

APPROVED
MINUTES
NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
JUNE 26, 2013 – 3:30 P.M.

Cumulative Attendance

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	May 2013 - April 2014	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Steve Lucas, Chair	P	2	0
Ella Phillips, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Jessie Adderley	P	2	0
Sonya Burrows	P	2	0
Ron Centamore	P	2	0
Nate Ernest-Jones	P	2	0
Alan Gabriel	A	1	1
Mickey Hinton	A	1	1
Brice Lambrix	A	1	1
Sam Monroe	A	0	2
Julia Parker	P	2	0
Richard D. Powers	P	2	0
Yvonne Sanandres	A	1	1
Scott Strawbridge	P	2	0
John Wilkes (arr. 3:38)	P	2	0

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, 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 3:37 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes from May 22, 2013 Regular Board Meeting

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

The following Item was taken out of order on the Agenda.

Action Items

IV. Flagler Village Improvement Association – Funding Request

Chair Lucas introduced Alan Hooper and Jim Ellis of the Flagler Village Improvement Association. Mr. Hooper explained that this organization works closely with the Flagler Village Civic Association, as the two groups share many of the same objectives.

Mr. Hooper showed a PowerPoint presentation to the Board, stating that the Flagler Village Improvement Association began in approximately 1999-2000 to generate interest in the Flagler Village area. They have worked in partnership with the CRA to brand and market this neighborhood. The Association is comprised primarily of local developers, business owners and entities, and churches and not-for-profit organizations. Other stakeholders include the residents and property owners in Flagler Village.

Mr. Hooper stated that the Association's goal was to bring about redevelopment in the Downtown area. They are actively engaged in public health and safety efforts, such as crime prevention, streetscapes and sidewalks, road conditions, and community beautification, and hope to include promotion of community events as well. The City has a vision to transform Flagler Heights into an "art-inspired, tech-savvy" neighborhood, which led to the renaming of the area as the Flagler Arts and Technology (FAT) Village.

Mr. Hooper continued that several projects have been approved for this community and are currently awaiting financing and/or additional activity. He pointed out that The Wave streetcar and the FEC initiative All Aboard Florida, the latter of which will introduce high-speed rail service extending from Miami to Orlando in under three hours. Mr. Ellis noted that little official approval is necessary to this project, as FEC already owns the tracks it will use.

Mr. Ellis advised that Tri-Rail also plans up to 40 stations to serve local commuters between Miami and Palm Beach. This project will use the existing Fort Lauderdale station located to the north of the bus terminal. Together, these projects will create a transportation hub within the Flagler Village area.

Mr. Hooper pointed out that there are presently opportunities for Fort Lauderdale to distinguish itself from other south Florida cities due to this increased ability to both travel between major metropolitan areas and increase the vibrancy of the Downtown and the CRA. This will promote greater development activity. Since 2005, 2143 units have been constructed within the Flagler Village area, with 784 additional units approved. The current vacancy rate among these units is 5%.

He emphasized the importance of safety and crime prevention, and added that the Improvement Association hopes to establish a Police substation whose operations will be funded by this Association. A security program involving off-duty Fort Lauderdale Police Officers, similar to what is done in other communities, is also planned in order to reduce crime. The substation will provide a base for these security operations, which will allow the Officers to work closely and actively with the community to address crime.

Mr. Hooper added that another important aspect of crime prevention is improved street lighting, which is a priority of both the Civic and Improvement Associations. The organization is also working with two grants, the Business Capital Improvement Program (BCIP) and Neighborhood Capital Improvement Program (NCIP), to place new signage, including monument signs, throughout the neighborhood. Mr. Ellis showed a map of where new signage is potentially planned, including some signs that will be purchased separately by the City.

Mr. Hooper stated that streetscape improvements are planned for Andrews Avenue and 3rd Avenue, as well as some side streets. He pointed out that no such improvements have been made to Andrews Avenue in 67 years, resulting in an environment that does not feel safe to pedestrians. The Improvement Association hopes to work with partners in the area to provide streetscape and connectivity improvements.

