NORTHWEST-PROGRESSO-FLAGLER HEIGHTS
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 25, 2005 – 3:30 P.M.

Board Members		Cumulative Attendance Jan. 2005 – Dec. 2005	
		Present	Absent
James Brady	A	3	1
Stan Brown	P	4	0
William Cain	P	3	1
Jim Carras	P	4	0
Jerry Carter	A	1	3
William Cone	A	3	1
Albert Fils	P	2	2
Hector Heguaburo	P	3	1
Tim Hernandez	P	2	2
Brice Lambrix	P	4	0
Laura Mutti	P	4	0
Ella Phillips	P	4	0
Rosalind Osgood	A	1	3
Marcia Barry Smith	P	2	2
Clare Vickery	P	3	1

Staff

Al Battle, Jr., CRA Director
Sharon Miller, Assistant City Attorney
Bob Wojcik, Planner III
Mina Samadi, CRA Engineering and Design Manager

Guests

Pamela Adams

Call to Order

Chair Stan Brown proceeded to call the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Brice Lambrix and seconded by Albert Fils to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2005 meeting.

Brice Lambrix remarked that his name appeared in several places in the minutes in parentheses and he did not think that he had made some of those statements. He added that the issues were not controversial, and he had only mentioned this as a formality.

Chair Stan Brown explained that the transcriptionist was probably not sure if the person speaking was the name put in parentheses, and therefore, did it in that manner.

Al Battle, Director CRA, asked how the minutes should be transcribed when the speaker had not been identified.

Sharon Miller stated that as long as the minutes were accurate, there would be no problem. She added that statements made by an unidentified speaker could be included in the minutes as "it was stated."

Board unanimously approved.

CRA Workshop Planning – Phase II

Al Battle explained that he had put together a table consisting of five categories incorporating the comments made by the Board at the last meeting regarding topics for the workshop.

Chair Stan Brown suggested that the categories be reviewed. The first category was "Preservation Existing Residents Base/Combination of Master Planning and Benchmarking." He asked if benchmarking would involve tying in a number today and reviewing it again next year. Al Battle confirmed and stated they could then review what successes had taken place to balance their existence.

Al Battle explained that he had placed checkmarks in the categories where he felt the specific items fit. He reiterated that this table was just his assessment of the items discussed previously. He further stated that he had gathered 18 items that had been discussed by this Board, and if they wanted to add others that could be done.

Chair Stan Brown stated another category would be "Property Disposition Strategy." He continued stating that this item would tie in with the RFP process and the ultimate review committee process.

Al Battle suggested they also add the type of RFPs they wanted for the future, and to discuss whether they would be capable of more specific RFPs down the road or were they still on a "fishing expedition" since development had not yet occurred everywhere. He explained it was "policy wise" where they wanted to put such types of advertisement in hope the development community would respond favorably.

Chair Stan Brown reiterated that this would then be a guiding document for the Board, and suggested they note to include the various types of RFPs.

Chair Stan Brown continued stating that another category was "Flagler Village/CRA Investment Strategy."

Tim Hernandez stated that at this point the question was whether the private sector was taking over. He asked if their involvement would stimulate additional development or hinder it, or not have any impact on it at all. He further stated that now this would probably only involve infrastructure, and possibly assisting in assembling properties.

It was stated that staying involved in the infrastructure was important so that everyone would stay on target and keep within the continuity of the design guidelines that had been developed, thereby giving them some form of control.

Tim Hernandez stated that regarding infrastructure, one could do whatever they wanted with their own property within reason, but the infrastructure did span a lot of different properties. He further stated that at a certain point in time one could argue there was a different approach to infrastructure such as using TIF Funds, bonded monies, or even special assessments.

Chair Stan Brown further stated that an incentive program still existed in the area for infrastructure. Tim Hernandez reiterated that was a good thing.

