Development  
 Tom Green, Beach Engineer  
 Talal Abi-Karam, Public Works Department  
 Jeff Stafford, Aquatic Complex Staff  
 Eileen Furedi, Clerk II  
 Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Guests and Presenters**

Lester Zalewski, LBM  
 Abby Laughlin, Central Beach Alliance  
 Fred Carlson, Central Beach Alliance  
 John Weaver, Central Beach Alliance  
 Scott Wyman  
 Art Seitz  
 Michael Glassman, M.D.

**I. Call to Order/Roll Call – Anthony Abbate, Chair**

Chair Abbate called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

## **Quorum Requirement**

As of this date there were 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 would constitute a quorum. It was noted there was a quorum at the commencement of the meeting.

## **II. Aquatic Center Modifications - Lee Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager**

Mr. Feldman explained that this meeting was arranged so that he could clarify some issues with the Aquatic Center. He provided a brief history of the Center. He said they received a single response to an RFP for a comprehensive facility in the summer of 2011: the proposal included an aquatic complex, restaurants, wave house, bridge, etc. The cost was about \$74 million.

Mr. Feldman continued that the project had issues with traffic, parking, concurrency and zoning, but the biggest issue was the cost. While the CRA would contribute \$25 million, there was doubt where the remainder of the money would come from. The City Commission instructed that the project be designed within the budget. Mr. Feldman continued that staff then presented a design that they thought would be within the budget, and the sole bidder RDC also presented a design based upon the same budget. The City Commission elected to go forward with the RDC design, and a developer's agreement was negotiated with RDC, which is now in effect.

Mr. Feldman then discussed ISHOF, which had been a tenant for many years. The City offered them a built-out space necessary for ISHOF to remain, a shell, and offered to lease the site to them for 50 years at \$1.00 per year. However, Mr. Feldman reported that they could not come to an agreement; ISHOF was seeking a greater financial agreement from the City to the tune of a \$50,000 per year stipend, profit sharing, etc. After that, ISHOF informed the City they were entertaining opportunities out of state, and were not interested in coming back to Fort Lauderdale.

Mr. Feldman reported there was a meeting two weeks ago with US Diving regarding the diving platform; they were asked the following three questions:

1. If they had concerns about the diving operations at the facility
2. If there is an issue with the peripheral vision of divers diving from a platform on top of the four-story parking garage
3. If there are wind issues

According to Mr. Feldman, US Diving said they thought the facility would be "great"; and they said the divers are focused on the water only - there would not be a problem with peripheral vision. Regardless of where the platform is, wind speeds exceeding 25 mph would cancel any diving. Based on calculations done by the developer's structural engineer, the difference between winds "at grade" and on the diving platform would be two mph. Mr. Feldman stated that winds here rarely get over 18 mph.

Mr. Feldman then consulted the City's Public Works Department to obtain an independent calculation from a professional at FIU - this is in progress.

Mr. Feldman continued that the City had entered into a development agreement with RDC at approximately \$32 million, \$25 million which is coming from the CRA and \$7 million from the parking fund (in the form of a parking revenue bond or cash contribution from the parking fund). Building plans should be submitted to the Building Division in November.

Mr. Feldman said they are bringing forth a series of change orders dealing with the facility in the previously designated ISHOF space. After considering several options, he said that the first dealt with freeing up space on the fifth floor and creating a nice venue there for the banquet hall. The second change was to create a two-story indoor diving training facility for which there may be a monetary contribution or sponsorships from the diving community. There also may be a credit on the moveable floor option on the pool since it does not provide any intrinsic value to the project. Mr. Feldman stated the scope has been drawn back "dramatically," and it is not the same facility that was first imagined.

Mr. Feldman commented that this facility has been (and still is) characterized to the City Commission as a "municipal pool complex." He said that City staff will be running the facility and book the events, as they have for 20 years.

However, Mr. Feldman stated that this pool will lose money, as do all the municipal pools - it is more of a service than a profit-making operation. The parking garage will generate additional revenue for the parking fund, which will bring dollars back to the General Fund. Those monies could help cover some of the losses incurred by the facility.

Chair Abbate asked the Board if they had read a June 10 letter from Mr. Foley, and a list of 20 questions and letter from Tim and Ron O'Brien. Although they had done so, they had not had a chance to understand the latest drawings and proposed revisions.

Mr. Green reviewed the changes:

- Reworking of the 5<sup>th</sup> floor
- City offices moved to a mezzanine floor (3<sup>rd</sup> level)
- Banquet facility on 5<sup>th</sup> floor (with no on-site cooking)

Mr. Green showed a rendering, pointing out the various areas/features.

Mr. Feldman relayed that there is a new sport: high-platform diving which would require a 28-meter diving platform and a deeper pool (one foot). He said they are looking into incorporating such a feature in the facility by adding 18 meters to the platform.

Chair Abbate wondered why US Diving had not made any accommodations as a result of Mr. Foley's June 10 letter. Mr. Feldman pointed out the letter was written in 2013, not 2014, and much discussion has occurred since then. In fact, Mr. Foley participated in the recent conference call and his concerns have been satisfied. Mr. Feldman continued that the biggest concern they now have with US Diving concerns visibility from the bleachers on the west side of the pool. To accommodate that concern, the City is trying to resolve some ADA issues.

Mr. Feldman added that the matter of attracting cruise ship participation is not the designer's obligation - it would up to the City.

Chair Abbate clarified that the "20 questions" are from Tim O'Brien and his father, Ron.

Ms. Lee wondered about the CVB's role in booking events. Mr. Feldman responded he has not had any conversations with them. Jeff Stafford of the Aquatic Complex confirmed that the YMCA is looking forward to returning, and they consider Fort Lauderdale a family destination.

Ms. Lee was curious if there had been any potential room-night generated studies once the facility would open and if staff has projected into the future regarding room-night revenue. Mr. Feldman replied that analysis has not been done because the City does not collect tourist development tax dollars.

