

**APPROVED**  
**MINUTES**  
**NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS**  
**REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE**  
**8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**MAY 27, 2009 – 3:30 P.M.**

<b><u>Members Present</u></b>	<b><u>Attendance</u></b>	<b>Cumulative Attendance</b>	
		<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b><u>Absent</u></b>
Michael Ferber, Chair	P	1	0
Ella Phillips, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Phyllis Berry (Arr. 3:45)	P	1	0
James Brady	P	1	0
Ron Centamore	P	1	0
Mickey Hinton	P	1	0
Bradley Hubert	P	1	0
Laura Mutti (3:48 p.m.)	P	1	0
Doug Sterner	P	1	0
Claire Vickery	A	0	1
Alan Gabriel	P	1	0
Jerry Heniser (4:11 p.m.)	P	1	0
Samuel Williams	P	1	0
Jesse Adderley	P	1	0

**Staff**

Alfred Battle, CRA Director  
 Thomasina Turner-Diggs  
 Bob Wojcik  
 Angela Wilson  
 Mina Samadi  
 Sandra Doughlin, Secretary  
 Hilda Testa, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc.

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:38 p.m. by Chair Ferber. As of this date there were fifteen appointed members to the Committee, which means eight would constitute a quorum. Following a roll call it was determined that a quorum was present.

**II. Approval of April 22, 2009 Minutes**

**Motion** made by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Brady, to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2009 meeting.

In a voice vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

### **III. Action Item – Flagler Village Civic Association Funding**

Mr. Battle explained the request was to help mitigate the appearance of blight on various undeveloped sites throughout the Flagler Village area, including disrepair, overgrown vegetation, and large vacant parcels. The area owners agreed to fund a portion of the costs of stockade fencing similar to the fencing in the Riverbend Corporate Park project. Mr. Battle introduced Mr. John Lacz, the Civic Association President.

Mr. Lacz stated the property being discussed bordered Federal Highway, and improving the aesthetics of the area would help the area to appear “up and coming.” Photographs of the site were provided to the Board members. Mr. Lacz explained some development in the area was halted due to the economy, and there were inexpensive options to help improve the appearance of the area.

Chair Ferber noted the Riverbend project used graphics and banners on the fencing to create a better image. Mr. Williams agreed the banners would be a good idea, and expressed concern with the potential for graffiti any time a fence was installed. In response to budget questions by Mr. Williams, Mr. Battle confirmed the CRA contribution would not exceed thirty thousand dollars.

Ms. Phillips noted the issue of halted development would be an issue from time to time in different areas, and felt Flagler could be a model for others. Mr. Gabriel asked if the fencing was permitted by zoning. Mr. Battle confirmed the zoning question was still outstanding. Mr. Battle believed the fence was permitted, but the height allowance was still being researched. Mr. Gabriel asked if there could be restrictions under the zoning requirements, including graffiti, unwanted advertisements being posted to the fencing, and the landscaping plan. Chair Ferber felt some restrictions would be reasonable.

Chair Ferber pointed out the neighboring landowners and developers were also concerned about the appearance of the adjoining properties, and felt the upkeep of the area could be maintained. Mr. Battle stated the improvements would be maintained by the Civic Association, the property owners, or a combination thereof.

Mr. Centamore mentioned the urban oasis by the DDA, where the fences were moved back eight to ten feet, and local nurseries provided temporary landscaping, using the areas to grow their trees to be moved later when the construction began. There were also discussions with the Art Institute students to put their sculptures around the perimeter of the fencing.

Mr. Brady noted if the vacant lots fell out of compliance with existing laws, then Code Enforcement should do the improvements. Mr. Brady did not feel the lack of code enforcement should be hidden behind a fence. Mr. Brady noted construction type fences often looked worse than the conditions they were trying to hide, and was not sure certain pieces of property that size could be contained for less than \$60,000. Mr. Brady suggested if the fences were to be used, advertisement space should be sold, and the City could grant a blanket variance with regard to the signage codes. Mr. Brady also suggested law enforcement be asked about the possibility of vagrants using the fenced in areas.

Mr. Brady felt just a grassy area would be nice, with some of the features suggested by Mr. Centamore. Mr. Brady questioned if fencing was a wise expenditure of money, particularly before November 15, due to the possibility of wind damage.