It was stated that not only was the infrastructure important regarding public improvements, but also the issue surrounding the availability of units. It was important that when the units became available the lenders could make sure of continuity in the area, as opposed to "stop 'n go" development. There appeared to be enough players in Flagler Village that had the financial capacity regarding assemblages, but that was where the off-site improvement assistance came in handy due to the high prices of land at this point in time.

Chair Stan Brown suggested they add to the investment strategy some type of unit strategy. Tim Hernandez stated that it might go along with administrative policy.

Laura Mutti asked for some further clarification of the incentive program that had been mentioned.

Chair Stan Brown explained that an incentive program existed that was about 2-3 years old which had been used by some of the developers. He thought it attempted to get both sides of the street improved when development occurred on a block, and explained further that it was also an assistance program.

Tim Hernandez explained that had been done regarding his project. He stated that a developer could make improvements that the City was not presently planning on doing when developing a project, and then the City gave back a percentage of the cost to the developer.

Laura Mutti further stated that she did not think it covered the other side of the street at this time. Tim Hernandez stated that the other side could be done, but the problem was that driveways could not be closed off. Therefore, there were limits to what could be done. He added that ultimately once development occurred things would be done correctly, but it could take a long time.

Chair Stan Brown remarked that another category was the "Marketing Program."

Tim Hernandez stated that Flagler Heights had done a pro-active strategy and had asked for some matching funds. He felt this was important.

Chair Stan Brown continued stating that another category to be discussed was "Crime Code Enforcement."

Tim Hernandez asked how the CRA would be involved and was there a perception that there was an absence of such enforcement in the area.

It was stated that the CRA should not invest in such enforcement since a Code Enforcement Department already existed in the City, and it was their obligation to follow through.

Chair Stan Brown stated that possibly there were unique issues in certain areas and spot enforcement was needed. It was stated that there should be uniform code enforcement. Chair Stan Brown suggested that possibly "spot policing" was needed.

Al Battle stated that there was a "buzz" in the City's administration as to how any of the CRAs could view policing as a budget item, and possibly contribute towards a fund for some types of services in the CRAs. He added that he had the City Attorney's office check to see if it would be legal for the CRA to spend their money on such things, and it was determined it was legal in accordance with Chapter 163 which addressed community policing whereby a strategy was used by the Police Department to provide services by placing officers in the communities who worked with various neighborhood organizations addressing issues for the area. He added that strategic deployment was also discussed for some situations. He advised that if the Board decided to provide such services, then they would have to "tweak" the CRA Plan, as well as make sure that it was consistent with the City's overall Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Stan Brown stated that in reviewing the categories and matters to be addressed, they needed to determine which items were true workshop issues. Some matters might need to be in separate categories of their own. He reiterated that today they needed to identify where they wanted to spend time as a Board, and then staff do further investigation before a workshop would take place.

It was asked if there had ever been a program in the CRA where officials from other cities or county departments attended these Board meetings and were brought into the picture.

Chair Stan Brown explained there had been a period of time when an additional position had been funded by the CRA in the Code Enforcement Department.

Al Battle remarked that once the workshop took place, other departments might be impacted by what the CRA wanted to accomplish. Therefore, they would be invited to attend the meetings and become involved.

It was stated that workshops did serve a purpose, but one could become inundated with them. By having other individuals attend the Board meetings, they might be able to accomplish some of their goals through regular meetings.

Chair Stan Brown asked if "Blighted Properties" should be joined with "Crime Code." He further stated that zoning would go along with the Precinct Plan and Overlay District.

Al Battle stated that the Board had been asked previously to authorize the spending of additional funds for the Precinct Plan, and he believed the completion of that effort would

launch them into looking at zoning from a global standpoint. He stated that parking was still an issue, along with inconsistent and unwanted uses.

Chair Stan Brown asked when the Precinct Plan would be completed. Al Battle stated that staff was working hard in conjunction with the Planning Department on that plan.

Mina Samadi, CRA Engineering Design Manager, stated that a meeting had been held over a week ago, and some cross sections for identified roads are designed, and were now being finalized. Once completed, the report would be provided along with a presentation probably some time in June.

