

APPROVED
MINUTES
NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
APRIL 24, 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	9	0
Ella Phillips, Vice Chair	A	6	3
Jessie Adderley	P	7	2
Sonya Burrows	P	8	1
Ron Centamore	P	9	0
Nate Ernest-Jones	P	9	0
Alan Gabriel	A	4	5
Mickey Hinton (arr. 4:18)	P	5	3
Brice Lambrix	P	5	4
Richard D. Powers	P	8	1
Yvonne Sanandres	P	7	2
Scott Strawbridge	P	8	1
John Wilkes (arr. 3:39)	P	8	1

Currently there are 13 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 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

None.

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 March 27, 2013 Regular Board Meeting

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

Chair Lucas introduced Jim Ellis and Matt Mattern of the Flagler Village Improvement Association. Mr. Ellis explained that the Improvement Association had been incorporated in 2003; although they had been inactive since 2008, the Association is now operating once again with many of its original members. They are working with several entities within the neighborhood, including businesses, large landowners, and the Flagler Village Civic Association.

III. NW Gardens and Sistrunk Gardens – CRA Streetscape Funding Request

Lindsay Lecour of Carlisle Development Group showed a PowerPoint presentation on Northwest Gardens II, III, and IV. These projects were first presented to the Board in November 2012. Ms. Lecour explained that the Carlisle Development Group is requesting streetscape funding for these projects.

She showed the Board the location of the four phases of redevelopment of the Northwest Gardens neighborhood. Thus far, the cost of all four developments is approximately \$66 million in hard costs only, with over \$100 million in total development costs. Of the \$66 million, roughly \$1.5 million has gone toward streetscapes. Northwest Gardens I is now complete and occupied, and a pocket park in the area was recently the site of the Light Up Sistrunk event. Construction is also complete on Northwest Gardens III and this section is fully occupied. Construction on the final two phases, Northwest Gardens II and IV, has recently begun.

Ms. Lecour advised that over \$670,000 in significant streetscape work has already been completed in the area. The request to the Board is for funding to complete the lighting on NW 8th and 9th Streets, which would use 17 CRA-specified lighting poles. The Carlisle Development Group is asking for the full \$103,000 necessary to complete this segment of the project, which is approximately 13% of the overall streetscape cost.

She showed a slide of the site plan for Northwest Gardens II and IV, which are presently under construction. Northwest Gardens II is geared toward elderly residents and includes seven residential buildings, with an additional community building. Northwest Gardens IV has six residential buildings and two sets of community buildings, and serves a non-age-restricted family demographic. Sidewalks and CRA lighting for Northwest Gardens II will cost roughly \$209,000, of which the CRA is asked to fund 60%, or \$125,000. The request for Northwest Gardens IV would include sidewalks, lighting, and a dedicated right-of-way onto

Sistrunk Gardens with paving and grading. The requested amount for these improvements is \$97,671, or 60% of the total cost of \$163,000.

Ms. Lecour concluded that the streetscape projects would have a significant impact on the improvement of the neighborhood.

Chair Lucas requested clarification of the overall request, noting that some of the improvements cited during the presentation are required by the City. Mr. Battle explained that the Carlisle Development Group is required by the City to build sidewalks and put in streetlights, as submitted in the project's site plan; the request would fund the installation of light poles that would blend in with the streetlights already present within the CRA.

Chair Lucas asked if the request would cover the incremental cost of CRA lighting over other lighting the developer could install. Mr. Battle confirmed that this was the case for both lighting and sidewalks, and pointed out that the CRA would be sharing the cost of building the sidewalks, which are wider than other sidewalks in the area. In some areas, sidewalks would be added where they do not currently exist. Both lighting and sidewalks improvements would encourage a more pedestrian-oriented environment.

Chair Lucas commented that the CRA has historically been asked to contribute 50% of costs for certain improvements. Mr. Battle said these requests are typically between 50% and 60%, particularly when the CRA has asked a developer to improve areas such as the opposite side of the street from a project. This enables the City to realize more improvements in an area by asking a private developer to take them on.

Mr. Ernest-Jones requested more information about the projects' landscaping. Ms. Lecour said this was not included in the presentation, as the developer is not asking the CRA to contribute toward these costs. She added that the landscaping currently seen in Northwest Gardens I and III is typical of what would be done in the other two developments.

Mr. Centamore asked why the developer was requesting the CRA contribute 100% of the costs in Northwest Gardens III. Ms. Lecour replied that the Carlisle Development Group had originally requested streetscape grants for this part of the project; however, due to circumstances they had not been able to proceed with this request, and construction is now complete on the property, which meant an additional crew would have to be brought to the site to make these improvements.