Ms. Smith expressed concerns about the wind affecting the divers.

Mr. Matchette wondered what events they might miss out on because the facility will not "be world class." Mr. Feldman believed they would have the same level of activity that they did in 2006-2007. In addition, they do not want to push out the daily users of the facility by having too many events.

Mr. Stafford stated that the design specifications do meet world-class standards (FINA). Mr. Feldman commented that this will be a first-class, state-of-the-art facility and cautioned against getting caught up in semantics.

Ms. Scher was still concerned that she had not heard confirmation that the dive platform was acceptable. Mr. Feldman replied he would provide that answer when they have the results of the FIU study. If the results are not favorable, he said they would not build the platform. Mr. Abi-Karam (Public Works Department) said the results should be ready within approximately three weeks.

At this point, Chair Abbate clarified that a vote today would be taken on whether to proceed with the modifications costing \$1.238 million. Mr. Feldman did not foresee any more changes to the scope with the exception of possibly modifying the diving platform to 28 meters and deepening the diving pool by one meter.

Mr. Mitchell liked the family/tourist use of the facility and the fact that it will be state of the art. He was concerned, however, about the profitability of the business side. Regarding design, he wanted to see “fresh and exciting” concepts within the budget.

Ms. Milroy asked if there was still a concern about how the complex would look from Seabreeze and how it would fit in with DC Alexander Park. Mr. Morris responded that EDSA is looking only at the public open space areas and connectivity between DC Alexander Park and the Aquatic Center, not the building façade.

Mr. Matchette asked Mr. Feldman what the alternative would be if the FIU study had adverse results. Mr. Feldman replied they would consider relocating the dive tower at the at-grade pool. This might involve redesigning the pool width to accommodate FINA standards, which would encroach into the front design. Mr. Matchette suggested relocating the dive platform to the Intracoastal side, and Mr. Feldman said they had considered that option but have not decided. He added it might be better to have it on Seabreeze in terms of pedestrian and vehicular traffic (so people can see what is going on). They want to keep a park-like environment on the west side to enhance the walking experience along the Intracoastal.

Ms. Lee suggested how the open space can be utilized to create a “wow” factor.

Chair Abbate opened the floor to public comment at 3:28 p.m.

Abby Laughlin, Central Beach Alliance, asked how far in advance of the City Commission meeting they would have the FIU study; Mr. Feldman said there will be two readings of the ordinance and the study should be completed before the second reading. He elaborated that the City Commission will consider the site plan approval and the change orders (a two-step process); the City Commission first meets as the CRA on August 19 and then meets as the Commission on September 3, 2014. Ms. Laughlin also wondered about the deed restriction; Mr. Feldman explained that the deed restriction refers to “a” swimming hall of fame, not “the” ISHOF. Since no swimming hall of fame is contemplated under this plan, the State does have the option to take back the facility.

Fred Carlson, Central Beach Alliance, said that people at several recent meetings regarding DC Alexander Park wanted to wait until the pool is finished before considering what concept to follow for the Park. Mr. Feldman responded that they are moving forward with EDSA to begin design concepts for DC Alexander Park. The City Commission rejected the first design; they had a visual charette discussion at the Aquatic Center to receive public comment, and on July 4 they put up a note-taking project for passers-by to post comments. Mr. Feldman reported they did not get the desired public participation at the meeting - mostly staff and BRAB members responded. He did not think they could wait until the completion of the pool to begin thinking of designs due to the CRA’s expiration date.

Art Seitz, former Board member, cited the results of the Visioning process, which indicated very few people had interest in water polo, synchronized swimming, recreational or competitive swimming and the like. He felt it was not certain the YMCA would come back. Mr. Seitz did not like the idea of putting a parking garage on the Intracoastal. He also cited lack of shade, no therapy feature, and too many other pools in the City as negative aspects of the plan; he suggested moving the center somewhere else, such as Holiday Park. Another suggestion was to make room at the top of the diving deck so people could watch Winterfest. He referred to critical articles written about RDC, and to some history of the project design.

John Weaver, President of Central Beach Alliance (CBA), reported that since the Swimming Hall of Fame reversed its position and said it was a great design, the CBA also thought it was good. He said the ISHOF generated 15,000 hotel room nights in 2011 (\$7.5 million) as opposed to \$10 billion for the entire beach. If the design is going to re-open, the CBA would like to see a four-story parking garage on Alhambra. Regarding the diving, he felt the study did not matter much - it was what the divers think that matters. He suggested that Mr. Feldman attend a CBA meeting to receive feedback.

Dr. Michael Glassman, surgeon and lifelong swimmer, expressed concern regarding locating the pool directly above a parking garage. He was worried about the effects of fume exposure from car exhaust. An open-air car garage cannot be vented to guarantee those above it will not be exposed. He also noted exhaust from yachts. He said that when he approached the developers about it, they did not perceive a problem, citing condo pools on top of parking structures. Dr. Glass pointed out the difference in numbers of people and children using the pools. Dr. Glassman left copies of medical studies linking respiratory problems to exhaust.

[Mr. Feldman and Ms. Lee left at 3:51 p.m.]

Lester Zalewski, Lauderdale Beach Management, thought the pool was a "done deal." He was not particularly in favor of the design, but felt the City Commission had made up its mind. He advised that there will be cost overruns, but thought there would be a benefit to the entire City. He suggested leaving CRA money in the CRA for neighborhood improvements, and tap the City for money for the Aquatic Center.

Chair Abbate closed the floor to public comment at 3:53 p.m.

Chair Abbate then summarized a letter from Tim O'Brien and his father Ron O'Brien into the record:

The two men have coached nine U.S. Olympic diving teams, and have spent their lives coaching/competing on a world-class level. They have been encouraging the City Mayor and Commissioners to step back and re-evaluate the current designs for the new Aquatics Center and its flawed business model, as well as trying to repair the relationship with the International Swimming Hall of

Fame so it can remain here. The City of Fort Lauderdale and areas surrounded by water has an incredible opportunity right now to make sure that it remains the central focal point of the aquatic world for decades by keeping the Swimming Hall of Fame here and building a truly world-class facility.