Chair Stan Brown asked if all the plans were being coordinated. Mina Samadi confirmed and stated that all comments would go through the CRA and the Planning Department to make sure that everything was compatible.

Chair Stan Brown stated that another item mentioned was "Lots with Title Issues."

Al Battle stated that this had been mentioned by a member of this Board because there appeared to be a number of properties in the CRA that had complex title issues prohibiting acquisition that needed to be addressed. He explained that he had received some preliminary information regarding the matter, but it appeared that outside help would be needed to assess and deal with the issue. Then, a recommendation could be made to this Board, along with a price tag for dealing with the matter.

Tim Hernandez stated that he felt this needed to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and did not think there was a global title issue involved. He reiterated that normally such problems were addressed with either money or through a lawsuit.

Al Battle stated that he was not advocating the solving of everyone's problems, but where it was strategically advantageous for them, especially in situations where properties were in a singular location that had problems. Tim Hernandez remarked that the seller could solve the problems by taking less money for the property. He reiterated that either the seller inherited the problem or created it, and therefore, should solve the issue.

Chair Stan Brown explained that the problem properties sometimes locked up certain portions of lots and created roadblocks. Tim Hernandez remarked that he would like to see some examples of such problem properties. He added that he was skeptical of such matters. Chair Stan Brown stated that this should be discussed because they did not readily have the answers to these problems. Tim Hernandez reiterated that if a specific case made sense, then he would be in favor of this.

It was stated that it was some of the Board's understanding that this issue was in regard to properties to be acquired by the CRA.

Al Battle stated that if there was something the Board felt strongly about regarding acquiring or encouraging a certain acquisition, then that should be done. Otherwise, it was an issue between two private owners and the CRA should not be involved. He further stated that the issue was raised due to encouraging development for the area.

Chair Stan Brown stated that another category was "Community Involvement."

Al Battle explained that they needed to deal with the existing community versus bringing in new development, and traditionally from the CRA's standpoint they dealt with things that provided an economic benefit to the community. Some issues on the table dealt with social issues, along with those having an impact on education or services provided that were not a part of the CRA's typical mission. Therefore, the issue becomes community development versus community redevelopment, and what role did the CRA want to play in the process over time, or did they just want to deal with such issues on a "one-time basis." He added that Code Enforcement and Policing would be involved.

Chair Stan Brown added that another category was "Income Information and Wages." He stated that this was interesting because the Board asked if they were fully aware of the demographics of the district.

Al Battle stated that Mr. Cain had raised this question, and he felt if they wanted to encourage job development for the area, they needed such a base line of information. It was stated that an outside consultant could probably be hired for about $10,000 to gather such information.

It was suggested that such information would be used in regard to addressing community development versus community redevelopment issues. They would then be able to understand the economic challenges given the opportunities they were attempting to create. This would tell them that a huge gap existed, and they needed to determine how to serve such a market. It was stated that they needed to get a handle on the data base in order to conduct an intelligent discussion regarding community development and redevelopment.

Al Battle stated that it also would have an affect on affordable housing. Chair Stan Brown stated it would have an affect on attainable housing.

Chair Stan Brown stated that another category was the "Phase I Progress Report." Al Battle stated that this item had been raised by James Brady. Another category was "Design Guidelines and Themes."

Tim Hernandez stated that they were investing a lot of money into some projects, and if they only ended up with a mediocre design, then that would be worse than not spending money at all. He felt they needed to proceed with such matters.

Chair Stan Brown further stated that this also referred back to the Precinct Plan and the work being done on it.

Chair Stan Brown announced that another category raised was the "Green Space/Open Space Plan." Tim Hernandez asked if all the boundaries had been defined, along with the number of parks needed. He asked if they were doing this on an ad hoc basis.

Al Battle advised that a consultant had been hired to come up with a global vision regarding parks for the City, but they wanted to communicate with the CRA and then incorporate all comments into the planning process.

