

APPROVED
MINUTES
NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
SEPTEMBER 26, 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	4	0
Ella Phillips, Vice Chair	P	4	0
Jessie Adderley	A	3	1
Sonya Burrows	P	4	0
Ron Centamore	P	4	0
Nate Ernest-Jones	P	4	0
Alan Gabriel	A	2	2
Mickey Hinton	P	3	1
Brice Lambrix	A	1	3
Richard D. Powers	P	4	0
Yvonne Sanandres	A	3	1
Vanessa Santiago	A	3	1
Scott Strawbridge (dep. 4:37)	P	4	0
John Wilkes (arr. 3:40)	P	3	1
Samuel Williams	A	2	2

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
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 3:38 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes from September 11, 2012 Special Meeting

This Item was deferred until the October Board meeting.

Mr. Battle advised that most documents will be sent to members electronically in the future. Hard copies of documents will no longer be provided by courier. He requested that all members provide him with their email addresses at the end of today's meeting.

Mr. Wilkes arrived at 3:40 p.m.

Mr. Battle continued that an Item has been added to today's Agenda, as representatives of Mount Olive Baptist Church will make a presentation on the changes that are underway at their facility. The project affects two roadways within the CRA: NW 9th Avenue and NW 4th Street.

James Duke, general contractor for the project, and Ronnie Mateu, architect, explained that the project is currently going through the Development Review Committee (DRC) process. Mr. Mateu provided a brief overview, beginning with a representation of the site plan. He showed where the original and existing church buildings have been located, as well as the surrounding parking lots, entrances, and exits.

A new sanctuary, chapel, and garden area will be added to the existing building, while most of the remaining development will improve the surface parking areas. The building will also contain offices, classrooms, and choir practice rooms. The front of the building will face 4th Street, while the existing sanctuary, which faces 9th Avenue, will become a family life center.

One of the proposed plans is the incorporation of green space into the surface parking areas. Parking will be done on hard surfaces, while driveways will remain green. A lobby area will unite the old and new buildings.

Ms. Burrows asked if the church has acquired more land. Mr. Duke explained that the existing parking is not fully used; lots that are currently vacant will be used for parking, with a staff parking area as well. Mr. Battle added that if streetscape improvements are incorporated from 4th Street to 7th Street, on-street parking will be limited due to curb and gutter installation. The west lot behind the older building will also be improved, and will be shared with another facility.

Ms. Burrows asked if representatives of the project have met with the nearby homeowners' association. Mr. Duke confirmed this.

Mr. Strawbridge asked if the new parking plan meets City Code. Mr. Mateu said the church is seeking a parking reduction, as some of the designs resulted in the loss of parking spaces. This will be a minor reduction. Mr. Strawbridge observed that the reduction would be located in the area shared between Mount Olive and another church. Mr. Duke stated that he is a member of the church, and has never seen 100% of these spaces occupied.

Mr. Strawbridge commented that the size of the facility will be nearly doubled, and asked if this was done to accommodate the existing congregation or in hopes that the congregation will grow. Mr. Duke said the church is intended to serve as a focal point of the community as well as a religious facility, which is one reason the family life center is being developed.

He continued that there are also plans to add a parking garage south of 4th Street. Mr. Mateu added that the facility is not severely underparked at present: while more programs will be provided, the congregation is not expected to increase by more than 50%. He estimated that the parking reduction for the entire project will only be 10 to 15 spaces.

Vice Chair Phillips stated that she is a member of the church, and emphasized the importance of making this investment in the community. The church has also worked with many different community and youth events in the area. She asserted that the community needs an expanded facility of this nature.

Motion made by Mr. Strawbridge, seconded by Ms. Burrows, that the Board supports and endorses the project, and sends a positive message to the DRC.

Ms. Burrows encouraged the project's representatives to reach out to the homeowners' association once more to bring them up to date on the plans for the church.

Mr. Wilkes requested clarification that there would be no demolition of existing structures on the site. Mr. Duke confirmed this was correct, and clarified that all property affected by the plan was already owned by the church. He noted that the new site plan would be roughly 40,000 sq. ft., with 440 to 450 parking spaces.

Mr. Wilkes asked if the plans include a curb and gutter concept. Mr. Duke said while the initial plans did not include this, subsequent discussions have included curb and gutter on 9th Avenue, as the DRC has made some requests of the project. Mr. Wilkes agreed that this concept would be helpful to the CRA.

