

**APPROVED**  
**MINUTES**  
**NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS**  
**REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE**  
**8<sup>th</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**JANUARY 23, 2013 – 3:30 P.M.**

**Cumulative Attendance**

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>May 2012 - April 2013</u>	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Steve Lucas, Chair	P	7	0
Ella Phillips, Vice Chair	A	6	1
Jessie Adderley	P	5	2
Sonya Burrows	A	6	1
Ron Centamore	P	7	0
Nate Ernest-Jones	P	7	0
Alan Gabriel	P	4	3
Mickey Hinton	A	4	2
Brice Lambrix	P	3	4
Richard D. Powers (arr. 3:58)	P	6	1
Yvonne Sanandres	P	5	2
Scott Strawbridge	P	6	1
John Wilkes	P	6	1
Samuel Williams	A	4	3

Currently there are 14 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, Economic and Community Reinvestment Manager

Sandra Doughlin, Clerk III, DSD/ECR

**Communications to City Commission**

None.

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

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 3:42 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

**II. Approval of Minutes from November 28, 2012 Regular Board Meeting**

Chair Lucas noted a correction on p.3, paragraph 3: the number of passengers should be 7.1 instead of 17.1.

**Motion** made by Mr. Gabriel, seconded by Mr. Lambrix, to approve as corrected. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

### **Information Items**

#### **III. Flagler Village Community Garden**

Chad Scott of City Realty provided an overview of this project, which is a nonprofit 501(C)3 community garden. Land for the garden was provided by a church located within Flagler Village. Mr. Scott distributed illustrations of what the garden will look like: it will be easily visible from the street and will hopefully inspire change within the neighborhood. Because no suitable City land was available within Flagler Village, outreach was made to the church to use their land for the community garden.

Because the garden is a nonprofit effort, any funds raised will go back into the garden itself. Once the construction phase is complete, it will run itself based on membership dues. Plots within the garden are available for lease by neighborhood residents, and group storage will be available. An area is also available for community workshops, and a communal table will be placed beneath a large tree in the garden. Space may be rented out for small weddings or other social or corporate events; funds raised in this manner will be used to hold the community workshops so they will be free to members.

Mr. Scott noted that articles of incorporation and by-laws have already been drawn up for the garden, as well as a gardener agreement. This will both suit the members' needs and provide liability coverage for the garden. Community organizations, such as the Flagler Village Civic Association, are supportive of the project. Ten of the available plots are reserved for education in partnership with different schools, universities, and outreach programs that wish to lease a plot.

He explained that the garden project is broken down into phases – the east phase, including irrigation and the entrance, and the west phase - including storage and communal space. Additionally, the garden has been selected from over 100 applicants to receive a state grant, which is reimbursable once construction has begun. Sponsorships are available for the front entrance of the garden. The land is planned to very low-maintenance, with a permeable lawn.

Ms. Adderley asked if an individual must be a member of the program in order to visit the site. Mr. Scott said this was not required when the garden is open.

Members are allowed to work and grow their own plots and participate in community workshops at no cost. The garden is intended to serve as a place for the community to come together.

Chair Lucas asked if no City-owned properties had been available within Flagler Village for this project. Mr. Battle replied that there are vacant lots in the area owned by the City, but none that had been suitable for the garden.

Chair Lucas asked how donations were being sought for the garden. Mr. Scott said these efforts are on hold while the lease for the land is being finalized; because donations will be tax-deductible, meetings with prospective corporate donors are planned. Once the fundraising efforts are complete, the City will be asked to match this amount.

Mr. Battle added that there are still some unknown factors with regard to funding the community garden: the gardens will require a very successful sponsorship campaign in order to support the construction that is planned. He concluded that in his opinion the Board may consider funding the project in phase 1, leaving the remaining phases to the garden to raise matching or other sponsorship funds. Another option would be to not fund the garden until all its phases have been funded. Mr. Scott advised that having the CRA as a sponsor would be very helpful in seeking other sponsorships.