Tim Hernandez stated that it was too late to make any such changes in Flagler Heights, but going west there was still such opportunities available. He felt they should know where all parks should be located. He felt these were long-term public improvements and were part of the infrastructure.

Chair Stan Brown asked if there was anything included in the Parks Plan that would cover the CRA area. Al Battle stated that he did not know if that existed.

Bob Wojcik, Planner III, stated that the Parks Department was moving forward with coordinating the planning associated with the Public Realm Plan and the County is presently involved with acquisition of property in the vicinity of the Mizell Center under the County Land Preservation Bond Program.

Chair Stan Brown proceeded to state that another category was the "One Stop Shop." Tim Hernandez asked if the Board had a legitimate input regarding this matter.

It was stated that the question was how to leverage the investment, and how could they play off it. It appeared to be a strategic issue. There were some under utilized assets in the CRA.

Chair Stan Brown continued stating that another category was "City Acquisition Strategy." He asked what items would the Board want to first discuss at a workshop.

It was stated that they should begin with the Phase I progress report.

CRA Parking Strategy – Sistrunk Boulevard

Al Battle stated that the discussion of the CRA parking strategy was important in regard to Sistrunk Boulevard. He explained that he had been approached by various groups having a similar vision regarding the planning of a parking structure which had been referenced in the CRA's Strategic Plan. He stated that such a structure could be constructed on 6th Street between 7th and 10th Streets since that was the center area from Flagler to the Interstate. He advised that he had not made any commitments to those groups and had only listened to their comments. He explained that such projects were as large an initiative as the roadway project regarding the raising of capital. He felt this was a global discussion that needed to take place. He reiterated that if they wanted large development opportunities to be available on Sistrunk, then a parking facility would be needed.

Brice Lambrix stated that Christopher Wren had done some schematic sketches years back along Sistrunk Boulevard, and had suggested various ways in which a parking structure could be integrated into the development of the area. He added that this information was very valuable and should be looked at once again, and possibly some approaches that appeared valid could be targeted. He further stated that it would be a revenue generating operation, and reminded everyone that the urban design guidelines were now different.

Chair Stan Brown explained that if the parking structure had townhouses and retail incorporated into it, then it would not look like a massive parking facility. He explained further that possibly a developer could include parking in their project. He stated that

possibly they could collect other users due to the location of the project, and then dollars could be shared. Then, a development deal could be entered into and collaborative efforts could take place. He added that possibly a different parking code could be created for Sistrunk from what presently existed which was prohibitive for the size of development being contemplated for the area. He further stated that such recommendations could then be made. He felt that metered parking would not make sense and they needed to see where they were going with this. He felt it would be better if the CRA could state their policy for the Corridor so the development community could be aware of it.

Tim Hernandez stated that he felt they were a long way from needing to build such a parking structure for the area. He continued stating that if there was the perception that parking issues might arise, then some could be solved with the redesigning of the street to include parallel parking. He further stated that they should hold onto the parcels they already owned providing surface lots on a short-term basis, and if structured parking was needed, then they would have the ability to provide it.

Chair Stan Brown asked how they could move forward with a parking strategy for the CRA.

Al Battle stated that staff would need to do some further investigation regarding the issues raised, and then possibly request to hire parking professionals to address the problem. Mr. Lambrix stated that before that was done, they needed to review the information that had previously been supplied by Christopher Wren, and then monies would not have to be invested in outside consultants. He felt some preliminary determinations could be made. Al Battle remarked that after reviewing Mr. Wren's information, they might be able to fashion the scope of services to be provided. He felt that professional advice was needed and possibly both from outside and in-house.

Tim Hernandez stated that normally 2-3 story structures did not require structured parking to support the uses contained in the building. He further stated that the character of the Corridor would have to be decided as to whether it would contain 2-3 story buildings or 4-5 story buildings. He felt that there might be a need for surface parking in the area.

Chair Stan Brown reiterated that their target was to have a parking strategy and institutionalize it with whatever studies were necessary.