We believe the City can do something really special here and have the best of all worlds by:

- 1) building a world-class facility that is the epicenter of worldwide aquatics
- 2) keeping the International Swimming Hall of Fame in its home of 50 years
- 3) having an aquatic center with a business model that actually makes money
- 4) including the surrounding communities with water attractions and activities
- 5) host events that will benefit surrounding hotels, restaurants, and business for years
- 6) still have the parking garage in the beach area

During our time coaching at the Hall of Fame pool, the City was constantly presenting us with design plans in an effort to build a new aquatic center. These plans included the Hall of Fame and were beautiful designs for a facility that would be the pride of Fort Lauderdale. We were excited to see the vision of the City -- those older plans include shops, restaurants and a wave pool or other water attraction that would include the surrounding community. We always felt there should be something there for tourists as well as for surrounding communities, residents, and children who could happily benefit from the water attraction.

We did not want it to be just a training center for aquatic athletes, excluding everyone else. The City's plans during that time were aligned with our beliefs that to make a new Aquatic Center successful it has to have attractions for everyone and contain a business model that is profitable. Simply stated, you cannot pay bills; it loses money currently. We have not seen any financial projections/analysis which has shown that the new and improved Aquatic Center is anything more than the same business model.

It is not a world-class facility planned regardless of what the City portrays it to be. It will just be another facility - nothing special - with a 10-meter diving platform exposed to the wind and elements.

There is a better way. The current plans for the new aquatic center are the worst version we have seen, dating back to the early 1990s and more importantly, are the status quo. We have never seen competitive swimming and diving pools built on top of parking garages. We have coached on that pool deck for over 40 years, and the wind for a diver on top of that 10-meter platform could be a huge challenge.

The City can hire wind experts but a report is far different from reality. We met with City officials and the developer over a year ago and voiced our

concerns, discussed numerous options - but ultimately the City and the developer ignored our advice.

We have no financial, political, or other motive in this issue. We love the City; we simply want to see officials provide the best possible solution to everyone involved. We believe this falls far short in every aspect. We urge the Mayor, Commissioners, and those involved to pause, step back, re-evaluate, get more insight, another vision, and explore options. Perhaps it would be wise to form a group of experts separate from the City to look at the best options, to talk to facilities with profitable business models and ultimately solicit more bids and do the right thing.

It is not important to do this fast, but to do it right. We only have one chance at this. Respectfully submitted, Dr. Ron O'Brien and Tim O'Brien.

Chair Abbate closed the floor to public comment at 3:58 p.m.

Chair Abbate reminded the Board of their specific charge regarding the Redevelopment Plan. He pointed out that the plan specifically stated "world class," but he noted the discussion had moved to "state-of-the-art." That would cause a change to the Redevelopment Plan. Chair Abbate also stated that everyone on the Board should say whether they are convinced that the plan (as moving forward) will contribute to the economic revitalization of the CRA.

Feedback from the Board was as follows:

- Not convinced that a pool complex on that property is the highest and best use
- Not convinced that the pool complex is going to be the type of driver that the CRA needs for its future
- Thought the project was "unstoppable" at this point, and if so, the proposed changes (catering, setback, etc.) should be recommended
- Sounds like it will be a world-class facility
- Improved pools will bring more local people to use the facility
- If the diving board and the deeper pool work out, divers will come here
- Will the facility fit with the vision for the CRA and beach?
- Where people go to swim has changed in 40 years
- The new facility will enhance the City
- Concern that the new facility will not be maintained based on past experience
- Parking garage is not necessary (too many parking spaces and wasted money)
- New facility will be beautiful
- CVB will market it successfully
- Contributes to revitalization of CRA
- Will be state-of-the-art
- Covered bleachers would be nice
- Perhaps look into fumes from exhaust (unknown factor)
- Would prefer a more tourist-oriented facility tied into DC Alexander Park, but would run into the "trips" issue



- Constitutes a change to the plan
  - No evidence that it will revitalize the area
    - It is a community swimming pool
    - Parking garage will not revitalize area (concerns about parking garages on beach: when empty, attract undesirable elements)
  - Facility would not even be state-of-the-art architecturally

Having heard the comments, Mr. Matchette wondered what any alternative would be. Chair Abbate responded he wanted to be sure there are plans in place to guarantee revitalization - he did not see the connection. He would assess the value of the parking garage as a component. Chair Abbate expressed concern about spending one half of the budget on one facility that is for a single use (swimming).

Chair Abbate pointed out that no members of the Board had seen the updated drawings, and he did not want to pass judgment on a plan that nobody on the Board (except himself) had seen. He also wanted to see the results from FIU. He said he did not know what the “usage plan” was that US Diving needed.

Further, Chair Abbate commented that, as it currently is planned, the Aquatic Center is not the best and highest use of the property.

Mr. Morris reminded the Board that they had previously recommended \$25 million for a project that was \$70 million in December, 2011. The City Commission moved forward based on that recommendation. Now the staff is asking for approval of modifications to the original plan. Chair Abbate commented that the proposed changes do improve the situation.

Mr. Weaver said he attended the meeting because he thought the project was re-opening for review. He thought the CBA membership would be in support of that, and would be interested in seeing more consideration. He thought the thing that attracted people was the Fort Lauderdale beach, not the pool.

Mr. Matchette commented that in 2011, the project was proposed as a swim facility, not as a project being the “highest and best use” of the property. He favored more time for review, noting this is the last opportunity to provide input.

Ms. Scher feared nothing would take place if they opposed the changes at this point, but actually wanted more time for review.

