

APPROVED
MINUTES
NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
JULY 25, 2012 – 3:30 P.M.

Cumulative Attendance

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	May 2012 - April 2013	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Steve Lucas, Chair	P	3	0
Ella Phillips, Vice Chair (dep. 4:21)	P	3	0
Jessie Adderley	P	3	0
Sonya Burrows	P	3	0
Ron Centamore	P	3	0
Nate Ernest-Jones	P	3	0
Alan Gabriel	A	2	1
Mickey Hinton	A	2	1
Brice Lambrix	P	1	2
Richard D. Powers	P	3	0
Yvonne Sanandres	P	3	0
Vanessa Santiago	P	3	0
Scott Strawbridge	P	3	0
John Wilkes (arr. 3:55)	P	2	1
Samuel Williams	A	2	1

Currently there are 15 appointed members to the Board, which means 8 would constitute a quorum.

It was noted that a quorum was present at the meeting.

Staff

Alfred Battle, Director, CRA
Sandra Doughlin, Clerk III, CRA
Bob Wojcik, CRA
Diana Alarcon, Director, Transportation and Mobility
Randall Robinson, Urban Design and Planning
Lisa Edmondson, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

None.

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes from June 27, 2012

Motion made by Mr. Lambrix, seconded by Ms. Burrows, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Officer Elections

Mr. Centamore nominated Chair Lucas for an additional term as Chair. Ms. Adderley nominated Vice Chair Phillips for an additional term as Vice Chair. The Board re-elected these Officers by acclamation.

Presentation

IV. NW Gardens II and IV

Chair Lucas explained that Northwest Gardens II and IV would be continuations of the existing Northwest Gardens project. There are no requests for financing at this time.

Nectaria Chakas, representing Lochrie & Chakas, provided a PowerPoint presentation on Northwest Gardens, identifying sections II and IV. She advised that these sections are considered separate projects for financing purposes. The project includes family apartments as well as age-restricted housing for the elderly.

The development will require the demolition of 166 existing units on all sites of the project, which total approximately 14 acres. When these units have been demolished, 266 new garden-style units will be constructed. The project represents a \$57 million investment in the Northwest CRA and includes large green spaces and ample parking. It is currently going through the City's Development Review Committee (DRC) process.

Mr. Battle asked if the units would be replaced on a one-to-one ratio. Ms. Chakas estimated that nearly 600 units would be created on the overall Northwest Gardens project. The total increase of units in the City's northwest quadrant would be approximately 150, as some portions of the project had lower increases than sections II and IV.

Mr. Battle commented that the project is located close to the area's primary retail corridor, which would affect the market information the CRA provides to potential

business developers. He also noted that not all units will be subsidized with low-income housing tax credits, which reflects a more diverse composition of renters than were previously housed on the site.

Ms. Adderley asked where the 100 new units would be located. Ms. Chakas confirmed that these units would be located throughout the property. Tam English of the Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority clarified that many of the existing vegetable gardens on the site would be moved to Northwest Gardens I and III.

Mr. Centamore requested a timeline of the site's construction. Ms. Chakas replied that the developer hopes to have building permits on hand by the end of 2012, with construction beginning shortly thereafter. Construction is estimated to take one year.

Mr. Wilkes arrived at 3:55 p.m.

Motion made by Mr. Lambrix, seconded by Vice Chair Phillips, to support the project. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

At this time Chair Lucas introduced Randall Robinson of Urban Design and Planning. Mr. Robinson stated that on July 10, the City Commission approved an Urban Agriculture Ordinance, which will add urban farms and community gardens as permitted uses in Fort Lauderdale. He explained that urban farms are entrepreneurial ventures in which a person or persons grows food to sell to various entities; community gardens allow persons who may not have a yard in which to grow vegetables to lease a plot for a nominal fee.

There has been renewed interest in community gardening over the past 20 years, and they now exist in several major cities. Mr. Robinson advised that urban farms are a more recent development, occurring primarily in cities that have experienced high depopulation and now have a great deal of land available for use.

He stated that the City Commission approved the Ordinance at their July 10, 2012 meeting. Community gardens are allowed throughout the City, while urban farms are allowed in all non-residential areas. Neither venture is permitted in parks. A nominal application fee will be required.

Staff is also developing a grant program that is expected to be similar to the Neighborhood Community Investment Program (NCIP). This grant would allow residents in each City Commission district to build a community garden. Mr. Robinson estimated that this funding would be available in early 2013.

