

APPROVED
MINUTES
NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
MARCH 27, 2013 – 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	8	0
Ella Phillips, Vice Chair	A	6	2
Jessie Adderley (arr. 3:52)	P	6	2
Sonya Burrows	P	7	1
Ron Centamore	P	8	0
Nate Ernest-Jones	P	8	0
Alan Gabriel	A	4	4
Mickey Hinton	A	4	3
Brice Lambrix	P	4	4
Richard D. Powers	P	7	1
Yvonne Sanandres	P	6	2
Scott Strawbridge	P	7	1
John Wilkes (arr. 3:47)	P	7	1
Samuel Williams	A	4	4

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
Lisa Edmondson, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

The Board requested by consensus that new City Commissioner Dean Trantalis appoint a new Board member in order to fill an existing vacancy.

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes from February 27, 2013 Regular Board Meeting

Motion made by Mr. Centamore, seconded by Mr. Ernest-Jones, for approval of the minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Flagler Garden Funding Request

Mr. Battle recalled that the Board had discussed this Item at length at both the January and February meetings. The project has a construction budget of slightly over \$110,000; the organization has provided the Board with a copy of its business plan and operating schedule. Operation of the project will also be supported through fundraising efforts and other sources, including grants.

In February, Chad Scott, representing the Flagler Village Community Garden, had provided the Board with a more detailed proposal of its funding request, which asked for a matching contribution from the CRA for each phase of the project. These costs were estimated at just over \$36,000 for phase 1, just over \$39,000 for phase 2, and just over \$34,000 for phase 3. The proposal requested that construction costs be divided 50/50 between the Garden and the CRA.

Mr. Battle advised that Staff had recommended assisting the Community Garden with a 50% match of capital costs for the first phase of the project. Funding would occur after evidence of the remaining construction funds are verified, a construction contract has been executed, and appropriate insurance has been secured. No funding would be dispersed until pro rata advancement of the project has occurred.

He continued that there had been discussion at the February meeting of establishing a program or a long-term policy to address the implications of a project like the Community Garden as related to the CRA's ongoing fund balance. Staff's recommendation was that \$100,000 be set aside in the upcoming budget in order to fund community-driven projects that help advance the overall goals of the CRA. Community-driven projects may be defined as loosely or as specifically as the Board wishes, and evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Staff recommended that each application be limited to no more than \$20,000.

Mr. Battle provided the members with a breakdown of the CRA's projected revenue and expenses over the next seven years. He explained that this would give the members an idea of how much tax increment financing (TIF) comes into the CRA and goes out for operating and other expenses, and how much money is left over for capital and other projects.

He concluded that Staff's recommendation for the project remains the same: funding of phase 1 at a 50% match as requested.

Mr. Centamore asked how the Community Garden would be secured at night. Mr. Scott said the property is entirely fenced, with a lock and key at both access points. Only Garden board members will have keys to the property. He agreed that vandalism and/or theft is a concern for any community garden; these are mitigated by secure fencing and lighting at night.

Motion made by Mr. Centamore that the Board fund [the Garden] at the first request.

Mr. Battle advised that the Garden may also be working with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), although he was not aware of whether or not a request for funding has been made to the DDA. It was clarified that the DDA has not made a decision regarding funding; the request will be decided upon within one to two weeks.

Mr. Ernest-Jones asked if funding provided by the DDA would serve as a disincentive for the Board. Mr. Battle replied that he would assume the costs for phase 1 would change if a third party entered into a partnership with the Garden. If a new funding source is identified, the CRA could reduce its contribution accordingly and funding could be divided evenly among all the parties involved. Mr. Scott stated that the project would focus on the DDA's partnership for phase 2.

Mr. Centamore asked if it would be preferable for the DDA to fund 50% of phase 2 while the CRA funded 50% of phase 1, or if the DDA and CRA should each fund 1/3 of phases 1 and 2. He stated that he would like to see the Garden reach out to more contributors, as this would allow the CRA to keep its costs down. Mr. Scott said the Garden is not asking the DDA to contribute 50% funding, as they were not likely to provide this much of a contribution. He added that the Garden is partnering with other entities, including corporate sponsors and neighborhood residents. The sooner phase 1 costs are met, the faster they can proceed with bringing more partners on board, as they will be able to see a successful project.

Mr. Centamore restated his **motion** as follows: **motion** that the Board fund 50% of phase 1, with no guarantee that [the CRA] will fund phase 2 or 3.

Mr. Scott clarified that the remaining 50% of the Garden's funding would come from other sponsors through fundraising. Mr. Battle said the CRA would provide a 50% match of whatever is raised elsewhere by the Garden, and reiterated that there is no guarantee that the DDA would contribute to phase 1, as the Garden is seeking phase 2 funding from them.