Ms. Morejon stated that the redevelopment plan created by EDSA always anticipated maintaining the Aquatic Center. The Sasaki Plan also envisioned aquatic use at the site. She advised the Board to clarify their language regarding “highest and best use.”

Chair Abbate remarked there are three basic core components in the Master Plan that the Board is charged to implement:

1. Create a world-class atmosphere for residents and visitors
2. Revitalize business
3. Promote pedestrian activity

Chair Abbate continued that during the inception of the Master Plan, certain assumptions were in place regarding the cultural component of the Aquatic Center (ISHOF) in addition to the athletic and the community aspects. He said the cultural component has been removed, the focus of the program to meet budgetary constraints was narrowed, and the pedestrian and connectivity component were removed. Due to those changes, he thought it would be incumbent upon the Board to see if the changed plans meet the original charge.

**Motion** made by Mr. Matchette, seconded by Mr. McManus, to inform the City Commission that the Board has serious reservations about the Aquatic Center being the highest and best use of the property as defined by the Fort Lauderdale Beach Community Redevelopment Plan. If it is determined that the Aquatic Center is the highest and best use, the Board approves these modifications.

There was a brief discussion concerning the meaning of “highest and best use” in the context of the motion, and of the need (or not) for parking.

In a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

#### **IV. Old Business - None.**

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Abbate at 4:38 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by J. Rubin, Prototype, Inc. - 1st draft edits by Eileen Furedi]

#### Attachments:

Letter from Tim and Ron O'Brien - Mr. Morris

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**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2014 – 10:00 A.M.**

MEMBERS	FEB 2014/JAN 2015				
		REGULAR MTGS		SPECIAL MTGS	
		Present	Absent	Present	Absent
Anthony Abbate, Chair	P	4	0	3	0
Ina Lee, Vice Chair	P	3	1	3	0
Thomas B. McManus	P	1	1	3	0
Dan Matchette	P	4	0	3	0
Melissa Milroy	P	2	2	3	0
Judith Scher	P	4	0	3	0
Tim Schiavone	P	4	0	2	1
Andy Mitchell, Jr.	A	3	1	2	1
Shirley Smith	P	4	0	3	0
Aiton Yaari	P	3	1	2	1

**Staff**

Don Morris, Economic Reinvestment Administrator  
 Ella Parker, City Planner  
 Diana Alarcon, Director of Transportation and Mobility  
 Audrey Nunez, Economic Development Program Aide  
 Eileen Furedi, Clerk II  
 Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Guests and Presenters**

Marwan Mufleh, Kimley-Horn & Assoc.  
 Paul Kissinger, EDSA  
 Kelly Hitzing, EDSA  
 Jeff Suiter, EDSA  
 Jason Webber, Kimley-Horn & Assoc.  
 Solange Beaumard, Miami Christmas Lights  
 Ramola Motwani, resident  
 Fred Carlson, Central Beach Alliance

**I. Call to Order/Roll Call – Anthony Abbate, Chair**

Chair Abbate called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Quorum Requirement**

As of this date there were 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 would constitute a quorum. It was noted there was a quorum at the commencement of the meeting.

### **Communications to the City Commission**

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Lee, seconded by Ms. Scher, that the Board requests a joint City Commission workshop to review Stage II of the Central Beach Master Plan Public Improvement Projects, which is 15% design plans. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

## **II. Approval of Minutes – Anthony Abbate, Chair**

### **Regular Meeting – July 21, 2014**

**Motion** by Mr. Yaari, seconded by Ms. Scher, to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2014, meeting as corrected.

The following corrections were noted:

- pg. 5, paragraph 5, line 3, insert “meet or” before “exceed”
- pg. 5, paragraph 7, line 4, insert “meet or” before “exceed”
- pg. 5, last paragraph, line 2, insert “as conditions of approval from accrediting agencies” before “in the letters”

In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

### **Special Meeting – August 4, 2014**

**Motion** by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Yaari, to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2014, meeting. Mr. Matchette stated that his comments preceding the motion on page 10 were not reported in the minutes. Mr. Morris said the minutes would be reviewed and brought back at the next meeting. The approval of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting, and the motion was not brought to a vote.

## **III. BRAB Recommendation to the BID – Anthony Abbate, Chair**

Mr. Morris stated that a Board member is recommended to the City Commission each year to serve as a BRAB representative to the Business Improvement District (BID).

**Motion** by Mr. Matchette, seconded by Mr. Schiavone, to nominate Vice Chair Lee to serve as the BRAB representative to the BID. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Lee said that most members of the BID have the option to have a second (alternate), and she wished to have the same, due to the importance of having the BRAB represented at their meetings. Mr. Morris was not sure if they could have an alternate, but he would look into it. He suggested proceeding with a motion.

**Motion** by Vice Chair Lee to nominate Mr. Yaari as the alternate. Mr. Yaari declined, stating he did not have time. Motion died.

**Motion** by Vice Chair Lee, seconded by Mr. Matchette, to nominate Mr. McManus as the alternate representative of the BRAB to the BID. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

#### **IV. Holiday Lighting Funding – Donald Morris, Economic Reinvestment Administrator**

Chair Abbate confirmed that staff was requesting \$55,000 to match what the BID had already committed to the lighting.

Mr. Morris reviewed the situation leading up to the re-bidding for the holiday lighting. Then, referring to a handout, he explained the features of the proposed lights as presented by Miami Christmas Lights. Mr. Morris said the lights could possibly remain after the holidays if they remove the “Happy Holidays” banners (at no cost), although the lights would have to be taken down before turtle season.

Mr. Morris explained that the BID recommended the \$55,000 at their last meeting and the City Commission approved the contract contingent upon budget approval on September 16, 2014.

Mr. Yaari asked if they could add music to the display since many people take videos, Mr. Morris said it would be possible, but would be an additional cost.

Vice Chair Lee strongly recommended keeping the lights up on the poles until turtle season in order to make the beach better lit during the peak season.