Ms. Burrows asked if any of the vacant City-owned properties are under consideration for the community garden program. Mr. Robinson confirmed this, stating that the City Manager had specifically requested the development of these gardens on public land.

Mr. Ernest-Jones asked if the City would officially operate these gardens, or if they would go out to bid. Mr. Robinson said the City would provide oversight on the City-owned parcels; the lots themselves would be operated by community or homeowners' organizations, or other entities that would apply for the program.

Mr. Battle continued that the Ordinance may also allow for partnerships that will make this locally grown food available for sale to the community, through grocery stores, farmers' markets, or other local vendors. This would allow the organizations to raise revenue in a manner not currently allowed.

Mr. Robinson advised that the City grant program is only one potential funding source for community gardens: private sponsors may also place signage in these locations.

Ms. Burrows asked if the Ordinance would address water issues. Mr. Robinson replied that a water source must be available; the grant program or sponsors could pay for the necessary water connection. Mr. Wilkes added that only the usage rate would apply and not the sewer rate, as the water would be used solely for the gardens.

Mr. Wilkes asked why parks were excluded as potential locations. Mr. Robinson explained that park lands are at a premium within the City. The project is also intended to build a sense of community among residents by using empty plots within neighborhoods.

Mr. Wilkes observed that while this may apply to some neighborhoods, lots in other areas are much more expensive and not likely to be converted into community gardens. He asked if park lands could be used in these neighborhoods, such as the Rio Vista area; in addition, if more expensive lots are used as community gardens, he asked if an agricultural exemption would be available to take these properties off the tax rolls. Mr. Robinson said the Ordinance has not been developed this far at present. He reiterated that urban farms would be permitted in commercial areas rather than residential, while community gardens could exist in residential neighborhoods. Mr. Battle said agricultural exemptions have been discussed and have not been ruled out.

Mr. Ernest-Jones asked if the CRA would be interested in providing an alternative source of funding to community gardens within the area. Mr. Battle said the CRA may partner with other entities for this purpose, or may sponsor

community gardens inside its boundaries, although it has not yet identified additional resources for this purpose.

Chair Lucas requested that Diana Alarcon, Director of Transportation and Mobility, provide an update on some of the parking issues discussed at previous meetings, including off-peak parking, other parking revisions, and streetscape improvements. Ms. Alarcon reported that a process has been developed to introduce on-street parking on Andrews Avenue. She advised that the County Ordinance does not allow for this change, which means a City Commissioner must make the request to Broward County in order to find a way to make this happen. The process may then be appealed to the County Commissioners. She concluded that there is a political will to accomplish the change, and hoped that this can be done prior to the elections in November.

Ms. Alarcon continued that a draft of the Complete Streets initiative has been adopted by the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board. The final draft will be printed and available to the public by Friday, July 27, and will be presented to the City Commission in fall 2012 for adoption into the Code. Future streetscapes will be designed according to the Complete Streets criteria. She hoped that the County will also adopt this initiative so the design guidelines may also be applied to County streets.

The proposed Central Beach parking reduction will be on the City Commission's August agenda. Ms. Alarcon stated that a work group plans to meet with residents before this happens in order to address concerns about the parking reduction. She concluded that in September or October, it is hoped that a City-wide parking reduction will be presented. This proposed reduction would take retail, commercial, bar, restaurant, and other uses into consideration for shared use. She estimated that when the new fiscal year begins, there may be funds available for a study that could make the CRA exempt from parking requirements, particularly for affordable housing developments.

The WAVE streetcar project continues to move forward, and a public meeting is scheduled for July 30 to consider the environmental impact of the project. Once this step is complete, an application for funding will be submitted. Ms. Alarcon explained that parking requirements for developments along the WAVE route will be reviewed in terms of transit-oriented development. A public hearing is also scheduled for August 4 with regard to the Broward Boulevard study, which will help define a gateway into the City.

Informative Items

V. NW CRA Budget Overview

Mr. Battle provided a spreadsheet to the members, as well as revenue estimates from June 1 and July 1, 2012. He advised that the estimate presented the previous month is slightly higher than expected: instead of a tax increment funding (TIF) revenue of \$4,885,637, the July estimate provided by the Property Appraiser's Office is \$4,997,341, or a 1% increase.

He referred the members to the spreadsheet, explaining that the document lists everything on which the CRA spends operational dollars, including salaries, benefits, expenses, services, security, engineering, equipment, and other expenses. The spreadsheet also reflects the service charges made to the CRA by the City, including legal, financial, and public works expenses. This year's budget is \$1,938,640. Mr. Battle noted that this figure will increase by \$60,000 in lawn and tree maintenance, which will cover the cost of daily street cleaning services on Sistrunk Boulevard.