Mr. Wilkes asked how the Northwest Gardens projects fit into the overall Master Plan for the CRA. Mr. Battle replied that the overall CRA is divided into three

portions: Flagler Village, which is similar to the Downtown housing market; the Northwest, which is divided into a single family-oriented area south of Sistrunk Boulevard and a more concentrated area north of Sistrunk. He concluded that he expected further development within the CRA, and hoped it would be of similar quality to the projects currently before the Board. This was the intent of many of the zoning changes the Board has discussed, such as a minimum housing quality standard.

He observed that there is also a demographic within the CRA in need of the subsidized housing provided by Northwest Gardens, as it is statistically an impoverished portion of the CRA. These developments are expected to both improve the quality of life of many residents and have a positive impact on tax increment financing (TIF) revenue.

Mr. Wilkes asked if the two phases currently under construction would be occupied by residents displaced by demolition of the previous structures, or would predominantly attract new residents from outside the area. Mr. Battle noted that the community has strict requirements for reconstruction of the previous units. Because the new development will offer low-income tax credit prices, however, they also expect that some residents earning middle-class incomes will be attracted to the project, particularly due to the quality of the units and their proximity to Downtown. He concluded that the streetscapes are considered a public investment that would allow nearby property values to increase.

Mr. Centamore asked how many more units were constructed in addition to those that were replaced. Tam English, representing the Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority, said the total increase throughout the CRA was approximately 200 to 250 units, half of which were located on formerly vacant property. Northwest Gardens will have 950 units in total.

Ms. Burrows commented that the streetscapes are along a public right-of-way and would enhance the overall community beyond individual properties alone. She noted that there is also a good deal of pedestrian traffic in the area.

Chair Lucas observed that the improvements in the right-of-way, including sidewalks, are required as part of the developer's site plan approval. He added that the CRA's contribution to the lighting would bring the streetscapes to a higher standard. Mr. Battle confirmed this, noting that the overall percentage of all improvements the CRA is being asked to pay is 69%.

Mr. English commented that the top two items from the City's recently completed visioning process were increased street lighting and increased walkability

throughout the City. Ms. Lecour added that improved lighting can serve as a deterrent to crime and will illuminate a walking trail that abuts Carter Park.

Motion made by Mr. Lambrix, seconded by Ms. Burrows, to support the request. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed 9-1. (Mr. Strawbridge abstained. A memorandum of voting conflict is attached to these minutes.)

IV. Pearl Flagler Village LLC – CRA Streetscape Funding Request

Nectaria Chakas of Lochrie & Chakas recalled that this project had come before the Board in June 2012 for a recommendation in favor of the site plan, which has since been approved by the City Commission. A building permit was issued in March 2013 and the project is currently under construction.

Today's request is for a 50% contribution toward streetscape improvements. Ms. Chakas noted that exact figures were included in the members' backup materials. The improvements would include lighting, landscaping, and other infrastructure elements.

She showed a rendering of the landscape plan, stating that the project will have 331 units. It will be seven stories in height, which is a mid-rise project, and is located near other projects currently under construction. The total cost of the streetscape improvements is \$903,415, of which the developer is requesting \$451,707.50 from the CRA, or 50% of the total.

Ms. Chakas described the landscaping and wide sidewalks planned for the area, which will be consistent with the nearby Henry Square development. Infrastructure improvements such as parallel parking on 5th Avenue will also be added. All improvements are consistent with the Downtown Master Plan and are expected to be of great benefit to the area.

Mr. Wilkes asked why NE 5th Terrace remained a public right-of-way rather than being considered an abandoned property. Ms. Chakas replied that this parcel was abandoned several years ago; while the original site plan had included a building that extended into the right-of-way, City Staff had requested that this part of the project not proceed. The developer was asked to instead reconstruct a road that would connect to the internal driveway of the Henry Square property, and had dedicated a perpetual easement for pedestrian and vehicular access along the road. She clarified the areas that were public and private property.

Motion made by Mr. Lambrix, seconded by Ms. Adderley, to support [the project]. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

V. NW Zoning Amendments

Mr. Battle stated that a presentation on the proposed amendments was made to various community groups, as well as the Planning and Zoning Board. The Northwest Regional Activity Center (RAC) Mixed-Use Zoning District Plan includes all past planning efforts, community meetings, and redevelopment plan goals.