Mr. Sterner had a number of questions, including

- Were the property owners contacted regarding the fencing?
- Who would be in charge of maintaining the fence?
- Could the owners decide to remove the fence rather than do the maintenance?

Chair Ferber stated there were conversations held, and it was deemed the Civic Association would be the applicant to the CRA. Chair Ferber reminded the Board the area being discussed was approximately one thousand, eight hundred linear feet at a quoted price of approximately seventeen dollars per linear foot to install the fence. The estimated total cost of the request would be under thirty thousand dollars, half with the CRA, half with the property owners. The larger amount being requested allowed the neighborhood to identify perhaps several other sites that would merit improvements.

Chair Ferber pointed out the request was a small investment compared to the potential income for the developers and land owner, the taxes generated, franchise fees and TIF. Chair Ferber also noted the original request for streetscape improvements, approved by the Board, was for \$850,000, and it was the decision of the City and the developers to build only one side of the avenue, leaving the other side in the current condition.

Mr. Brady advised he was not concerned with spending perhaps even more money for the cause, but questioned whether the fencing was a good solution to the problem. Mr. Brady pointed out the neighboring buildings were multi-story buildings, and anything above the second story would not benefit from an eight foot fence if the grounds inside the fence were not maintained.

Chair Ferber confirmed the same arguments were discussed with the property owners, who felt the street-level experience would be enhanced, which would be helpful even if the experience for the upper floors was not perfect. Chair Ferber continued the construction equipment would be removed, and the dirt would be bulldozed flat, improving the view for the higher floors.

Mr. Brady maintained the scenario was similar to the situation at 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Oakland Park Avenue where the City was currently suing the developer for the “abomination” behind the construction fencing. Chair Ferber felt the application, as a minimum proposal was an appropriate improvement for a nominal amount of money.

Mr. Williams had no problem with the fence as it related to the street level view, but wondered about setting a precedent for other blighted areas and similar requests which might come in the future. Chair Ferber described prior precedent on the City-owned lots in midtown that were sodded and maintained by the City.

Chair Ferber called for a motion.

**Motion** made by Mr. Centamore, seconded by Mr. Gabriel, to agree with the recommendation of Staff, consistent with zoning, with maintenance requirements, advertisements to be approved by the appropriate City authorities, and minimum landscaping to be approved by the City’s landscape architect.

In a voice vote, the motion was approved with Ms. Berry and Mr. Brady opposed.

#### **IV. Discussion Item – Carlisle Development Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority**

Mr. Battle reminded the Board members Carlisle Development and the Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority were partners in the existing reconstruction of the Dixie Court project. The partnership revitalized the Dorsey River Bend neighborhood, and previously came to the CRA for funding for streetscape improvements. The properties would become taxable properties, creating a TIF benefit in the long run. Mr. Battle advised the funding would not produce all the equity originally assumed due to the economic downturn.

Mr. Battle explained the funding sources came from loans, tax credit equity, grants, and value of the properties. The number of sources did not match up with the uses needed to make the partnership financially feasible. Mr. Battle provided documentation to the Board members demonstrating gaps between the available funding and the funding being requested.

Mr. Battle noted the partnership was the largest owner of property within the CRA, well over eight hundred units, with the long-term objective to renovate all the properties. All those properties would go to the tax rolls. Mr. Battle emphasized the Northwest Gardens project feasibility would be at risk without the requested financial assistance.

Mr. Battle concluded by saying the information provided was still a work in progress, was before the Board for discussion only, and no recommendation by Staff was made.

Mr. Hubert asked if the Housing Authority was paying land taxes. Mr. Battle explained the properties were owned by the Housing Authority, which was a not-for-profit and the properties were treated as City property.

Mr. Ken Naylor, Carlisle Group, and Mr. Scott Strawbridge, Housing Authority of Fort Lauderdale were present to answer questions. Mr. Naylor described the unique situation in Fort Lauderdale, explaining the Housing Authority was aggressively looking to redevelop its entire portfolio and replace a lot of buildings that other housing authorities might judge as "good enough." Mr. Naylor explained through the partnership the property would become private property for a minimum of fifteen years, and would be on the tax rolls. If the properties were then refinanced they would continue to be on the tax rolls.