Mr. Morris said the cost last year was \$132,000; this year’s is almost \$250,000 (for 90 days). Although the new contractor wanted money up front, Mr. Morris said the City will not provide money up front. Once the lights and display are up and tested the contractor will be paid 50%, and there will be incremental payments over the remainder of the contract.

Mr. Morris recalled the troubles they had with the contractor the past few years.

Chair Abbate was concerned that the sand castle would be too small with a base of 15 x 15 feet. He was also concerned that the display is “singularly focused” on Christmas, and pointed out that some people are offended that their holidays are overlooked. He wanted to see more inclusiveness in the décor. Mr. Morris commented he has heard similar concerns, and did not think it would be problematic to add other imagery to the display. Chair Abbate suggested having each of the four sides present a different theme (for photos), and Mr. Morris said they would look into it.

Mr. Matchette expressed concern about spending \$250,000 for a short-lived project, and wondered if they could eliminate the sand castle. Mr. Yaari said it would be good for visitors, and he anticipated it being a major attraction. He pointed out that more money was being spent on the surfboards than on the sand castle, and wondered if the surfboards could be re-used. Mr. Morris emphasized the displays have always been custom made, and offered the possibility of getting something “off the shelf.”

Solange Beaumard, from Miami Christmas Lights, clarified that they have already done a three-year agreement with a 20% discount, and the \$250,000 is an annual cost. She said that all items will be refurbished at the end of the season – the items are basically rented to the City.

Mr. Schiavone verified that it is a fixed cost each year for three years, and Ms. Beaumard said that variations on the lights/banners from year to year could be used at no extra cost. Mr. Morris added that next year’s center display will be something different.

Ms. Milroy shared that they put up an iconic display every year at the Galleria, and their entire cost is about \$250,000 – but they use it every year and pay to have it installed. She suggested an item that people would look forward to seeing year after year.

Vice Chair Lee thought having something spectacular and unique there every year is very important. She also believed the sand castle concept could be echoed in the hotel activities, and perhaps they could have a sand castle competition on the beach.

Mr. McManus asked Mr. Yaari how people responded to the display last year, and Mr. Yaari relayed that the lighting ceremony was late, and attributed that to the fact they were underpaid. However, he said the visitors appeared to love the display.

Mr. Morris stated that people expect to see something different at the beach every year for photo opportunities, as opposed to the traditional display at the Galleria. Mr. Morris said that last year the staff had to spend time providing the upkeep that should have been done by the contractor. He explained that he made it clear to Miami Christmas Lights that if staff has to do the upkeep again, the City will not use them in the future. Mr. Morris said he did not want to have to worry about parts of the display getting fixed and replaced in a timely manner.

Ms. Scher expressed dismay that the matter came up so late this year, suggesting they could buy a display and have it installed every year. She cited the example of the Galleria display, which was purchased and put up every year.

Mr. Schiavone preferred to have the contractor (not staff) take care of all maintenance until the end of the contract. However, he was concerned about the “wow factor” and wondered if the display could be bigger.

Ms. Beaumard commented they are known for their service/maintenance, having their teams on call 24/7. She added they have never held anyone “hostage” to a contract who was not pleased. Ms. Beaumard stated she could prepare a more realistic, to-scale rendering of the display.

Vice Chair Lee commented that the display should be obvious for people coming over the Las Olas Bridge.

Mr. Matchette pointed out that even by taking out the sand castle itself (at \$56,000), the contract is still \$58,000 over last year’s contract. While he was glad to have a “top-notch” company backing up their contract, he balked at the expense. Mr. Matchette acknowledged they basically had only one bid (since the other bid was the same company used prior), but questioned that it was more than double the money from the prior year.

Chair Abbate believed that an artist could be commissioned annually to create an iconic display for the price of the sand castle, and he did not perceive the display as “world class.” He suggested taking a broader view next year, and make sure there is an exit strategy in the contract (without cause). Mr. Morris said all City contracts are cancelable. Mr. Morris pointed out that the City did have a contract, but the company (Brandano) informed the City in July that they were not interested in continuing.

**Motion** made by Mr. Schiavone, seconded by Mr. Yaari, to approve the project as it stands with the understanding that there is an exit strategy at no cost to the City, and, with the consideration of time, to move forward and “get the ball rolling.” The display should be non-denominational. An amendment was made by Vice Chair Lee, that the surfboard portion of the pole lights stay up until turtle season.

Mr. Schiavone commented that dialogue about the holiday lights should start in the early months of 2015, for consideration of the possibility of an artist’s iconic display or buying the display and leaving it there.

Chair Abbate opened the floor to public discussion at 10:45 a.m.

Ramola Motwani complimented the Board on their thoughtful discussion. She recalled the beginning of the holiday lights program. She wanted to make sure the holiday decorations were removed from the sand castle after the holidays, and Mr. Morris confirmed that would happen. She said it was time to “take it to the next level” and present a world class item. She referenced the lack of timeliness by the previous contractor and said they expect better quality and service this year 24/7. She suggested the company consider a permanent item that the CRA could buy (before the funds are gone in 2019) and decorate every year. Ms Motwani added it is critical that this year’s display is a success and that it goes through until the start of turtle season.

Chair Abbate closed the floor to public discussion at 10:49 a.m.

Mr. Matchette wondered what would happen with the \$61,000 discount if they decide to discontinue their contract after the first year. Mr. Morris responded that the clause in the City's contract would be to the effect that if the City opts out, there would not be any penalty to pay.

There was a brief discussion about including different holiday themes (such as Christmas tree, menorahs, etc.), with Mr. Schiavone suggesting not having anything that suggests a religious choice. He recommended having lights and say "Happy Holidays." Vice Chair Lee spoke in favor of a Christmas tree, and much discussion followed and Ms. Scher promoted a "commercial" Christmas tree that would not suggest any religion.

