

APPROVED
MINUTES
NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
SEPTEMBER 25, 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	4	0
Ella Phillips, Vice Chair	A	3	1
Jessie Adderley	P	3	1
Sonya Burrows	P	4	0
Ron Centamore	P	4	0
Nate Ernest-Jones	P	3	1
Alan Gabriel	P	3	1
Mickey Hinton	A	1	3
Brice Lambrix	A	1	3
Sam Monroe	A	1	3
Julia Parker	A	2	2
Yvonne Sanandres	P	3	1
Scott Strawbridge	P	4	0
John Wilkes	A	3	1

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

Communications to City Commission

None.

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 3:39 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes from August 28, 2013

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

Chair Lucas advised that Board member Richard Powers has resigned, as he is relocating to another state. This will create one vacancy on the Board, which will be filled by City Commissioner Bruce Roberts. It was noted that when a new member is appointed to replace a former member, that new member serves the remaining balance of the former member's term.

Presentation

III. 5-Year Northwest Progresso-Flagler Heights Community Redevelopment Program

Mr. Battle explained that he would provide an overview of the 5-Year Community Redevelopment Program document, which was a collaborative effort between himself, the City Manager, and other senior City management. He expected the City Commission to schedule a workshop with the Board members in the near future to discuss the document further. All expenses listed in the document are consistent with the existing redevelopment plan, and will not require any action by the Board.

He continued that the 5-Year Program is intended to prioritize the CRA's spending efforts over the next five years. It is likely the plan will be amended each year, as new priorities arise and are addressed and existing goals are met.

A map of the CRA district was provided for the Board members, as well as documentation showing that the Northwest CRA is consistent with other City plans. Mr. Battle advised that Staff monitors aspects of CRA business such as the commercial agency rate, taxable value, and TIF generation percentage, as well as the number of housing units and business licenses within the CRA and how they will affect the district's bottom line.

The City is preparing to undertake an Economic Development Plan that identifies six strategic areas of emphasis: the Northwest CRA, Beach CRA, Middle River CRA, Galt Ocean Mile, 17th Street Corridor, and Cypress Creek. Senior City Staff discusses these areas to determine how plans should be implemented and to create a better understanding of the resources available in each area. They also discuss financial issues, including existing bond obligations; infrastructure projects, which are addressed through the public works process; and neighborhood improvements that are managed on behalf of the City.

Mr. Battle explained that unencumbered TIF project balances typically occur when there are funds left over after specific projects are completed. They can also refer to holding accounts for incentive programs, such as the façade program and Midtown reinvestment program, which spend funds on an application-by-application basis. Due to the current economy, the number of applicants to these programs has decreased in recent years, as it is difficult for many businesses to meet eligibility requirements.

He reviewed other line items within the Program, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) line of credit is the final \$300,000 available to spend on projects within the CRA. The Sistrunk project change order/release of encumbrance shows funds remaining after a positive change order, as well as funds left over from the Sistrunk Boulevard project. Finally, the projected revenue from 2014-2018 is \$17 million, based upon a 3% increase in revenue seen in the current fiscal year. The City's overall increase in taxable value in 2013 was 4.5%.

Mr. Battle moved on to a list of specific projects included in the 5-Year Program, noting that the document was in development at the same time some of these projects were being presented to the CRA. These include streetscape grants, which were approved by the Board in July 2013 and by the CRA Board in August, and Northwest Gardens II, III, and IV, approved by the Board in July and expected to come before the CRA Board in October.

Mr. Battle continued that other anticipated projects include the Shoppes on Arts Avenue, which includes a residential building as phase 2; however, a Florida Power & Light (FPL) transmission line bisects this portion of the property, and must be either buried or relocated if the planned building is two or more stories. He noted that if the site in question is not developed, it reverts to ownership by the CRA, which would also be restricted regarding the size of any planned building unless the line is relocated. The Shoppes on Arts Avenue is applying for low-income tax credits and would request assistance from the CRA for the project if these credits are awarded to them.