Mr. Gabriel requested more information on the property leased from the church. Mr. Scott said the lease is being finalized to begin on June 1, which will allow for the liability insurance to apply and the funding of construction. Mr. Battle added that the City has passed an ordinance that will allow community gardening and urban farming in the area. The applicant for insurance will be the garden rather than the church.

Mr. Gabriel asked where parking would be located. Mr. Scott said walking to and from the garden is encouraged; however, parking is available in the church parking lot, as the church only uses this space on Sundays. Free street parking is also available on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Mr. Gabriel explained that he was concerned primarily for parking for these "side uses." Mr. Scott said these would be monthly or quarterly features rather than events on a daily basis.

Mr. Gabriel asked if the CRA is authorized to provide funding to a community garden. Mr. Battle replied that no program had been created anticipating the establishment of a community garden; however, it can be interpreted that a development such as the garden is consistent with the CRA Plan, as it promotes the use of vacant lots for community activities.

He continued that there are often issues with bringing plans for a community garden to fruition, typically involving a lack of capital or space, both of which must often be donated to get the project off the ground. Mr. Battle concluded that this project will be part of the surrounding neighborhood and privately driven. He also noted that the project fits within the City's intent to promote sustainability and environmental awareness.

Mr. Gabriel observed that another urban farm, which is already established, is on today's Agenda. He pointed out that there are no existing criteria the Board can use to evaluate these kinds of programs.

Mr. Centamore asked if the garden is eligible or has applied for Neighborhood Capital Improvement Plan (NCIP) funding. Mr. Scott said they have not. Mr. Centamore suggested that City Staff might be able to advise the garden's planners on whether or not the project might qualify for this funding. The garden would need to supply matching funds for the project if selected.

Mr. Ernest-Jones asked if the garden would be open to placing signage for the CRA as a sponsor if the Board elected to provide funding for the project. Mr. Scott said plaques would be placed near the front entrance of the garden in recognition of large sponsors, while smaller sponsors would be named on bricks in the garden's brick wall.

Mr. Ernest-Jones asked if the Board might consider signing a commitment letter for the CRA to match a certain amount of funds raised by the project. Mr. Battle said the Board would first need to make a decision about funding the project and what a reasonable amount might be. Mr. Ernest-Jones asked if the Board had considered a forgivable loan, made contingent upon the garden's revenue stream from outside events within a certain amount of time. Mr. Battle said the CRA typically prefers to use real estate as collateral in these cases, and the land would still be owned by the church. He felt a forgivable loan was better used in the case of a project that is expecting some tax-based return.

Mr. Wilkes commented that the proposed garden would serve as an educational facility and general community amenity; he advised, however, that the CRA should wait until the lease is signed before committing any funds, as they will need to ensure the property remains a community amenity. He felt the Board also needed more information on the garden's business plan.

Mr. Scott noted that he had reached out to various community gardens around the country, which have an annual budget of \$900-\$1500. The Flagler Village garden will charge a slightly higher annual fee to its members due to the number of amenities planned for the property. Utilities include water and electric, with a separate irrigation meter; lighting for special events would be part of the fee for

these events, and lights used at night would be LED lights, which are very cost-effective.

Mr. Wilkes reiterated that it is still early for the CRA to make a decision on funding the garden, and they should review the lease and the business plan before making a commitment. Mr. Scott said the business plan is included in the by-laws, although he noted that the project will not be run as if it were a business. He added that waiting another one to two years for the NCIP application and funding process could serve to deflate the momentum and support that has been built around the project at present.

Mr. Battle asked if there had been discussion of a contribution from the Flagler Village Civic Association. Mr. Scott said this organization does not collect membership dues and does not have funds to make a contribution.