Ms. Sanandres **seconded the motion.**

Mr. Strawbridge commented that he would be uncomfortable funding 50% of phase 1 if the entire remaining 50% came from a DDA contribution. This would mean the funds were provided by two taxing authorities rather than two community or corporate sponsors. He asserted that the Garden must find other sponsors to make contributions as well.

Mr. Wilkes and Ms. Adderley arrived at 3:47 and 3:52 p.m.

Mr. Powers pointed out that it is time-consuming for an entity like the Community Garden to appear before the Board multiple times with funding requests. He felt it would be preferable to establish a fund specifically for community-driven projects such as this one.

Mr. Wilkes observed that the 50% match of \$36,000 would provide up to \$18,777.50. He stated that he remained unconvinced that the CRA should fund the project, and noted that the average cost of establishing a community garden in Broward County ranged from \$1000-\$4000 in start-up costs. For this reason, he did not consider the project to be a community garden, but "a charitable organization...on private land."

Mr. Wilkes added that the City did not seem supportive of community gardens, and concluded that the request fell into a gray area for CRA funding.

Mr. Scott pointed out that a City Ordinance was passed in July 2012 in support of urban farms and community gardens. He asserted that while the project was not a typical community garden, it would function as one, using a modern design and promoting sustainable living. He concluded that a member of the City's Visioning Committee has stated that the project fits into their ideas for Fort Lauderdale's future.

Mr. Wilkes replied that while he agreed the project would be much more than a community garden, the passage of a City Ordinance does not mean the City is supportive of these efforts. He noted that no money was committed to community gardens by the City. Because the contribution would mean public money is being used toward a private enterprise, he felt there should be safeguards in place that the project will be available to the public, which is not currently extant in the lease agreement. He stated it would be unsatisfactory if the Garden is limited to individuals who pay the \$85 membership for a plot rather than open to the public at large.

Mr. Scott responded that the Garden's by-laws and articles of incorporation state how the project will be set up; he added that the lease could include an amendment or addendum as requested. Mr. Wilkes stated again that the Garden was no different than a church or other private entity making a request for a charitable purpose, and giving support for it would open up the Board to similar requests in the future, particularly as there are no current criteria on which to judge this type of project.

Mr. Battle asked to know the hours of operation for the Garden. Mr. Scott said it would be open from dawn to dusk, and accessible to any members of the public; after hours, it would be accessible with a key. Mr. Battle suggested that this be included in any information that the Board may subsequently provide to the City Commission.

He added that he had previously recommended the allocation of \$100,000 in next year's CRA budget for community-driven projects such as this one, so a separate fund would be in place for requests of this nature. No single applicant would receive more than \$20,000, which is the same maximum allotted to the façade program.

Mr. Wilkes reiterated that the Garden's lease should include a provision on assignment rights, and stated that other community gardens in Fort Lauderdale have suffered from a lack of community participation, as there are "effectively three or four people" that are consistently involved in these projects. Mr. Scott asserted that Flagler Village is not a neighborhood in which only a very few people are interested in the garden, stating that there are several stakeholders involved in the project.

In a roll call vote, the **motion** failed 5-5 (Ms. Adderley, Ms. Burrows, Mr. Lambrix, Mr. Strawbridge, and Mr. Wilkes dissenting).

It was clarified that a second vote could only occur if an individual who had voted on the prevailing side moved to revisit the issue.

Mr. Centamore suggested that the Garden be brought back before the Board once a fund has been established for consideration of community-driven projects.

Mr. Scott pointed out that in addition to its function as a community garden, the project would serve as a beautification effort, using currently vacant land to activate the neighborhood. He felt it could be seen as an advertising mechanism for Fort Lauderdale.

Motion made by Mr. Ernest-Jones, seconded by Ms. Sanandres, to reconsider Staff's recommendation on funding the project.

Mr. Battle reiterated that Staff's recommendation was to fund 50% of phase 1 with \$18,770. A vote to reconsider meant that further discussion would be held on the Item.

In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 6-4 (Ms. Adderley, Ms. Burrows, Mr. Lambrix, and Mr. Wilkes dissenting).

It was suggested that the Garden could post movable items as collateral, such as benches, bicycle racks, and pavers. The funding agreement could be structured in a way that the CRA or City would have first right of refusal on these items, should the project fail. This would provide a safeguard against the funds provided. Mr. Scott referred to the Garden's cover letter, which states that in the event the project failed, the City would have this first right of refusal for the movable assets. The assets could be moved to parks or other facilities in other parts of the City. He noted that the total cost of these items would be \$19,230, which would be greater than the funding request.