The Flagler Arts and Technology (FAT) Village project is working with the CRA to create the atmosphere of an arts district, including a streetscape package that is expected to cost \$500,000-\$600,000. This would cover the cost of light poles for all streets within the area. One issue in this area is identifiable parking, which would need to be made more visible. The pedestrian experience in this area would also need to be enhanced, particularly for night and weekend events.

Chair Lucas noted that CRA Staff has proposed a name change for this project from FAT Village to FAT Avenue, and advised that residents of the area have approved a name change in honor of historic resident Mary Brickell, although this change has not become effective. Mr. Battle replied that the residents' request

applied only to a specific portion of the area, while the remainder would be called FAT Avenue.

Wireless surveillance cameras are expected to be installed on portions of Sistrunk Boulevard, Andrews Avenue, 7th Avenue, and 3rd Avenue; there has also been discussion of their installation in parks. This project is estimated to cost roughly \$300,000 to \$400,000, with annual maintenance costs projected at \$50,000 to \$60,000. The budget for these installations is not to exceed \$700,000. Mr. Battle advised that the CRA Plan was recently amended by the City, and accepted by Broward County, in order to include this project.

He continued that the Carter Park Senior Center has been discussed by the City Manager, the District Commissioner, and members of the surrounding neighborhood. The City recently exchanged property with the Housing Authority, which resulted in the acquisition of a parcel on the southern edge of Carter Park. This parcel could both house the proposed Senior Center and serve to expand the park itself to provide a place for seniors' activities.

Mr. Battle advised that the Mizell Center is being considered as a small business resource center, as its facilities allow meetings and seminars to be hosted on the premises. Broward College has been active in creating business incubators throughout the County, and has approached the CRA as a potential partner. He noted that most of this 27,000 sq. ft. building is vacant for the majority of the year, and it is located on Sistrunk Boulevard in the heart of the business district.

Technical assistance could be provided at this location to small businesses that cannot yet afford to lease space, while additional services could be provided to other businesses. This would also attract attention and interest to Sistrunk Boulevard as a potential location for new and growing business. Mr. Battle concluded that infrastructure improvements are currently being made to this building, and must be resolved before further plans can be made for its use.

Other infrastructure-related projects included in the 5-Year Plan are the NW 9th Avenue, Northwest neighborhood, and Progresso Village enhancement projects, all of which have received funding through the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) former transportation enhancement program. The CRA has committed matching funds to these projects, and improvements will be implemented over the next three years.

Mr. Battle referred the members to the Sistrunk Development Initiative, which he described as the CRA's second attempt to establish a specific set of incentive programs for the Sistrunk Corridor. He pointed out that in addition to current and visible programs, such as the façade and streetscape programs, other initiatives within the CRA require applicants to meet certain thresholds related to both

spending and ability to complete the project, which can be difficult for small business owners to achieve. The new Sistrunk Development Initiative is intended to help these CRA programs become more user-friendly for business and property owners.

He explained that the Initiative will retain the façade renovation program, increasing the dollar amount available to applicants; it will also keep the streetscape grant program intact, but will limit its funding to \$1.5 million. This figure is based on both current funding and the anticipated needs of future projects. The tax increment projection rebate program is intended to be available to large, non-luxury housing projects that seek incentives to help close gaps in their financing; the CRA would provide these projects with a payment against the tax increment funding they are expected to generate over a given time frame. This program is funded up to \$500,000.

The final incentive program in the Sistrunk Development Initiative would be funded up to \$4.5 million, and is similar to the business incentive program presented to the City Commission earlier in 2013. It would fund projects along the Sistrunk Corridor up to \$200,000. Projects located elsewhere in the CRA would be eligible to receive a maximum amount of \$100,000. This program also identifies specific uses that are preferred or recommended within the CRA. It features a detailed scoring system to assign points to applicants; if the business does not score a minimum passing grade, it will receive no funding.