He explained that Regional Activity Centers are a land use designation for development purposes, and include several different zoning types within the area. Compliance with some of the requirements within this area can be difficult, and variances and zoning changes have been necessary in order for development to occur. The RAC would allow movement on many of the suggestions that would make it easier to support development and achieve the overall plan for the CRA.

He continued that a great deal of the work arose from the recent moratorium on convenience and liquor stores in the area: when this moratorium was passed, both the Planning and Zoning Board and the City Commission had asked for solutions to address this issue, as well as more comprehensive rezoning opportunities within the area. These solutions have been presented to the Midtown Business Association and Commissioner Dubose's District meeting, as well as at meetings with individual property owners in the area.

Mr. Battle advised that the proposed new zoning district is only "phase one" toward more comprehensive zoning changes in the area. He noted that there are at least four different zoning categories along Sistrunk Boulevard. The challenge is to create a permanent zoning district that will allow all the permanent uses desired within the CRA, while restricting those uses that are not wanted, such as convenience and liquor stores and other noxious uses associated with B2 and B3 zoning.

In addition, projects are currently asked to meet relatively arcane setback requirements as opposed to a "build-to" line with sidewalk frontage. The intent is for all setbacks to be the same, with a build-to line set back from a maximum sidewalk width. This would provide a more uniform and consistent appearance along the corridor, regardless of the use inside each building.

Mr. Battle noted that one area of concern among property owners is height. For this reason, the amendments would lower height by 50 ft. in more intense areas, such as the area surrounding 7th Avenue and Sistrunk Boulevard. The maximum height allowed would be eight stories or 100 ft. Discussions on this issue are ongoing, as some property owners would prefer to be allowed greater height.

While some concerns were raised with regard to reducing the overall parking requirements, it has been determined that this would be a good approach as well. The Northwest RAC would follow what has been done in other areas, such as South Andrews Avenue, where parking requirements were eliminated for any commercial retail space of 2500 sq. ft. or less; larger spaces would receive a 40% parking reduction. On-street parking would be allowed, and the City owns some properties along the street for which surface parking is programmed. The goal is for parking to be the result of agreements and shared space between property owners.

He continued that other proposals include eliminating the requirement for neighborhood compatibility, which would prevent many projects from having to go before the Planning and Zoning Board for approval. A demarcation line would exist to the east of 9th Avenue between larger development patterns and smaller neighborhood-based development patterns.

Mr. Battle stated that another part of the presentation was to show the impact of liquor and convenience stores on crime within the Northwest CRA as compared to the rest of the City. He called the members' attention to a map showing this distribution, showing the number of crime calls for these businesses as plotted on a map. Crime reports for the past several years show that of the top 50 addresses for which calls were made, roughly 20% were liquor and convenience stores. There are approximately 10 such stores along a 1.5 mile stretch of Sistrunk Boulevard. While he clarified that not all of these stores have a negative impact on the community, more than half of them do have this negative effect. He advised that they hope to encourage those stores that do not contribute to a negative environment to remain in the area.

One aspect of discussion with both the community and the Planning and Zoning Board was the issue of eliminating the use of liquor and convenience stores within the Northwest, as this was perceived as "putting people out of business." The CRA's response was that the area plans to encourage those businesses that were willing to stay and participate in the goals of the plan, which requires incentives and programs aimed specifically at this purpose. Another issue was that members of the Planning and Zoning Board and the community did not perceive the statistics regarding crime in proximity to these stores as any worse than in any other part of the City. Mr. Battle noted that the Sistrunk Corridor's crime statistics are, in many cases, double what is seen elsewhere in the City.

He continued that if these uses were restricted and no additional liquor or convenience stores were allowed to open, the existing uses would still be allowed to stay and could contribute to the problem. This could mean there would be no meaningful change to the area while these businesses remained. Mr. Battle concluded that the Planning and Zoning Board had deferred this Item until

they had more information about the possibility of completely eliminating this use. The best solution to this problem is still under discussion, and could be the amortization of these uses over a five- to seven-year period, developing a special permit for the uses, and other potential scenarios.

The proposed zoning districts have not yet been presented to the Planning and Zoning Board for adoption, as more community meetings are planned at a later date to discuss height restrictions and parking requirements.

Ms. Burrows asked if it would be possible to restrict the hours of operation of liquor and convenience stores, possibly based on the hours at which police calls were made. Mr. Battle said this was discussed as a prospective solution. Mr. Centamore commented that it may not be possible to reduce the hours of operation for these businesses in certain neighborhoods while allowing unrestricted hours in other parts of the City. Ms. Adderley asserted that these stores needed to be closed, as the activities within the Northwest area were not necessarily the same as activities elsewhere in Fort Lauderdale. She characterized the issue as one of nuisance abatement.

