

**MINUTES OF THE NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
JANUARY 23, 2008 – 3:30 P.M.**

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	Cumulative Attendance May 2007-April 2008	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Ella Phillips, Chair	P	7	2
Michael Ferber, Vice Chair	A	8	1
Phyllis Berry	P	6	3
James Brady	P	6	3
Jerry Carter	P	8	1
Ron Centamore	P	8	1
Alan Gabriel	A	5	2
Jerry Heniser	P	6	1
Mickey Hinton	A	2	7
Bradley Hubert	P	8	1
Brice Lambrix	A	5	4
Laura Mutti	P	9	0
Doug Sterner	P	8	1
Clare Vickery	P	6	3
Samuel Williams	P	3	0

Staff

Alfred Battle, Director CRA
Mina Samadi, Engineer, CRA Staff
Thomasina Turner-Diggs, Project Coordinator, CRA Staff
Bob Wojcik, Planner III, CRA Staff

Guests

Rafael Jorge, S.A.T. Inc.
Victor Abreu, Atlas Investment
Hilda Testa, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc.

I. Call to Order & Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 3:50 p.m. by Chair Phillips. A quorum was present.

II. Approval of November 28, 2007 Minutes

Ms. Berry noted a correction to page five, paragraph six, of the November 28, 2007 minutes, and stated “Bernadette Norris Speaks Building” should read “Bernadette Norris Weeks Building.”

Motion made by Mr. Sterner, seconded by Mr. Williams, to approve the minutes of the November 28, 2007 meeting with the requested correction. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

III. Application for Development Assistance – Sun Auto Tops Inc. (S.A.T.)

Mr. Battle provided a brief overview of the project, including a memo prepared by Staff recommending development assistance of a “forgivable loan” in the amount of \$161,500.00. Mr. Battle explained the project would be a \$4.2 million investment, which would include the construction of a new 26,000 square foot facility housing a showroom, sales area, and general headquarters. The business has been at the current location for a number of years, and received financing from a Broward County Industrial Development bond.

Mr. Battle indicated the request for assistance does not fall into any of the incentive programs used in the past, but is within the CRA. The \$161,500.00 loan would cover 50% of the exterior and right-of-way improvements, and would be amortized over a five year period at a rate of 20% forgiven. The funds would be provided on a reimbursable basis, and no funds would be given out until completion of the project.

Mr. Rafael Jorge, representing S.A.T. Inc, provided photographs showing the location at the time of purchase, and comparison photographs showing the improvements made by S.A.T. Inc. The company has been in Fort Lauderdale for over fifteen years, and employs approximately 70 people. S.A.T. Inc. acquired the land at the corner of 7th Avenue and Sunrise Boulevard four years ago, cleaned up the environmental issues left by an old gas station, and projects completion of the current construction by October 2008.

Mr. Jorge noted the requested funds would be used for repair and/or replacement of the existing sidewalks, replacement of the existing signal lights,

and landscaping improvements. The proposed expansion would allow for the addition of approximately 25 jobs.

Chair Phillips asked how these additional employees would be targeted from the community. Mr. Jorge explained the company typically ran ads in the *Sun Sentinel* for job openings, targeting local residents. All employees are trained in-house. Mr. Battle added that the CRA staff had encouraged Mr. Jorge to hire from the community.

Mr. Williams asked if the landscaping had been a mandated part of the site plan and was advised by Mr. Jorge that it was not mandated. Mr. Jorge stated the sidewalk replacement had been included in the original budget. While planning for that improvement, the company discovered the signal lights would have to be removed at a cost exceeding \$40,000.00, which halted the sidewalk replacement project.

Mr. Williams followed up by asking if the requested loans would impact other targeted areas in terms of monies available. Mr. Battle felt the loan would be an investment providing other benefits such as increased TIF revenues, and added resources available to the community.

Mr. Sterner congratulated S.A.T. Inc. on their beautiful landscaping, attention to detail, and their efforts in cleaning up the location. Mr. Sterner asked for clarification on the location of the building entrances. Mr. Jorge noted the entrance would be on Sunrise Boulevard, with the exit on 7th Avenue, both of which will be gated.

Mr. Sterner asked about the type of business activities to be carried out in the building. Mr. Jorge listed the following:

- Research and development
- Analyzing new products
- Package design
- Product development
- Internet sales
- Retail sales offices

Ms. Vickery asked if the Florida Revenue Bond had been granted for the full value of the project. Mr. Jorge stated the bond process had been very challenging and took approximately one year to complete. The land value, clean up costs, and architectural fees were not included in the bond, and totaled approximately \$700,000.00.

The entire \$3.8 million was received up front and placed in a money market account, and the entire bond was purchased by Commerce Bank. Money can only be drawn for building construction. Mr. Jorge stated the loan is at a rate of four percent, amortized over twenty years, and is being paid in monthly installments.

Ms. Vickery asked how many types of businesses had been qualified for CRA. Mr. Battle stated there were only a few businesses that would qualify or be interested in going through the labor-intensive process.

Ms. Berry asked if the Broward County Transit would be providing accessible bus stops. Mr. Jorge stated there is a bus stop on 7th Avenue, but not on Sunrise Boulevard.

Mr. Carter noted the aesthetic improvements would make an impact in the area, and felt approval would be a win-win.

Motion made by Mr. Brady, seconded by Mr. Hubert, to approve the Staff recommendation, with the amount not to exceed \$161,500.00. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Old Business

Mr. Battle provided information regarding the Corridor Redevelopment Association for informational purposes.

V. New Business

Mr. Battle provided an overview of the issues brought up at a technical staff meeting regarding the DDA Light Rail Project, which would run from the northern part of the Flagler Village area through downtown, to the southern part of the urban core. The DDA Staff is planning to visit the FTA in Washington, D.C., and will appear before the Fort Lauderdale City Commission on February 5, 2008. Mr. Battle encouraged the Advisory Board members to attend this City Commission meeting.

Ms. Vickery asked if the DDA Staff was pledging CRA dollars to obtain commitments from the Federal and County governments, as had been done in Miami. Mr. Battle confirmed questions had been asked about available funding, but no specifics had been determined and no commitments had been made at this point.

Ms. Vickery asked if CRA had reached out to current residential construction projects for updates on occupancy rates or other issues deterring home ownership in the targeted neighborhoods. Ms. Mutti noted the issue had been addressed at a developer round table meeting in the fall. Mr. Battle confirmed there had been a meeting where developers were able to express concerns and discuss issues. Mr. Battle agreed to work with Ms. Vickery to include west and east side homeowners in discussions. Chair Phillips stated the issue could be discussed at the next meeting.

VI. Director's Report

Mr. Battle stated he had no further updates.

Ms. Mutti advised the Board on the "Take Charge of Education" program offered by Target. As customers use their charge cards, one percent of sales from Target are sent to Walker Elementary School. The school also earns one-half of a percent on sales using the charge card in a store other than Target. The school receives the funds twice a year, and has earned \$3,100 so far.

VII. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by K. Bierbaum, Prototype, Inc.]