Chair Lucas remarked that the final program's description should be clearer with regard to which items fall into this category: for example, he did not feel installation of a security system would result in increased TIF revenue. Mr. Battle replied that the program is intended to assist businesses either investing in significant renovation or building a project from the ground up. There will be a minimum cost threshold as well as the \$100,000 or \$200,000 maximum.

Chair Lucas asked if Staff will solicit applications within a certain time frame, after which time the Board will be asked to grade them. Mr. Battle confirmed this, explaining that the Board would review applications approximately once per quarter. He also pointed out that the program would use a pro-rated scale to determine the percentage or amount of requested funding to provide, assuming that the application receives a passing grade.

It was asked if applications would also be ranked to determine the amount of funding to award them. Mr. Battle said because limited funds would be available for the program, the Board will attempt to allocate some funds to every applicant that receives a passing grade. He advised that the idea of ranking applications would need to be considered further, noting that this system was used by City selection committees when reviewing requests for proposal (RFPs). It is also

possible that a majority of applicants might fail to achieve the minimum passing score.

Ms. Burrows noted that the program could serve as an alternative for existing businesses that might not be able to approach a more traditional lending institution. Mr. Battle advised that the criteria will include consideration of how long an applicant has been in business, as well as whether or not the business is preferred within the CRA. He clarified, however, that the program will request a business plan as part of the application process, and will consider whether or not there may be financial issues that prohibit or limit funds granted to the project.

Mr. Battle moved on to the Flagler Village Train Station Transit-Oriented Development Program and Wave Contribution, which includes the planned Wave streetcar, All Aboard Florida, and other transportation improvements planned in or near the CRA. He asserted that All Aboard Florida is expected to encourage a number of developments within the area, as well as improvements planned by the City to upgrade walkability and encourage commercial development.

He continued that All Aboard Florida is likely to result in speculative construction of office space, which will have infrastructure needs in which the CRA can act as a partner. Mr. Battle noted that the City, County, and All Aboard Florida own a great many significant properties along a 10- to 12-block area of Broward Boulevard.

The City is likely to plan public spaces and improvements in addition to facilitating the development of more TIF-generating properties. The walkability plan intended for Broward Boulevard, which include pedestrian and streetscape improvements, is likely to be expanded, with the potential implementation of Complete Streets standards as well. Of the City's \$7 million to encourage development in this area, the CRA will contribute \$500,000. Part of the City's remaining \$2 million contribution to the Wave will come from the CRA as well.

It was suggested that a representative of the All Aboard Florida program be invited to present information on this program to the Board in order to ensure that funding provided by the City and CRA are being properly used. Mr. Battle replied that Staff shared this concern, and that contributions would focus primarily on improvements in the surrounding area.

He moved on to the Sistrunk lighting upgrade, noting that there has been a proposal to suggest the wattage in the recently installed lights, particularly in the Northwest segment of the corridor. Mr. Battle advised that this concern is due to the direction of the lights, as they face downward. Increasing the wattage is one alternative that could solve this problem, as could changing the type of light

fixture. The cost is estimated at \$100,000 to \$200,000, although it is possible that it could be significantly less.

Mr. Battle stated that other initiatives on which the CRA may wish to spend its funds include opportunities to partner with consultants in order to stimulate business development. This would require an RFP and evaluation of respondents, who could help analyze the best incentives that could be provided for a project or the potential success of a certain business within the market. This initiative would fall under the CRA's operating budget as professional services.

He continued that the marketing budget can be more creatively used as well, and advised that the Midtown Business Association and Negro Chamber of Commerce working to spearhead an effort similar to the Flagler Village Association. The CRA will also continue to dispose of City-owned properties along the Sistrunk Corridor and within the neighborhoods, so they can be used for development or infill housing.

Staff has met with Planning and Zoning Director Greg Brewton, as well as with property and business owners within the area, to continue modifications to zoning Code. The major remaining issue is height, as there is significant concern that buildings may become too tall for the surrounding neighborhood from Andrews Avenue to 7th Avenue or 9th Avenue. Community consensus is still being sought on this issue; once it is resolved, it will be easier to advertise this market to developers.