Mr. Strawbridge observed that the Board has seen roughly 1000 new units of rental housing currently under construction; in a competitive rental market, the community garden would be to the advantage of private landowners to entice renters to the neighborhood. He asked if the garden has attempted to solicit funds from any of the landlords of these recently developed units. Mr. Scott said there have been discussions of holding a roundtable event with developers for this reason. He felt if these developers, and the CRA, were brought on board with the project, it would show that local businesses and the City are supportive.

It was asked how much the entire project is expected to cost. Mr. Scott said this was estimated at \$110,000.

Mr. Centamore commented that part of the CRA's charge is to improve the neighborhood, which he felt would apply to the garden. While he applauded their efforts, however, he did not know when would be the best time to provide financial support, or what might be the appropriate funding level. He also advised that he did not feel the CRA should make the first contribution before the project has raised other funds. Mr. Battle said Staff could also help identify other resources that the garden might be able to access. They might also be able to help the garden in soliciting grants, such as grants aimed at educational events. It was also pointed out that because there are a number of vacant properties within the CRA, many of which could also host a community garden, the Board should take care not to set a precedent of providing early funding.

Mr. Battle said Staff would conduct research into other potential funding opportunities and would come back to the Board with a recommendation at a later date.

#### **IV. Dr. Lindsay Urban Farm Sponsorship and CRA Service Day**

Mr. Battle said this was an opportunity to participate in urban gardening by providing a sponsorship at the Dr. Lindsay Urban Farm, which is part of a Housing Authority property. He advised that if the Board chooses to participate in projects such as the Urban Farm and the Flagler Village Community Garden, it would allow the CRA to have a more tangible and physical presence in the community by helping residents become more involved in sustainable practices.

He stated that his proposal for the Dr. Lindsay Urban Farm was a sponsorship contribution of \$1800 at the Master Gardener level. This would also allow the CRA to tie into a CRA Service Day, to be organized with the Housing Authority, which would invite civic associations within the area, City Staff, local schools, and other interested participants to work in the Urban Farm. This would allow for a more physical presence in the community for the CRA and the Board.

It was asked if the CRA had authority to fund this project. Mr. Battle said the Board may spend funds that they believe will further the overall CRA plan; the sponsorship could also be perceived as a marketing effort to encourage activities of this type throughout the CRA. The CRA Service Day could also serve as a media event that would provide the CRA with recognition for its efforts. The event would be planned using the budget line item dedicated to events. Mr. Battle said he did not expect a large expense would be necessary.

It was noted that it may prove difficult for the Board to draw a line between different entities that come before them seeking support, particularly for projects on private property. Mr. Battle said Staff could conduct research into what has or has not been done in the past for community gardens from a municipal perspective, if that was the Board's wish. Because there are no existing programs that specifically include community gardening, it may be necessary to establish some criteria in order to distinguish between these projects and determine which ones should receive funding. Mr. Battle reiterated that the Commission has adopted a plan of sustainability for the City, into which support for community gardens may fit.

Mr. Centamore asked what a Master Gardener sponsorship would entail. It was clarified that sponsorship at a given level will sponsor a certain number of containers on the Urban Farm site; at the Master Gardener level, the CRA would also receive signage in recognition of their contribution, as well as recognition in all of the Urban Farm's marketing and social media materials. The sponsorship would also allow for participation in the Urban Farm if the members wished to raise any crops.

Mr. Centamore asked if the sponsorship would apply to a specific group who used the Farm, such as a school group. It was explained that the sponsorship

helps keep the farm running and pays a living wage to the individuals who work there. Some of the food raised on the site goes toward the Pantry of Broward or to the residents of the community. The Urban Farm sponsorship is distinctly different than the Flagler Village Community Garden project: the sponsorship and Service Day will not only promote the Urban Farm, but will promote the idea of adapting other vacant properties within the CRA to the same use.

**Motion** made by Mr. Wilkes, seconded by Mr. Gabriel, to approve the sponsorship. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

It was suggested that the members of the Planning Department who have already researched these projects, particularly in terms of their zoning, might be invited to an upcoming Board meeting to educate the members on how these projects bring value to a community.