Mr. Matchette asked what would happen if the motion did not carry, and Mr. Morris said it would go into the budget memo that the BRAB voted against it. It would be up to the City Commission to make the final decision.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed (8-1), with Mr. Matchette opposed.

**V. Review Progress of Master Plan Projects – Jeff Suiter, EDSA and Marwan Mufleh, Kimley-Horn**

Mr. Kissinger (EDSA) stated their goal is to have a City staff review meeting on October 17, 2014, at 15% submission, followed up by a joint BRAB-Commission meeting near the end of October.

Mr. Kissinger explained that based on the feedback from the last BRAB meeting, they had formulated preliminary ideas for the beach projects. He said they were looking at three options, which they would like to narrow down to two options, but they will present all options.

Mr. Suiter stated they have done their analysis and are trying to determine how to program the various phases. He said the design ideas are just for discussion.

Mr. Suiter, Mr. Mufleh, and Mr. Kissinger gave a PowerPoint presentation on the following eight topics at 10:57 a.m., emphasizing that all the projects need to come together at the same time:

1. A1A Improvements
  - a. Traffic volumes do not support one lane instead of two
2. The Beachfront Plaza/Oceanside Parking Plaza
3. Overall Las Olas Corridor
4. Las Olas - Seabreeze to A1A
5. Almond Avenue and Garages
  - a. No storm sewers exist on street



6. Intracoastal Parking Garages and Promenade
  - a. Need to fit 900 cars into parking areas
  - b. Could implement retail space on the ground floor and restaurant space on the rooftops
  - c. Or, could have free-standing food and beverage venue in options 1 or 2
  - d. The garage height could be brought down if the footprint were widened (option 3) but utilities would probably have to be moved at an extra cost
  - e. They are “wrestling with” height, view corridors, redevelopment opportunities, mass, efficiency, and constructability.
7. Sebastian Median Improvements
  - a. Consider manageability and use of restrooms
  - b. Need feedback on whether the U-turn is needed

The PowerPoint presentation was concluded at 11:40 a.m.

Chair Abbate wondered what recommendations the presenters would make amongst the options. Mr. Suiter said he (personally) would prefer to kept the garages low by flanking both sides of the bridge and have two garages, or look at the opportunity on the north and what the utilities do to “bring that down.” He continued that if the garages are on both sides, there could be a stronger pedestrian linkage on the southern side from the garages. Connectivity could be accomplished under the bridge between the north garage and the south garage. Mr. Kissinger stated they had not settled on a specific recommendation, because of the number of elements.

Regarding the Intracoastal, Mr. Kissinger suggested looking at the mass on the north side, which might be broader and lower. It would provide a redevelopment opportunity on the south side that could create a tax base and generate revenue that could assist in taking care of the asset. Mr. Kissinger continued that regardless of the garage configuration, they are designing the Promenade first for pedestrians, so the garage is formed around it.

Mr. Kissinger did not believe they had a recommendation yet for the Beachfront/Oceanside Plaza. He thought the porte cochere is a viable alternative; however, if they do not have it, they would consider how they could enhance the Las Olas Corridor as a pedestrian environment. Creating a space for events would require the space to be subdivided somehow. He felt this area was the top priority, and DC Alexander Park was secondary.

Mr. Suiter requested feedback on the drop-off and on the issue of parking or no parking at the Oceanside Plaza. Mr. Kissinger said they recommend taking all the parking out and putting the space back into pedestrian use. Mr. Suiter commented when they try to put 60-100 spaces on the lot, the number does not affect the height and size of the buildings but impacts the usable space.

Chair Abbate mentioned that he did not see anything pertaining to bicyclists in the presentation. Mr. Suiter responded that A1A will definitely have bicycle lanes, along with B-cycles. Mr. Kissinger added that when they speak of "pedestrians," they are referring to everyone except cars/vehicles.

Mr. Matchette also pointed out the omission of any handicap facilities or parking. He suggested sidewalk cutoffs for handicap drop-off on both sides of the street on each block.

Ms. Alarcon assured the group that bicycles are an important part of the discussion. In addition, FDOT has challenged them to eliminate a number of crosswalks along A1A, so there is less conflict between pedestrians and vehicles and bicyclists. In return, FDOT would create more distinguished crosswalks (raised/lit). The City does want to make sure the area is physically comfortable for all.

Ms. Alarcon stated they are tying the crosswalks into openings at the wave wall. They have asked FDOT to consider raising the crosswalks, putting in ground lighting, and creating a strong pedestrian movement ability going east and west as part of their A1A rehabilitation project.

Mr. Yaari said he was not in favor of parking in the lot, the drop-off was very important, and hoped the park on Las Olas and A1A would be programmed together with DC Alexander Park.

Regarding Almond Avenue, Mr. Yaari suggested that to take some pressure off Las Olas, instead of the south end going south, the south end should be going north. He pointed out that Banyan is the "smallest street" in the City of Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Suiter commented that since Almond Avenue is supposed to be used for drop-offs and deliveries, they determined the traffic circulation would work better going south, especially for 18-wheelers.

Chair Abbate said he did not think 18-wheelers should be using Las Olas in the future, and maybe they should come up 17 Street or from Sunrise Boulevard. Mr. Suiter said they are trying to circulate them around Poinsettia so they are only on Las Olas for a very small section.

Mr. Yaari also commented on the following:

- The storm drainage is in dire need of improvement on Almond Avenue
- Concrete poles are good, can carry more transformers
- The U-turn on Sebastian needs to be there to keep the flow of traffic
- Perhaps re-lamp light fixtures on the east side of A1A, since the ones there are new
- Make sure a traffic study is done in March
- Continue the process to get to the goal on time

Vice Chair Lee agreed with almost all of Mr. Yaari's comments and also asked Ms. Alarcon if they would need a parking garage coming over the bridge at Las Olas if a large garage is going at the Aquatics Center. It was noted the City directed the EDSA to have no net loss of parking from the Las Olas lot and the Intracoastal lot. Ms. Alarcon referred to prior parking studies that had projected similar parking projections for the beach growth in parking to meet the public needs; they are on target, but have not done any development yet. Because there is now more private than public parking, the general public believes there is "no affordable public parking." The additional parking at the Aquatics Center will help, and she thought relocating it there was a good thing. Ms. Alarcon said they need to determine how to move the people once the parking is relocated, perhaps involving a tram. She added that the pedestrian promenade on Las Olas would play a key part in a tram.