Mr. Wilkes stated that collateral was not his concern, as he did not believe any parties would want the garden's movable assets. He said while he would like to see the project succeed, he did not feel the CRA should offer financial support until after it is already "up and going." He added that the prices listed for the movable items seemed too high.

Mr. Ernest-Jones pointed out that the project cannot reach the up-and-going stage without meeting startup costs; furthermore, the CRA would not be providing any funding until the Garden has amassed \$18,770 from the private sector.

The members discussed the project further, including the requirement for a construction contract. Mr. Wilkes said he felt the proposed commitment of \$18,770 was too high. Previous projects located on both City and private properties were discussed in comparison to the Garden.

Ms. Sanandres suggested if the request for \$18,770 seemed to be too much, the members could arrive at another amount they felt was appropriate. She stated that the Garden would serve the entire community, and failing to provide some level of funding would set a poor precedent.

Mr. Strawbridge asked who would operate the programs proposed by the Garden. Mr. Scott said the project's board of directors is partnering with different organizations, and there are presently 69 members of the project who will serve on various committees and boards, as well as the individuals who will pay a fee to be a member of the garden. He pointed out that the Garden has held

successful fundraising events thus far and did not anticipate a need for a staff to hold community events.

Mr. Strawbridge commented that he shared Mr. Wilkes' concern with the scale of the project, which seemed to be too large. He was not certain that the Garden's business plan addressed its long-term maintenance and preservation, as it may not be possible to operate a project of its magnitude, including special events, for \$5000-\$8000 per year. He noted, however, that CRA guidelines do not require a project to generate taxes in order for the CRA to provide financial support. He concluded that he would also like to see the facility in operation, with a track record of active volunteers, before providing funding.

Mr. Scott explained that there is no public land available in the neighborhood for the Garden; it is a nonprofit venture with a 10-year lease. He advised that the funding request would come after the Garden has raised its 50% of the funds. With regard to the size of the project, he stated that \$18,770 is approximately 1/6 of the entire cost. He concluded that the intent behind the Garden is to activate the surrounding neighborhood and promote community involvement, and financial support from the CRA would send a positive message.

Motion made by Mr. Wilkes, seconded by Mr. Ernest-Jones, that the CRA commits to contributing \$5000 reimbursement for this community garden for the cost of at least 1500 sq. ft. of plantable bed space, soil, planter costs, irrigation system, fencing, and the City permits, in conjunction with the other caveats the Board has previously talked about, [and] assurances that the project goes forward, with [the] protections in the lease as discussed.

In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 8-2 (Mr. Centamore and Mr. Lambrix dissenting).

Chair Lucas noted that the second part of Staff's memorandum on this Item referred to setting aside a certain amount of funds for community-driven projects.

Motion made by Mr. Powers, seconded by Mr. Wilkes, to support the proposal to appropriate the budget for 2014 to have \$100,000 set aside for community projects. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 9-1 (Mr. Lambrix dissenting).

IV. Director's Report

Mr. Battle informed the Board that there may be plans for a Wal-Mart Neighborhood Grocery to be located at the southwest corner of Sunrise Boulevard and Andrews Avenue. Discussion is ongoing regarding the viability of this potential project. He noted that he had forwarded an article to the Board regarding this item.

He continued that public meetings are scheduled regarding the Northwest CRA zoning moratorium on convenience and liquor stores. The first discussion will be held at City Commissioner Dubose's District meeting on Monday, April 1; an all-day public meeting will be held at the Mizell Center on April 4. There will be a morning session from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and an afternoon session from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. More information, including a one-page overview of what the new zoning would include and the geographic boundary of the proposed zoning district, will be provided to Board members.

Broward County has recently passed a Complete Streets resolution, which is a positive sign that the County may be supportive of the streetscape project proposed for Andrews Avenue and NE 3rd Avenue. The City has been asked to provide its design plans to the County for review and approval. The City's Department of Transportation and Mobility is coordinating the completion of these designs. Both streets are included in the City's capital improvement program, as well as in the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) transportation improvement program.

Chair Lucas asked if plans for off-peak parallel parking on the two streets had been advanced. Mr. Battle replied that he had not been given an update on this possibility.

He concluded that Bank of America will hold a grand opening for its new Sistrunk Boulevard branch on April 12.

V. Communication to CRA Board

The Board agreed by consensus to request that new City Commissioner Dean Trantalis appoint an individual to fill the current vacancy on the Board.

VI. Old / New Business

None.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.