## **V. Director's Report**

### **a. Update on Amendments to CRA Plan**

Mr. Battle recalled that at earlier meetings, there had been discussion of refinancing bonds. He advised that he has been asked to table this effort and focus instead on spending the dollars the CRA already has. The construction line item currently contains roughly \$100,000, while the property acquisition line item contains approximately \$500,000. These dollars must be spent prior to July 1, 2013.

Mr. Battle explained that he has discussed the CRA plan and other projects, and how funds can be spent between now and 2025, with the City Manager. Additional conversations regarding prospective CRA projects will be necessary before these projects are undertaken. Mr. Battle added that he may bring forth more potential projects that have not been previously discussed by the Board.

Mr. Wilkes asked if the bond was in need of restructuring. Mr. Battle advised that restructuring would have allowed the CRA to borrow more money, as funds have been spent on property acquisition in the latter part of 2012. He noted that while bond funds cannot be used for private investments, they may be used for the capital improvement program, on which the amendments to the Plan had been focused. Projects such as streetscape and neighborhood improvements cannot be made without borrowing more money unless the improvements are made in a piecemeal "pay-as-you-go" fashion, which will take longer to achieve.

Mr. Wilkes pointed out that the requirement to spend existing funds would mean the CRA would be less and less productive as it gradually has less remaining money to spend. Mr. Battle agreed with this assessment.

**b. Follow Up on Discussion on City-Owned Property Disposal**

Mr. Battle recalled that at the last meeting, there had been discussion of the CRA receiving some properties from the City at no cost, which meant the Board would need to determine what should be done with them. He advised that 40 of these properties are within the Northwest Neighborhood Improvement District, which is a holding entity created for the purpose of conveying properties for affordable housing development. The properties are expected to become part of the CRA's inventory in February, at which time proposals for their use will be brought forth to the Board. Habitat for Humanity and another nonprofit entity are interested in creating infill housing on some of these sites.

Mr. Battle continued with the Director's Report, noting that the Board had discussed the creation of a Property and Business Incentive Program at an earlier meeting. This program would have provided funding for businesses that move into the Sistrunk Corridor. The program was presented to the City Commission in November 2012, but was ultimately pulled, as the Commission considered the terms of the program to be too aggressive. They recommended that the Board modify these terms and take a different approach.

Mr. Battle said further discussion may come in February to enhance existing programs, such as the façade program and the development of low-interest loans for small businesses, with a maximum of \$100,000-\$200,000 over a five-year time frame. This would allow businesses to make improvements to the interior of their properties.

**VI. Communication to CRA Board**

None.

**VII. Old / New Business**

Mr. Lambrix requested an update on payments for the lighting in Flagler Village. Mr. Battle said this bill is being transferred to the City.

Mr. Wilkes stated that he would like to recognize the efforts of City Staff in the recent Light Up Sistrunk event and the ribbon-cutting ceremony that accompanied it. He advised that this was a successful, well-attended, and enjoyable event.

Chair Lucas recalled that Mr. Powers had been part of a team that submitted proposed streetscape improvements for Andrews Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in 2012. As of last week, these improvements have gone through the MPO's



screening process and are now in the design phase, which could result in construction of the improvements within roughly 18-19 years. It is expected that the County will approve these designs in February or March of this year.

Mr. Powers said many people within the CRA would view any activity or improvements as a positive step, as most projects are completed over the long term. He felt that projects being funded in the short term would help the community understand the CRA's purpose more clearly, as they can have a great impact on the spirit of a community. Chair Lucas agreed that there can be some frustration associated with getting projects done.

Mr. Battle advised that some small projects the CRA would like to fund, such as changing a street name or providing neighborhood markers, fall into the same category as the Flagler Village Community Garden: there is no established program through which the CRA can fund them, unless there is agreement that they should be funded. They may require some private funding as well as CRA funding. He also pointed out that the CRA has less experience with smaller initiatives than with larger projects.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

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

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