When the Improvement Association first began, they retained marketing and graphics firms to work toward these promotion initiatives. The Association's intent was to begin a campaign to promote Flagler Village as an emerging neighborhood, featuring efforts such as the art initiatives in FAT Village, events in Peter Feldman Park, street events, and other opportunities.

Mr. Hooper showed a slide including the transit hub and other projects that either have been built or may come to the Flagler Village area. These show the importance of the many public parcels within this neighborhood. He stated that the Improvement Association hopes to promote economic development opportunities, which is also part of the CRA's mission. They hope to expand the existing tax base within the community, improve the quality of life of neighborhood residents, and build a neighborhood that encourages retail and

attracts tourists. These efforts will speed economic development along the Wave route and other key transit hubs.

Matt Pici, President of the Flagler Village Civic Association, confirmed that the Civic and Improvement Associations are working closely and have similar goals. The Civic Association has reviewed and approved the Improvement Association's plan. Dave Shalkop, Vice President of the Flagler Village Civic Association, stated his support as well.

Mr. Battle advised that Staff has met with Mr. Hooper and Mr. Ellis to discuss a funding request for \$409,500. Staff recommends that the Board provide \$314,250 in CRA funds, of which \$19,750 would go toward the funding of a Police substation. Mr. Battle recalled that the Board had previously approved funds for the creation and rental expenses of a Police substation on Sistrunk Boulevard, which established a precedent for spending funds on Police-related activities.

He continued that there had been discussion at the May Board meeting with regard to amending the CRA Plan in order to be able to use CRA funds for community policing activities and other public safety initiatives, including wireless surveillance cameras and public WiFi capability.

Mr. Battle stated that Staff is also comfortable in using CRA funds to match the Improvement Association's BCIP and NCIP line item requests, and has been working with the City's Neighborhood Support Division to identify these matching funds within the CRA. Staff recommends providing \$107,000 in order to fund the signage project as quickly as possible, as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are no longer available for BCIP and NCIP programs throughout the City or within the CRA.

Mr. Battle stated that the request for land planning for Andrews Avenue and 3rd Avenue is \$50,000, which Staff recommends from the CRA's professional services budget. He advised, however, that the CRA should have additional discussions to determine the scope of these services, as there may be opportunities to use existing City contracts with planners and engineers.

He continued that \$97,000 has been requested from the CRA's marketing budget, which was increased by \$60,000 the previous year in recognition of the desire of outside organizations to have the CRA participate more fully in the marketing of events. Similarly, \$60,000 is requested from the CRA's event marketing budget. Mr. Battle recalled that the CRA has helped to sponsor recent events, such as Light Up Sistrunk and Midtown Summerfest; they have also worked with the DDA on events in the Flagler Village area. Because there was some concern regarding the size of this request, Staff has recommended that

funding be provided in the amount of \$40,000, which they feel will provide the same level of quality in marketing events.

The total recommended expenditure of CRA funds would be \$314,500. The CRA will increase its operating budget by \$206,000 in order to cover these funds.

Mr. Wilkes asked if the request is for funds to be provided to the Flagler Village Improvement Association, or if it is for the CRA to increase its budget and fund these efforts directly. Mr. Battle replied that the Association is asking for CRA funds to be put aside to cover their expenses in these areas. He noted that the CRA has not yet determined exactly how this would occur, as there are some purchasing issues relative to providing a contribution for these services.

Mr. Battle added that he was comfortable with increasing the CRA's budget in order to have these funds available so they would not have to be approved on an item-by-item basis, although more details will be necessary on how to pay these expenses. He offered the example of an expense that may be supplied in partnership with the DDA: the CRA may contract directly with this entity in order to make this contribution without having to go through the competitive bidding process, which would be necessary if the Association wished to use a contractor whose service costs are above a certain threshold.

Mr. Wilkes requested clarification of the CRA's budget. Mr. Battle said it is approximately \$1.8 million; this budget would be increased by \$200,000 in operating funds and \$107,000 for capital expenses. He advised that next year's tax increment financing (TIF) revenue was estimated to be \$5,242,800. In addition, the CRA will retire all its debt by September 2013, which leaves more funds available for projects. The budget increase lies within this revenue projection, based upon the revenues estimated as of June 2013.