Vice Chair Lee stated it was "critically important" that the lower parking garages on either side would create an opportunity for redevelopment on the south side. She also liked the idea of taking parking off A1A and Las Olas Boulevard, but need to figure an efficient way to get people out of the garages to the beach. She felt that could be iconic in itself.

Regarding Sebastian, Vice-Chair Lee suggested minimal restrooms. Furthermore, she asked Mr. Kissinger how he would like it to be if that area were his home. Mr. Kissinger said they do live in Fort Lauderdale, and they need to be responsible to sticking to a budget. They need to look for ways at this point to allocate the right amount of dollars to get the "biggest bang for their buck" that will last the longest.

Vice Chair Lee offered the additional comments:

- Liked the idea for flex space in the A1A beach lot (without cars) with different areas
  - #1 area/priority to make an iconic world-class statement
- Need a way to move the traffic from the parking garages to the beach

Chair Abbate commented that pedestrians and bicycles are more alike than different – they are not either/or. He felt the discussion was about managing expectations and putting the proper signage and formal elements in place so that cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers know what to expect. Chair Abbate thought the designers were focused on accommodating thousands of people in cars coming to events.

Ms. Alarcon said she tries to design projects for every day, not extremes. However, there are more extremes on the beach than everyday situations. She said summer is actually the busiest time on the beach, declining after Labor Day. Ms. Alarcon said they have to find a balance; they cannot stop designing roads for the cars until multimodal transportation is available. She said the roads can be designed so that they are shared and safe in terms of pedestrians/cyclists and vehicles. Because of the turtle regulations, they are limited to amber lighting, but they did receive permission to have the pedestrian path lit with amber lights.

Mr. Morris encouraged the Board members to offer their preferences based on their experience; Mr. Kissinger said they will listen to the Board and make a recommendation. He added they are not going to design for the July 4 weekend, but since the beach is busy, they have to accommodate for that busyness. Ms. Alarcon commented that the City's priority order is for the pedestrian, bicycles, transit and motorists.

Regarding wayfinding, Ms. Alarcon said the family of signs has been selected, the designer team has been picked and they are constructing. Installation will begin within the next 45 days. They will coordinate with FDOT regarding I-95 signage. They are working on a truck ordinance and truck delivery time.

Ms. Alarcon continued they are beginning signage at the beach area, and the style will be coordinated with FDOT. In addition to the wayfinding signs, there will some regulatory signage that has been approved by FDOT.

Vice Chair Lee hoped there would be "pardon our dust" signs with something showing how it will look in the future. Ms. Alarcon said the contractor is producing three such signs so people will know exactly what is being built.

Vice Chair Lee concluded her remarks by saying she loved the wave concept.

Ms. Smith acknowledged nothing could be done to alleviate the darkness at the beach. Regarding the garages, she referred to a parking study done by Jack Newton, and said the current parking plan was overkill. She did not want a parking garage on the south side of the bridge – she predicted the backup on the bridge would be bad; and a person would not be able to leave people off at a garage because it is so "jammed up."

Ms. Smith recalled that in 2000, it was promised that Fifth Street would be made two-way, and it needs to be done.

Ms. Smith continued that parking is needed from Sunrise Boulevard going north for surfers.

Mr. Kissinger relayed that the Police Department had told the City Manager that the reason why the area by the South Beach lot is closed off is because they are trying to discourage people from lapping.

Mr. Schiavone felt there was so much content in the materials presented that it is difficult to digest. He suggested more frequent meetings for discussion. He also recommended they look at the future for design ideas, and not dwell on the past. Mr. Schiavone said an important consideration is not only how to get people there, but also where they are going to go once they get to the parking lot – will they be crossing A1A, etc. He predicted that would be a staffing problem for the City as a safety issue. Mr.

Schiavone also wondered if that area would become a drop-off point, creating more traffic congestion.

Mr. Schiavone concluded his input by saying that the Board needs to encourage the blending of the projects, rather than segmenting it so it works across the board.

Mr. Morris said that if the Board wanted to have a joint meeting with the City Commission at the 15% mark, they should construct a Communication to the Commission.

## **VI. Communications to the City Commission**

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Lee, seconded by Ms. Scher, that the Board requests a joint City Commission workshop to review Stage II of the Central Beach Master Plan Public Improvement Projects, which is 15% design plans. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Kissinger said they plan to reach the 15% mark by the end of October, which would mean be an October 28, 2014, City Commission meeting. He also stated they will have a deliverable around October 17, 2014, and they want to have a meeting with this Board where this is the only item on the agenda. He encouraged the Board to submit comments to Mr. Morris.

Mr. Schiavone suggested visiting the locations first hand. Chair Abbate said they had done that, but thought maybe they could walk the area with the City Commissioners.

Mr. Kissinger elaborated that they are envisioning that people will still go to the Las Olas lot and go to the beach. However, they will not park there. They are not looking at changing the movements, but how those movements are made.

Mr. Kissinger explained that they are looking at the drop-off having a hotel entrance feel with a porte cochere, perhaps with valet parking.

It was noted that if they go with the amount of proposed parking, it should happen in phases; however, when the parking analysis was done, apparently they did not have the needed specific data as the data provided did not convey demand for beachgoers, and they are now collecting that information. There appears to be a disproportionate amount of privately held public parking at this time, although the number of spaces might be too expensive to build.

Mr. Kissinger reiterated that the City's direction is "no net loss," and that is why the parking space numbers are 835.