Mr. Williams requested clarification regarding what was being requested from the Board. Mr. Battle explained the financial commitment being considered was to help close the three point seven million dollar gap through some type of creative financing arrangement. Mr. Battle provided examples of past projects and the tax benefits to the City. Mr. Williams asked when it was anticipated the TIF would begin for the Dixie Court project. Mr. Battle stated the TIF would begin as soon as a certificate of occupancy was granted. Mr. Strawbridge provided Certificates of Occupancy were already granted on Phases I and II, one hundred fifty-four units were built and taxable currently, with another one hundred units taxable by early 2010.

Chair Ferber described past projects fell into three categories:

- Small portions of incremented dollars with CRA "getting a lot for the money."
- "Break evens" where there were heavy costs, with an even benefit to the City.
- Projects where the amount of TIF generated was low.

Chair Ferber understood the request was for tax abatement, and the amount of the shortfall and the amount of the TIF was a "pass through" to make the numbers work. The CRA would not see a dollar, as the dollars would be recirculated back, but the end result would benefit the City. Chair Ferber felt the request was consistent with the CRA

mission. There followed a discussion regarding the mission and purposes of the CRA, and the potential benefits to the City.

Mr. Tillbrook, suggested a full presentation at a future meeting to demonstrate how the business model could transform a neighborhood from slum and blight to new housing. Mr. Strawbridge emphasized the desire to bring in anchor stores throughout the area.

Mr. Williams asked how the proposal would impact the tenants in terms of costs. Mr. Naylor assured the subsidized tenants would not be affected at all. There followed a discussion regarding the voucher system and the increase in maximum density for the renovated units.

In answer to questions by Mr. Hubert, Mr. Battle explained Staff felt the proposal was a good investment, however there were budget management issues still being discussed. Chair Ferber asked about a timeline for a possible solution. Mr. Battle hoped a full presentation would be ready for the June Board meeting. There followed a discussion with Board members regarding issues to be covered in the presentation. Chair Ferber suggested the Board members see the property before the presentation. Mr. Battle suggested a bus tour of a variety of completed projects possibly in August.

#### **V. Communication to City Commission**

None at this time

#### **VI. Director's Report**

Mr. Battle explained the City was found at fault HUD following an audit, and CRA funded projects are being used to satisfy a two point five million dollars repayment to the federal government. Mr. Battle explained no money would actually change hands, as any non-Federal resource could be used to repay the penalty. Mr. Battle explained the CRA's commitment of funding to approved projects would be transferred to the Housing and Community Development CDBG account, and the funds would be dispersed to the projects. Mr. Battle explained that three million dollars in investments have been identified to help meet the requirement.

Mr. Brady reminded the Board the past Chairman, Peter Feldman, organized the village concept and asked about the issue of the street lights. Mr. Battle stated the grant had not yet been paid. Chair Ferber stated the Downtown Development Authority suggested a joint meeting with the CRA Advisory Board to propose a collaborative effort on overlapping projects. Chair Ferber felt the street light issue might get folded into a larger project to rebuild numerous streets. Mr. Battle stated although the lights were not

the type originally agreed to, the lights were within code, and there were no requirements for a certain type of light.

## **VII. Old/New Business**

Chair Ferber stated the letter discussed in the last meeting to be sent by the Chair to the CRA Board was not necessary due to the new method of communication decided on by the City Commission. Mr. Battle provided a description of the new method of communication to the City Commission.

Ms. Berry asked Mr. Battle for the City Commissions reaction to the Advisory Board's opposition to the CRA expansion area from the April meeting. Mr. Battle stated the City Commission understood the opposition and would wait to see what the County decided.

Chair Ferber asked for an update on the 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Sistrunk RFP. Mr. Battle stated there were fewer outstanding technical issues. A Staff member described the following outstanding issues:

- A few minor issues with Broward County engineering
- Minor issues with AT&T
- Issues with one property and a needed easement
- Minor City-owned utility issues
- FEC and CSX permits

Staff hoped all permitting issues would be wrapped up in June, a bid package would be developed to go before the Department of Transportation for review. The RFP could be out for bid by the end of the summer. Chair Ferber thanked the Staff for their persistence and diligence in the RFP process. Ms. Phillips also thanked the Staff for their work, and requested a brief update of the project be provided at the end of every meeting.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.