Advisory Board Leadership Succession Process

Chair Stan Brown stated that he had brought up the issue of the advisory board leadership succession process about two years ago. He stated they needed to get back into the cycle they were in previously.

Al Battle proposed that the Board look at formalizing the process of selecting a Chairman, and adding a Vice Chairman position to this Board. He explained that this would build an opportunity to ascend into the role of Chairman, and assist in the issue of schedule conflicts. He stated that there could then be an annual election process.

It was asked if the positions were limited to a specific term period. Al Battle stated that there were term limits.

Sharon Miller stated that such information would be supplied to the Board.

It was stated that there was a term limit of six years for other advisory boards in the City.

Chair Stan Brown stated that strategically they needed to move forward with the process. He offered to stay and continue serving as Chair for one year while a Vice Chair could be appointed. He explained they needed to draw in leadership and make this Board work in order to keep the pressure on and keep things in focus.

Al Battle explained that a nominating process could be created, and the nominating committee could consist of a past Chair, a Board member, and the CRA Director, who would then make recommendations to the Board for the positions to be voted on. Nominations could be made to the CRA Director who would then provide them to the Chair of the Nominating Committee. He asked if the Chair of the Nominating Committee could now be appointed.

It was asked what role the Vice Chair would play outside of serving as Chair due to his absence. Al Battle explained that not only would the Vice Chair serve as an "understudy" and fill in at times, but would be provided some leadership training for a future role.

Chair Stan Brown explained that previously when the Vice Chair position had been filled, a concerted effort was made to include the Vice Chair, but one had to keep in mind the Sunshine Law. He further stated that it had not worked because the Vice Chair felt it was more of a ceremonial post and not a working position. He emphasized that it would be important to rotate the positions so everyone would have a chance to participate.

Chair Stan Brown asked if Jim Carras would serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee. Jim Carras accepted.

Sharon Miller stated that any subcommittee created by an Advisory Board had to be approved by the City Commission through a resolution. She stated that possibly a committee need not be formed, and the Chair could delegate a discussion to be held by the Board Members which would have to be noticed and opened to the public due to the Sunshine Law.

Al Battle reiterated that the meeting would only be to delegate some responsibilities and make a recommendation.

Director's Report

Staff Positions

Al Battle stated that some offers had been extended to increase staff for the CRA, and one offer had been accepted. He proceeded to introduce the Board to Thomasina Turner Diggs who would be serving as Project Coordinator and dealing with marketing and budget issues.

The Board proceeded to welcome Ms. Diggs to the CRA staff.

Al Battle further stated that another position had been filled, thereby leaving only the positions of Project Manager and Deputy Director vacant. He continued stating that they were actively recruiting, and hopefully all positions would be filled by the end of summer.

Al Battle advised that a new Economic Development Director had been hired recently. He stated that his name was Ron Hicks who was from New York, and had worked for the Empire State Development Corporation.

Sistrunk Boulevard Streetscape Design

Al Battle stated that a document had been distributed to the Board which was an overview of the Sistrunk Boulevard Streetscape Design. He stated that all feedback received from the meeting regarding this document had been outstanding. He added that Pamela Adams of Pamela Adams Consulting had assisted in this endeavor. He stated that during the meeting comments had been given and follow-up would be provided at a later date. He further stated that Commissioner Moore asked for an affidavit to be circulated asking for everyone's support for the project. He stated that 102 forms had been submitted. Of those 93 were supportive with 3 requiring additional information, and only 6 were not supportive and those individuals had supplied their reasons for their non-support. He stated that a video, along with the comments provided, would be put together at Commissioner Moore's request for forwarding to the County Commission so the issue could be placed on their agenda for consideration.

Al Battle further stated that the CRA now placed themselves to be pro-active regarding the project. He advised that the video would be sent to all members of this Advisory Board, along with the City and County Commissioners.

Chair Stan Brown remarked that many people had attended the meeting, and a lot of effort had went into the endeavor.

Old/New Business

No reports given.

A motion was made to adjourn. There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret A. D'Alessio (Muhl)