Mr. Strawbridge suggested an **amendment** to his **motion**, stating that he wanted to emphasize the need for the church to continue to work with the neighborhood with regard to the project. Ms. Burrows accepted the **amendment** as well.

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

Action Item

III. New Incentive Program

Mr. Battle referred the members to a Staff memo outlining an incentive program, which would provide CRA dollars to properties and business owners coming to the area, primarily along the Sistrunk corridor. This program is intended to encourage more rapid development while using dollars from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) line of credit. The program would subsidize development and/or improvements to properties.

The incentive program would provide funds for construction-related projects, such as HVAC, plumbing, and other interior improvements, as well as exterior improvements including roof, stucco, landscaping, painting, and parking projects. The major difference between this and previous programs, such as the façade grant program, is that the CRA plans to be very aggressive, providing up to 80% of the capital necessary to fund these improvements, not to exceed \$250,000. Property owners along Sistrunk Boulevard who have buildings available for lease feel that this program would help them attract tenants or allow existing tenants to improve the space.

The program would act as a subordinate mortgage on the property, so the owner and tenants would act together to ensure that the improvements remain on the property itself and are enforceable over a long-term basis. These loans would amortize over a period that is either consistent with the lease time or no longer than 12 years. Mr. Battle pointed out that the CRA is expected to be in existence for another 12 years; the program would not be expected to last longer than this time frame.

He continued that another feature which makes this an attractive arrangement is that despite the CRA's best efforts, in addition to the spending power of the area, it is difficult to attract major retail to the Sistrunk corridor for two reasons: either businesses do not see the area as a viable investment that can return a reasonable profit, and high crime statistics still exist in this area. While the CRA may now be seen as a viable residential area, it is not yet seen as such from a commercial/retail standpoint. There are existing businesses in the area that have not made significant improvements to and investments in their properties. The

program could also assist those businesses that would like to open franchises along the corridor but do not currently have the necessary capital.

The incentive program would be funded at \$1 million, with \$700,000 of this coming from the CDBG line of credit funded by CRA dollars. Notices would be sent to businesses, encouraging them to send in their applications to the program; Staff, as well as Board members, would review these applications within a reasonable time frame, then rank them according to criteria that would determine whether or not they can be achieved. Projects that can be funded right away will be ranked accordingly so the program can meet these businesses' needs aggressively. Mr. Battle estimated that most of the improvements would cost between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

Chair Lucas asked if the program is limited to construction alone rather than development. Mr. Battle clarified that all costs must be construction-related, which may include design costs. No funds would be provided retroactively for projects that have already been funded.

Mr. Centamore asked if the program would be limited strictly to properties that pay taxes within the CRA. Mr. Battle confirmed this, stating that entities which do not pay taxes, such as churches, may still apply to the façade program for external improvements. The program would seek to fund more permanent fixtures or improvements that would remain in the building even if a tenant left the building.

Mr. Ernest-Jones referred to one of the application criteria, asking if projects would receive higher weighting if they hired local contractors and/or subcontractors, particularly if they are located within the CRA. Mr. Battle agreed that this would be a good criterion to include on the application, and suggested that a certain percentage of work could be required to go to Fort Lauderdale- or CRA-based contractors.

Mr. Strawbridge proposed that projects might be ranked based upon their plans for local participation. He added that he would like to see language to this effect included whenever the CRA is asked to participate in funding, emphasizing the need for contractors to hire from within the community. He continued that his only concern with the program was with regard to property "flippers," who would borrow funds and then turn a profit on the improvements.

Mr. Strawbridge left the meeting at 4:37 p.m.

Mr. Wilkes stated while he felt the concept of the incentive program was positive, he felt providing up to 80% of the capital required for some projects was high, and he would like to see matching funds or another means of showing a

commitment from the owners' side. He added that some costs, such as those associated with going through the DRC process, could be counted by the property owners toward their share.

Mr. Wilkes asked for more information on how the loans would be secured. Mr. Battle explained that there could be a restriction on the sale of the property within a particular time frame, or the owners would need to pay back the CRA. He advised that this is not an uncommon process, although the CRA would need to determine its position in relation to any other existing liens or mortgages on the property. Another condition would be if an existing tenant business fails, the owner would agree to bring in another tenant with a use consistent with the improvements made. This would help the CRA exert some level of control over the businesses they would like to see coming into the area.