He continued that there is currently a \$41,000 budget set aside for the marketing of special events within the CRA, and suggested that this figure be increased by an additional \$40,000 for the following year. He noted that upcoming activities, such as the Midtown Summerfest, may expand and become annual events that could require financial support. He clarified that the CRA would not run these events but would instead support their development.

Chair Lucas asked if the CRA planned to participate in the upcoming rededication of Carter Park, which is expected to take place at the end of 2012 or the beginning of 2013. Mr. Battle said this expense appears to be covered at present, although the CRA may consider providing some funds for a senior center at this location.

He observed that the \$60,000 maintenance increase will raise the budget level to \$1,998,173; when subtracted from the revenue estimate, the remaining funds for discretionary spending would be \$2,998,701. Some of the projects that could be funded include the business incubator project, which may include a partnership with Broward College to develop a center for small businesses. Mr. Battle estimated that this project could cost \$200,000/year. Other budget amendments and projects are currently under discussion as well.

Chair Lucas recalled that the refinancing of the CRA's debt had been discussed at previous meetings. Mr. Battle said 2013 would represent the final payment of roughly \$609,000; in the future, there would be less discretionary funding as before, as the time frame would be shorter and the new or refinanced debt may be more than the \$13 million previously borrowed. He noted that refinancing may result in fewer restrictions on the cash flow, while more traditional new debt would be attached to specific projects.

Motion made by Ms. Burrows, seconded by Mr. Strawbridge, to adopt an additional \$40,000 for the special events line item on the budget.

Mr. Battle clarified that the increase would change this advertising/marketing line item from \$41,300 to \$81,000.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Lucas asked if the Board would vote on the final budget at their September meeting, as they do not meet during August. Mr. Battle advised that the date of this meeting should be changed so the Board may vote on the budget before its presentation to the City Commission on September 18. It was tentatively determined that the meeting would be held on September 12 if availability allowed.

Motion made by Mr. Wilkes, seconded by Ms. Santiago, that the Board reschedule [its] September meeting for the week of September 9, depending on availability of space here at City Hall. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. Wilkes asked how the 11% reduction in the CRA's funding allocation since 2011 was determined. Mr. Battle explained that this reflects a reduction in revenue. Mr. Wilkes also asked if the 20% appropriation to salary and pension expenses was consistent throughout the City. Mr. Battle stated that the pension calculation is not standard, as the contribution is dependent upon when individuals were hired. The 10% appropriation for health care costs may fluctuate if the provider is changed.

Mr. Wilkes asked if there is a legal opinion regarding whether refinancing will be bound by the restrictions of the original bond. Mr. Battle said there has been no such opinion issued thus far, although it would be necessary before any borrowing is done. He noted that there are approximately \$20 million in remaining projects in the CRA, and an analysis must be made on how much money can be raised. He observed that the projected operating expenses are currently flat at \$1.9 million-\$2 million; if necessary, funds can be taken from other areas, such as architectural, marketing, or engineering expenses.

Mr. Battle continued that there had been discussion at previous meetings of acquiring a greenway parcel, and informed the Board that he had updated the City Manager on this issue, particularly noting that Reliance Housing would not be able to contribute funds toward this acquisition. He reviewed the information shared with the Board since April 2012, when this prospective acquisition was first discussed. The most recent appraisal of the property's value was \$135,000, with an estimated cost of \$250,000 to make improvements to the site. Mr. Battle

concluded that the Board could recommend purchase of the land at \$135,000, or may take different action or no action with regard to the property.

Motion made by Mr. Strawbridge, seconded by Mr. Centamore, that the Board not pursue the acquisition of the property any further. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

VI. Director's Report

Mr. Battle informed the Board that the grand reopening of Sistrunk Boulevard has been deferred, as Florida Power & Light (FPL) must still take down utility poles. No date for the reopening has been set thus far.

The Midtown Summerfest is scheduled for Wednesday, August 1. Mr. Battle invited the Board members to participate in this event if possible.

Ms. Burrows asked if the proposed renaming of a portion of Sistrunk Boulevard will come before the City Commission before the street is reopened. Mr. Battle said he did not know the answer to this at present.

VII. Communication to CRA Board

None.

VIII. Old / New Business

Chair Lucas reminded the members that there would be no Board meeting in August. The rescheduled date for the September meeting would be circulated to the members when the availability of a room is confirmed.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

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