Ms. Scher agreed with all of Mr. Yaari's remarks. She made the following comments:

- Loved no parking at Oceanside Plaza

- Loved the idea of a water feature
- Concerned that the Aquatics Center is up in the air
  - Cannot make decision on parking until that is known
- All in all, it is beautiful

Chair Abbate pointed out the Aquatics Center has been suspended until they get verification that the design meets the criteria that have been set. He said there are options that go with the parking design - is it screened, lined, etc. Chair Abbate stated that either the design team meets the Plan criteria, the design team comes with the variance request, or the Master Plan would have to be changed.

Ms. Scher then mentioned that she does not know the need for parking, but she had doubts about valet parking for the beach, especially for locals.

Ms. Milroy agreed with many points, especially Mr. Schiavone's statement about changing the way of thinking, to look at what the future holds. She pointed out that when a person is in a major city, they walk. In addition, she said there will be some people who would want the valet parking, and it could be an option for them. She suggested an option where a person could be given a numbered space to park their own car upon arrival; when they return, if they do not want to walk to their car, the valet could retrieve it for them.

In addition, Ms. Milroy provided the following feedback:

- Regarding Option 3 of the Oceanside Plaza, she liked the built-in seating
- Liked the idea of the berms to provide height difference
- Liked the drops of water better than the waves to provide circular motion
- Wanted to keep the U-turn at Sebastian

Mr. Kissinger noted there are technical issues with the turn-around: the property to the south has that in their site plan.

Mr. Matchette pointed out that four condominium complexes would be directly impacted economically by the parking garages at the Intracoastal. He said that if a garage were built on the north side of the bridge, one condominium would be completely blocked. While he thought the garages were needed, he felt that would be a big issue for the residents of those buildings. The option that provides the lowest height would be worth the trade-off.

Regarding the Las Olas area, Mr. Matchette said that the removal of the parking lot has positives, but Option 3 resembled the representation of DC Alexander Park; he was concerned about having two parks so close together having the same sort of theme. He said perhaps that would provide an opportunity to emphasize the thematic element of the Aquatics Center with DC Alexander Park and make it more of a water-oriented theme.

Mr. Kissinger stated they see the DC Alexander Park as being “in the family, but not twins” as it relates to the overall concept. Mr. Matchette commented that the Las Olas Park is looking like an entertainment venue, outdoor amphitheatre style. He did not think it would be necessary to have such a style be featured at DC Alexander Park. Mr. Kissinger said the scales are different, and the key to both spaces is that their uses are flexible, from everyday activity to major events with a stage.

Mr. Matchette thought that tram service was a bad idea because it is expensive, the insurance is expensive, and the City is already subsidizing the trolley. Mr. Kissinger responded that part of their program is to have an intermodal center at the garages that would allow for bikes, trams, drop-offs, etc. They are not designing a tram system, but are facilitating the space for it to work later. Mr. Kissinger stated that parking costs/fees may offset part of the costs of tram operation.

Mr. Matchette brought up the matter of handicap drop-off, suggesting zones for that, one for businesses/retail and one for the beach. Mr. Kissinger said that they always consider barrier-free designs, and pointed out a few aspects of the Sebastian lot to illustrate that point. He said the ADA means equal opportunity not better opportunity. Mr. Matchette thought distance can be considered a barrier, saying he would not walk with crutches from a parking lot on the Intracoastal to “Mr. Yaari’s restaurant.” Mr. Kissinger said they are trying to accommodate those who will walk, and those who cannot. He reiterated that additional comments be sent to Mr. Morris within a week.

Vice Chair Lee recommended that they limit the meeting length to what is suggested, even if they meet more frequently.

Chair Abbate concurred with Mr. Schiavone’s comments. He added the following input:

- Oceanside Plaza Option 1 or 2 make sense
- Preferred Sebastian Option 1
- Las Olas, eliminate the median and make it two lanes
  - Extend concept all the way to the building line and not segregate the street – could still be used for traffic, but on days when it is closed, it would all be one “material special experience”
  - Get rid of the trees
- Almond Avenue, Option 1
- Intracoastal garages
  - Put retail at ground level and gardens on the roof regardless of height
- Wave and boardwalk concepts are intriguing, maybe combine the two
- Pedestrian theme connecting the Aquatics Center to Las Olas from the Master Plan does not appear anywhere
  - Flip the water from the Oceanside to Seabreeze side – water feature theme could provide connection
- Design for the future: pedestrians and bicycles, transit
  - Wants to see how it is done, see Oceanside Plaza extended to the street
- Combining ramps and stairs great idea

- As many drop-off locations as possible to relieve anxiety about where to park
  - Maybe do it along A1A
  - Cannot make drop-off available only to those who can afford valet service
- Are the parking studies up to date, and do they anticipate transit and people biking and walking?
  - If not, is a new one needed?
  - Mr. Kissinger said they are updating the information to provide the City with the best available information regarding those expenses

Chair Abbate opened the floor to public comment at 12:53 p.m.

Fred Carlson, Central Beach Alliance, stated they are reaching capacity on the north/south highways and cautioned against the notion of expanding forever. Too much density will eventually ruin the luxurious image and comfort of the beach. Mr. Carlson did not believe they need to straighten the road coming over the bridge in order to have a view; he said if they cut down five palm trees, they can see the ocean. Building a garage that juts above the roadway will obscure any view of the yachts and result in a concrete canyon/tunnel. He said there is a disconnect between this Board and others like it from the City Commission because some improvements have not been addressed (such as fixing Fifth street). Mr. Carlson asked for more relevancy from the boards to the City Commission. He said the developers need to work with the City.

Chair Abbate closed the floor to public comment at 12:57 p.m.

**VII. Old/New Business** – none.

Hearing no further business, Chair Abbate adjourned the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by J. Rubin, Prototype, Inc.]

Attachments:

Handout on Holiday Lighting – Donald Morris