Chair Lucas stated he would like to ensure soft costs are not reimbursed before improvements are made. Mr. Battle said these costs would only be reimbursed when the owner could provide an approved and executed redevelopment agreement.

Mr. Centamore asked if the assessed value of a property was likely to increase once improvements are made through the program. Mr. Battle said while tax increment financing (TIF) revenue would hopefully increase within the CRA, he did not expect large increases to occur as part of the program.

Mr. Powers asked if it would be possible to encourage specific types of businesses to relocate to the Sistrunk corridor. Mr. Battle replied that both wanted and unwanted businesses are identified in the CRA's Master Plan. Unwanted types of businesses currently located along this corridor would not be able to participate in the incentive program unless the property owners wished to change this use.

Motion made by Vice Chair Phillips, seconded by Mr. Ernest-Jones, to endorse the Incentive Program. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Information Items

IV. Zoning Moratorium

Mr. Battle provided the Board members with a draft copy of the zoning document, explaining that it would come back to the Board for endorsement at a later date. The working document included a draft Ordinance to amend zoning in the Northwest Regional Activity Center (RAC), declaring a moratorium on liquor and convenience stores in that area.

The draft Ordinance creates four new zoning districts for businesses that front along the commercial corridors of Broward Boulevard, Sunrise Boulevard, Sistrunk Boulevard, and NW 22nd Road. These areas include commercial and industrial to light industrial activities. Liquor and convenience stores would not be permitted within the new zoning districts, although any such businesses currently in operation would be grandfathered in. None of the residential zoning districts were affected, as they do not allow these businesses.

The four new districts are as follows:

- RAC-SC: Sistrunk Corridor District;
- RAC-BB: Broward Boulevard District;
- RAC-Franklin Park: Sistrunk Corridor and NW 22nd Road; and
- RAC-SB: Sunrise Boulevard District.

Mr. Ernest-Jones asked if alcohol sales would be prohibited in bars or restaurants. Mr. Battle clarified that the moratorium applies specifically to convenience and liquor stores.

He added that he had recently discussed parking exemptions within the Sistrunk Corridor zoning district with some Board members. The language describing this district has been modified to state that a parking exemption would be provided for this area for an 18-month period while a parking study is conducted to determine requirements within existing Regional Activity Centers. Parking requirements would be exempt in residential and non-residential areas within this district; commercial uses would still have to make accommodations for loading and delivery. The parking exemption is not offered elsewhere except for residential districts in the Broward Boulevard corridor.

He concluded that the parking exemption could serve as an additional incentive to bring new businesses to the Sistrunk corridor.

Mr. Ernest-Jones asked what entity was the sponsor of the Ordinance. Mr. Battle said the CRA, City Commission, and Planning and Zoning Departments have all given their support to the moratorium. The Ordinance will have its first reading at the second City Commission meeting in November 2012.

V. Update on Action Plan Items

Mr. Battle advised that due to departmental reorganization, the Planning and Zoning Department is working through some personnel changes. He stated that the CRA will try to engage new Staff members with regard to working on comprehensive design guidelines and planning issues.

The CRA marketing strategy will be presented as an Agenda Item at the Board's November meeting so members will have a sense of what is expected to work within the overall area. This strategy is related to the increase in the FY 2012-13 marketing budget.

Plans are in process with regard to the disposition of City-owned properties within the CRA. Mr. Battle said he has spoken to residential developers, such as Habitat for Humanity, with regard to some of these properties in the Durrs area. More information will be available in the next few months.

VI. Director's Report

Mr. Battle invited the Board members to attend the kickoff event for the Business Seminar Series on October 3. Booths are available to Fort Lauderdale-based businesses at a cost of \$30. The public is welcome at this event, which seeks to provide free information to small businesses.

Utility poles have been removed from section 4 of the Sistrunk construction project. Striping and other final activities are currently underway. Mr. Battle noted that the weather has affected paving activities for this project. All activity is expected to be complete by November 1.

The evaluation team should be able to make a recommendation to the City Commission regarding a consultant for the affordable housing study by early November. Mr. Battle thanked Chair Lucas and other members who have served on this team.

VII. Communication to CRA Board

None.

VIII. Old / New Business

None.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.