Chair Lucas asked to know the consensus of the various public outreach meetings to discuss the proposed amendments. Mr. Battle said the community felt liquor and convenience stores should be closed within the area, while only a small minority focused on the issue of parking requirements. The height issue has generated the most discussion by the public, as some owners to the east of 9th Avenue did not want to be limited.

Chair Lucas commented that there are many large vacant tracts of land to the east of 7th Avenue, which present the opportunity for multi-family development. He noted that some developers may wish to build large projects in these locations with the assistance of tax credit funding. Mr. Battle pointed out that none of the new high-rise projects built with tax credits are larger than 99 units. He observed that while there is the opportunity for compromise on this particular issue, the answer has not yet been determined.

Mr. Strawbridge remarked that structured parking for multi-family developments uses up a great deal of the tax credits available. Mr. Wilkes noted that some projects located within the urban district are seven to eight stories. He agreed that height should be limited, as there were no plans for buildings of 150 ft. on Sistrunk Boulevard, nor were these plans expected.

Mr. Wilkes asked if the City Commission has considered the effect of implementing rezoning and/or restrictions on property owners who may argue that they have lost the right to use their property. Mr. Battle said this question had been raised during past discussions. He noted that the last community-driven

plan, which was last updated in 2008, only supported a range of eight to twelve stories, which anticipates taller buildings, particularly at major intersections. He agreed that if a limit is established, prospective developers will be able to work within these parameters. He concluded that it was not likely that the CRA would support greater height than a 100 ft. maximum.

Mr. Wilkes advised that if development occurs along primary streets, some rezoning on adjacent properties will also be necessary, as the depth of these properties does not support the anticipated development. He recommended ensuring that drivers would not cut through secondary neighborhoods in order to access additional parking. Mr. Battle said as improvements are made and more traffic is anticipated, entry into neighborhoods has been restricted and slower speeds have been enforced. He agreed that there may be unintended consequences to development that would require greater consideration.

Mr. Ernest-Jones asked if parking mitigation fees were being considered. Mr. Battle said this had not been addressed at other meetings, as it is a relatively complicated topic. He pointed out that there is a large but underused parking inventory along the streets, and the City owns properties along the streets that could be developed into public parking areas.

Chair Lucas asked what the next steps would be regarding the proposed Northwest zoning amendments. Mr. Battle replied that they will go back to the Planning and Zoning Board in May to address the issue of liquor and convenience stores; more public meetings will be held to discuss the zoning districts, which are estimated to go to the Planning and Zoning Board by August.

VI. Director's Report

Mr. Battle announced that the Better Meetings Academy will meet on April 25 at 10 a.m. He encouraged the Board members to attend this meeting, even if they have previously attended, as there are occasional changes and new information.

He added that next month's CRA meeting would be held on May 7 rather than May 21. Efforts will be made to include the two projects that presented at today's meeting on this agenda.

VII. Communication to CRA Board

Chair Lucas recalled that the Board had requested the appointment of new members to fill the two existing vacancies. Mr. Battle said applications have been submitted to fill these vacancies, but appointments have not yet been made. He noted that former Board member Samuel Williams' term had recently concluded,

and Commissioner Dubose is seeking an appointee to fill this position. It was decided that the Board would not send a second communication on this issue.

VIII. Old / New Business

Mr. Wilkes recalled that the Board had recommended approval of four projects to receive a governmental contribution toward affordable housing; however, the City had not approved any of these projects to receive funding. Mr. Battle confirmed that thus far, none of these projects have been selected for this contribution, although he pointed out that they may reapply when the new cycle opens.

Mr. Strawbridge stated that there is no such cycle or funding at present, as there are multiple lawsuits and challenges related to this issue. He noted that there appeared to be some misunderstanding regarding these requests, as projects had needed local support to be able to apply for funding. He added that it was typical for multiple projects to request this recommendation at the same time, and even less likely that more than one of the projects would be funded.

Mr. Strawbridge continued that the Housing Authority typically applies to Broward County for this funding rather than to Fort Lauderdale. He explained that receiving a local recommendation simply allows the projects to become competitive: without this support, they may not even apply for funds. He reiterated that it had always been unlikely for more than one of these projects to receive funding. He asserted that as long as there is a need for affordable housing within the City, these efforts should be supported.

Mr. Battle advised that the developers in question may reapply without City support, and are likely to do so, as they have ownership interests in the properties. He observed, however, that in the past the City and County may have received a relatively large share of these funding awards, which could result in the State seeking to allocate these funds elsewhere.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

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