Mr. Wilkes commented that the budget increase would be dedicated to only a portion of the CRA. Mr. Battle confirmed this, adding that the funds would continue to be monitored by Staff. Mr. Wilkes explained that his concern was for the possibility of duplicate services, and requested clarification of the process to be used in disbursing these funds. Mr. Battle explained that the CRA's marketing and event budget was increased the previous year for City-related expenses, as there had been a trend toward more community events.

Mr. Wilkes stated that some of the items discussed should be covered by revenue sources found elsewhere in the City, such as Police or planning services; the funds would be used to purchase extra services for the CRA. He also pointed out that the Improvement Association is a business entity, and asked if they have access to any other revenue sources so the CRA would not act as their primary funding source. He pointed out that a civic association within

the CRA may come forward with a funding request. Mr. Battle said this would have to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Ellis replied that the Improvement Association's Board has reviewed Staff's funding recommendation and given its unanimous approval to them. He added that the Improvement Association already has funds, although they have not reached out to all potential members to request funds thus far. Most of these potential partners are private developers.

Regarding the funding of public safety and Police expenses, Mr. Ellis continued that the Improvement Association already has the funds to provide these services, and has committed them for this purpose.

Mr. Hooper continued that the Association also plans to "match the gap" if there is a funding shortfall, and has committed funds in the past toward streetscape and planning efforts as well. At present they have \$50,000 in the Association's account, and plan to match another \$70,000; in future years, they expect to match funds at an even higher rate. He explained that they are seeking large commitments from major partners in order to get started with their planned improvements before reaching out to smaller businesses. They meet regularly with the Civic Association and have provided them with resources as well.

Mr. Wilkes asked if the Improvement Association has developed an overall budget, of which their funding request to the CRA would be seen as a percentage. Mr. Hooper said a budget showing this percentage could be incorporated into a presentation.

Motion made by Mr. Centamore, seconded by Ms. Adderley, that the Board funds what Staff recommends, the \$314,250, to the Flagler Village Improvement Association. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. Ernest-Jones requested clarification that a significant portion of the CRA's budget was not yet designated for specific uses. Mr. Battle clarified that the \$4 million gap has not been allocated to any projects thus far. He added that for fiscal 2013-14, the Board would save a significant amount of money that did not have to be paid in debt service, and would also have access to a reserve account of roughly \$2.7 million.

He advised that during the budget process, Staff would present several items that the CRA planned to invest in over the next five or more years; once these items are presented, there will be a pool of funds remaining, about which the Board will be asked to provide advice on its expenditure.

III. Fort Lauderdale TMA Sun Trolley – Funding Request

Diana Alarcon and Kevin Walford of the Fort Lauderdale Transportation Management Association (TMA) showed the Board a PowerPoint presentation related to their funding request. Mr. Walford recalled that the TMA had appeared before the Board at its May meeting to request operating funds for its Neighborhood Link route, for which the Board had approved roughly \$20,000. Today's request is for the Northwest Link, which has been funded in the past by the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA). This funding, however, was part of a two-year pilot program and will be cut by 50% after September 2013. The TMA would like to request the CRA's support for this route.

Mr. Walford advised that the Northwest Link route covers a total mileage of 13.17 miles, of which 6.15 miles, or 46.6%, lie within the CRA. Total costs for this route are estimated at \$300,000; he noted that the correlating percentage of costs would be \$140,000, which is being requested of the CRA. Mr. Walford provided the members with a point-by-point mileage breakdown of the major locations on the route, many of which lie within the CRA. SFRTA's future funding for this route is expected to be \$160,680.

He also provided ridership figures for the route, noting that this figure has increased each year since fiscal year 2011. For the eight months of the current fiscal year, 75,000 riders have traveled this route. Mr. Walford provided a route schedule and map as well, noting the area of the Northwest Link that operates within the CRA boundary, as well as other bus routes operated by Broward County Transit (BCT) and Sun Trolley. He noted that routes will be renamed the East and West Community Links in the future for greater clarity.