Chair Lucas referred to p.9, noting that the document lists \$25 million to spend, of which \$23 million has been tabled. This leaves approximately \$2.5 million remaining to be spent. Mr. Battle said he was seeking input regarding projects or other programming for these funds. He recommended that the Board members consider this further and make suggestions at the next meeting, and urged them to make sure their concerns are communicated effectively to the CRA Board.

Mr. Strawbridge asked if the Board was prepared to accommodate upcoming funding requests that are not presently included in the 5-Year Program document. He pointed out that developers purchasing City-owned properties within the CRA may make requests for streetscape and lighting improvements. Mr. Battle replied that there are funds available be used for walk-in requests, as long as those requests fit into existing CRA programming. He added that they could also be used to supplement incentive programs, such as the streetscape grant program. Funds could also be reprogrammed from one incentive to another if necessary.

Mr. Strawbridge recalled that the TMA, which has made funding requests of the Board, is not reflected in the document as a potential CRA investment. He

pointed out that this service could help bring riders to the All Aboard Florida or Wave systems, and suggested that there could also be consideration of neighborhood transit connections to these modes of transit as well. He felt the CRA could consider giving support to these feeder systems with some of the unprogrammed funds.

He continued that while the CRA is promoting the disposal of surplus property, the 5-Year Program does not include specific plans or support for this property's redevelopment. He asked if a development package should be created for these properties, which could serve as single-family parcels or small-scale development. Mr. Battle said the incentive programs focus on business development, and noted that the CRA does not own any buildable residential properties; it would be better to promote development of these properties rather than to help fund it.

Mr. Strawbridge concluded that other than Complete Streets, the document did not describe any initiatives that focus on sustainability or energy conservation. He proposed that the City consider bringing in an energy performance contractor, who could bring greater efficiency to City-wide operations and fund these initiatives with the money saved by this efficiency. He pointed out that the CRA may be able to advance this effort even farther, such as setting a goal to make the public realm within the CRA entirely self-sustaining by 2025. This would make the CRA the least dependent district within the City by the time the CRA sunsets, and could have a positive ripple effect throughout Fort Lauderdale.

Mr. Battle noted that LED lighting is planned for neighborhoods and projects in Progresso Village, NW 9th Avenue, and the Northwest neighborhood; this would be part of the standard operating procedure for the CRA in the future. He commented that it could be possible to require LED lighting for any streetscapes the CRA planned to fund.

Chair Lucas stated that he would like to see the primary area for the property and business incentive program expanded to include the CRA's major corridors of 7th, 9th, and 3rd Avenue, as well as Andrews Avenue. The secondary area could include infill properties within the district. He explained that there would be greater exposure to businesses located along major commercial corridors, which would result in greater TIF revenue.

Mr. Battle concluded that the 5-Year Program document would be subject to additional revisions following discussions with the City Manager, after which time it would be brought back to the Board.

Information Items

IV. Communication to CRA Board

None.

V. Old / New Business

Mr. Battle provided the members with copies of a letter sent to all County CRAs from the Broward County Office of the Inspector General. The information requested by this Office would be provided by the end of the week. He explained that the CRAs are asked to ensure that their expenses are being used toward the advancement of a comprehensive CRA plan rather than simply covering expenses that are not made with a specific set of goals in mind.

He concluded that the Broward County Cultural Division is offering a program that would award funds to artists to spend a year in the community developing an art project. There have been requests from artists for recommendations to this program from the CRA. Mr. Battle advised that the artists would also meet with the CRA Board to provide updates on these projects.

Mr. Strawbridge described a 1600 sq. ft. arts studio that will open within the next six weeks. The studio has funding to operate senior and afterschool arts programs. He invited the Board members to visit the site once it has opened.

Mr. Ernest-Jones reported that the Flagler Community Garden recently held a groundbreaking event. This project appears to be very popular and was well-attended by the public and by sponsors. Its next phase will include putting in planters and containers.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

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