Mr. Wilkes requested clarification of the TMA's relationship with BCT. Mr. Walford replied that the service he was describing is part of BCT's community bus system. Mr. Wilkes asked to know the TMA's long-term plan for funding, pointing out that the CRA only exists for a finite time period. Ms. Alarcon said the TMA is working on a program that will be tied to several different routes by allowing business entities and workforces to partner with them by providing funding. This will ensure that the TMA is not dependent upon local government funding or grand funding, but will be in partnership with the businesses to which the buses help bring visitors.

She noted that an example of this would be addressing the route currently known as the "Courthouse Loop" and marketing it instead as a "Downtown Loop" in order to provide service to Broward General Hospital. The Hospital also wishes to move users from the BCT terminal closer to the hospital. These efforts will help create and sustain a thriving community bus program.

Mr. Wilkes remarked that the result could be the development of transportation system that is used not only by those who need it but those who desire to use it as a preferred alternative to driving. Ms. Alarcon said while this could not be predicted, the way the City manages transportation is likely to change as well. She asserted that the current goal was to ensure that the existing Northwest and Neighborhood Links remain sustainable, and identifying funding sources that will help them continue to operate.

Chair Lucas asked what would happen to the 50% of the Northwest Route's funding that did not come from Tri-Rail. Ms. Alarcon said the route will continue to operate at 50% of previous SFRTA funding for two more years, after which time this federal funding will expire. She noted that the Northwest and Neighborhood Links are particularly important to residents within the CRA.

Ms. Burrows requested information on how the community buses worked in conjunction with other modes of transportation, such as City buses. Ms. Alarcon said the two routes had been reviewed in order to identify important locations in terms of ridership. When these two routes were designed, it was with the current ridership in mind, based upon where riders boarded and exited the buses. Depending upon their destinations, it may be necessary for some riders to use two separate services.

Ms. Burrows asked if the Save-a-Lot grocery store was open at the time the ridership was studied. Ms. Alarcon said the store was not open during the study, so ridership numbers did not include this destination. She advised that the routes will continue to be studied to determine whether or not changes are necessary, based on new information. She pointed out that the current ridership figures continue to support the existing routes.

Mr. Walford added that the two routes both carry more than 20 passengers per hour, which are the two highest ridership rates in the community bus system. The routes are offered at no charge, which is the reason a funding request is necessary.

Chair Lucas stated that Staff's recommendation is to fund the TMA's request at \$140,000 for fiscal 2013-14. Mr. Battle recalled that the recent \$20,000 funding provided to the TMA for the Northwest route was also calculated using the percentage of the CRA in which the route operated.

Motion made by Mr. Wilkes, seconded by Ms. Burrows, that the Board approve the Staff recommendation and fund the monies that have been requested. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Discussion Items

V. Director's Report

Mr. Battle advised that there was typically no Board meeting during the month of July, and asked for the Board's direction regarding whether or not to follow this precedent. The Board's next regularly scheduled meeting would occur in August, at which time the CRA budget would be presented in greater detail. The City's budget, which includes the CRA budget, will be presented at the City Commission meeting on July 9, and a budget workshop will be held by the City's Budget Advisory Board on August 26.

Motion made by Mr. Centamore, seconded by Ms. Adderley, to not meet in July. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. Battle continued that in late May, the CRA received a letter from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, stating that a project called Village Place is within the necessary range to receive an allocation of low-income housing tax credits. It is not yet known if the project will take advantage of these credits. He explained that even though neither the City nor the County provided the project with a local government contribution, it can still apply for the tax credits, although he noted that the City would have the right to deny these credits when the project comes up for site plan approval.

He advised that while the State has delayed allocating the most recent round of low-income housing tax credits, they are now preparing to reopen this process. A workshop will be held on July 9 to solicit comments on how the 2014 process of awarding tax credits will be conducted. Mr. Battle said the State is expected to be somewhat restrictive in how notice is provided for the 2014 application cycle. It is expected that this cycle will be divided into three geographic groups for small, medium, and large counties, and applicants will be able to apply at three separate times depending upon the appropriate geographic designation. The small, medium, and large county cycles will be discussed at the July 9 workshop.

Chair Lucas asked if the City would be allowed to deny permits to a project that fits within its Master Plan. Mr. Battle said the City Commission had made no funding commitments to any of the developments the CRA had recommended for local government contributions.

Mr. Wilkes suggested that the Board request a presentation meeting by City Staff on the projects they may be asked to approve in the near future, as well as what they may need to consider as a basis for approval or denial of a funding request. Mr. Battle said one result of the discussion that ensued when all recommended projects were pulled by the City Commission was an affordable housing study, which has not yet been completed. He added that the County, not the City, is

typically the source of funds for local government contributions. He concluded that he would prefer the Board not participate in this process at all; if necessary, they should participate as part of an open process that advertises the availability of funds. He pointed out that if one project is accepted for a local government contribution, it is likely that this would be the only project that would receive any such funding.

Mr. Centamore requested more information on what had followed when the City Commission had declined to recommend a local government contribution for any of the recommended projects. Mr. Battle said an RFP had been issued to hire an affordable housing consultant; however, although a company had been selected, the City Commission had recently rejected all the bids from this process due to a difference of opinion among Commissioners regarding the scope of the study. This item is expected to be placed on the Commission's August Agenda to discuss a way to help the City Commission develop a policy on this topic.

Mr. Battle continued that the contract for a prospective affordable housing site on Andrews Avenue has recently expired. It is not known what will become of this site, which is owned by the County. The proposed developer had applied for three consecutive years for low-income housing tax credits, but had never received them.

He concluded that a public hearing will be held to discuss the amendments to the CRA Plan, which had been discussed earlier in the meeting. The amendments are expected to be formally accepted by the City Commission in August. Mr. Battle said these amendments add the ability to spend money in three areas not specifically identified in the current CRA Plan: community policing, public WiFi, and surveillance cameras.

He explained that many modern surveillance cameras emit a WiFi signal, which would allow for a broad enough signal to provide public access. The Housing Authority currently has a system of this type installed on and around its properties so its residents can access it. The proposed installation of these cameras with WiFi capability would be along Sistrunk Boulevard, 3rd Avenue, and Andrews Avenue.

VI. Communication to CRA Board

None.

VII. Old / New Business

Mr. Wilkes requested an update on the possibility of constructing a Wal-Mart on a site on Broward Boulevard rather than on Andrews Avenue. Mr. Battle said this

developer had always had two potential sites for two different types of Wal-Mart stores in mind: a neighborhood grocery store had been proposed for Andrews Avenue, while a Wal-Mart SuperCenter and shopping mall has been proposed for the Broward Boulevard site. He stated that the developer has purchased this latter site, although no such purchase has been made thus far on Andrews Avenue.

Mr. Wilkes asked how the promotion of vacant retail space at the Save-a-Lot shopping center was proceeding. Mr. Battle said Save-a-Lot, Bank of America, and Family Dollar represent 87% occupancy for the landlord of this site, which means the viability of the shopping center is not in distress. He noted that while a number of potential options for this site have been identified, no announcements have been made thus far.

He continued that CRA Staff recently attended the International Convention of Shopping Centers in Las Vegas, and will send Staff to the Florida event planned for Orlando as well. Staff is working on some leads and concepts for the shopping center, some of which are similar in nature to Panera Bread. Some local retailers are also interested in coming to Fort Lauderdale.

Mr. Wilkes asked if the proposed tenant improvement program has had any influence in terms of attracting prospective tenants. Mr. Battle recalled that this program was not approved by the City Commission, although a revised version is being prepared for presentation in August.

Mr. Wilkes asked if it would be helpful for the Board members to attend the meetings at which this and other initiatives are presented in an attempt to persuade the City Commission to consider them further. Mr. Battle said this is always helpful, and the Commission values the Board's input. He noted that in some cases, such as the affordable housing tax credit discussion, it can be more difficult to convince the Commission of the value of the Board's recommendations than when programs are proposed. This is one reason the Board may consider using other objective criteria when determining which projects to support in the future.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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