

**APPROVED
MINUTES
NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
SEPTEMBER 23, 2015 – 3:30 P.M.**

**Cumulative Attendance
May 2015 - April 2016**

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Steve Lucas, Chair	P	5	0
Ella Phillips, Vice Chair	P	5	0
Jessie Adderley (arr. 3:45)	P	4	1
Leann Barber	P	4	0
Sonya Burrows	P	5	0
Ron Centamore	P	4	1
Alan Gabriel	P	3	2
Camille Hansen	A	3	2
Mickey Hinton	A	2	3
John Hooper	P	3	2
Dylan Lagi	P	4	1
Jacqueline Reed	P	2	0
Scott Strawbridge	P	5	0
John Wilkes (arr. 3:54)	P	5	0

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

Jeremy Earle, Deputy Director, Department of Sustainable Development
 Bob Wojcik, Planner III
 Sandra Doughlin, DSD/ECR
 Thomasina Turner-Diggs, Project Coordinator
 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 August 23, Regular & September 2, 2015 Special Meetings

Motion made by Mr. Gabriel, seconded by Mr. Hooper, to approve [the August 23, 2015 meeting minutes]. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Motion made by Mr. Gabriel, seconded by Mr. Hooper, to approve [the September 2, meeting 2015 minutes]. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Community Redevelopment Plan Modifications – Advisory Board & Community Discussion

Chair Lucas stated that today's discussion would focus on where the Board has been and where they are now in relation to the current CRA Plan, and to discuss what can be done in the future. He noted that feedback will be provided by both the Board and by members of the community.

Chair Lucas introduced Kim Briesmeister of Redevelopment Management Associates (RMA). Much of the RMA team is comprised of other CRA directors as well as individuals from the private sector. Mr. Earle added that what would be discussed today is a culmination of the decisions made by the Board at their June 2015 meeting.

Ms. Briesmeister emphasized that the key issue for the Northwest CRA is compliance with State Statute 163.361, which regulates the activities of CRAs, as well as the Northwest CRA's governing documents. She is a former president of the Florida Redevelopment Association (FRA), which acts as a primary source of information for Florida CRAs. RMA will help ensure the Board is legally compliant with its governing documents and the State Statute, and that appropriate changes are made to the Plan to bring desired activities into compliance.

She showed a PowerPoint presentation to the Board, reviewing Statute 163.361, which deals with amending the Plan to ensure that a Board's activities are represented by that Plan. Because the Board has asked for additional public input, today's meeting will include community involvement. Meetings with the CRA Board and the City Commission are also required.

Ms. Briesmeister continued that RMA's scope of work includes data collection and overview. Thus far, RMA has met with the City Manager, the CRA Executive Director, and a team of City Staff members to review the 2001 Community Redevelopment Plan and compare it to the original document from 1995. They also reviewed economic and market effects, which may need to be included in the Plan, as well as development

regulations, zoning Code, and compliance. Today's community meeting will address some of the changes made to this Plan, such as categories and activities that may be added to the document. She cited transit or traffic projects as an example, explaining that references to these types of projects have been added to the Plan, although these references do not have to be specific.

RMA will also draft a Financial Plan for the CRA, which will serve as a template for the Board and will provide greater transparency regarding the use of CRA monies. They will provide a final draft of the CRA Plan by October 19, after which it will be presented to the RAB at the October 28 meeting. It will be presented to the CRA Board on November 17 and to the City Commission on December 15. The process is moving quickly because there are initiatives in the Five-Year Plan that the Board wishes to undertake, but which are not referenced in the CRA's governing documents.

Ms. Briesmeister continued that the CRA Plan is documented in a manner that references geographic areas within the District. RMA has also identified the following categories within the Plan:

- Real Estate
- Safety and Security
- Code Enforcement
- Quality of Life Issues
- Transportation and Mobility
- Administration

She reviewed the Real Estate category, noting that while the Plan does not have to state that purchases and appraisals of land will be made, there is some sensitivity to how CRA funds may be used in terms of City properties. CRAs are not allowed to duplicate or replace anything that a City's General Fund would typically pay for, which led to the creation of a provision that includes appraisals of land and acquisition of buildings. This enables the CRA to reuse buildings. Additional detail was also added to land and property disposition processes.

The Safety and Security category has been amended to include greater detail, as it included amendments from 2013 that were specifically worded to include public wifi and surveillance camera systems. As this amendment was made in a Resolution format, these words were never carried over to the CRA Plan document itself. RMA has added them under this category. References to lighting upgrades were also modified to provide greater flexibility in the future.

The Code Enforcement category is another which is also funded by the City's General Fund, although Ms. Briesmeister noted that in blighted areas, there are typically more extensive Code issues than in other parts of the City. The modifications to this section of the Plan state specifically that not only may the CRA undertake Code initiatives, they may actually help bring properties into compliance.

Under Quality of Life Issues, Ms. Briesmeister advised that more initiatives and activities occur inside redevelopment areas at present than in 1969, when the CRA Statute was enacted. These include initiatives such as art in public places and other cultural activities, which have now been built into the Plan. She cautioned that special events and activities must meet public purpose standards within the Statute. This means the activities must have an end result that is publicly motivated and will have an impact on the CRA, bring the public to an area they would not normally come to, or make the public aware of initiatives to upgrade the area.

She continued that while CRA money may not be used for regular government buildings or parks, funds can be used to create urban environments, such as community gardens, if they are tied to the redevelopment program.

Transportation and Mobility is a key category, as improvement of the pedestrian and public realms are one of the intentions of the CRA Statute. Improvements such as pedestrian and bicycle safety, crosswalks, parking, wayfinding and signage, and the Wave Modern Streetcar were mentioned in the Plan amendment, as well as general public amenities, which were not specified. The final category, Administration, allows the CRA to hire consultants or firms to carry out activities.

Ms. Briesmeister advised that after discussing the categories and other general topics, RMA will capture any other items the Board would like to be considered for incorporation into the Plan and review them with the Executive Director. The Plan will then be amended once more and vetted by a legal team to ensure compliance. She concluded that the Plan may be amended as often as the Board wishes. Any legal questions will be communicated to the City Attorney for clarification.

Mr. Strawbridge stated that he felt this part of the amendment process may be moving too quickly. He noted that while the Transportation category lists several capital expenses, it does not include any operating expenses, although the Board has been asked in the past to help subsidize local mass transit operating expenses. Ms. Briesmeister explained that with the amendments, the Board may expend funds on all things transit-related, which may include both capital and operating expenses, if they choose.

Mr. Strawbridge continued that the CRA is paying to maintain new streetscapes from its operating costs. Ms. Briesmeister confirmed that the Board may also do this, although she pointed out that CRAs tend to use their funds more for capital expenses than for operating costs or other ongoing expenses.

Ms. Briesmeister advised that CRA Plans only need to be written one time if they do not need to be amended; however, the Board is obligated to approve a budget each year.

This means ensuring that when the budget is created, it is checked against the CRA Plan.

Mr. Centamore asked if the Board would be able to discuss the Plan amendments on an item-by-item basis at the October 28 meeting. Ms. Briesmeister replied that this will be up to the Executive Director: RMA will submit a document that includes both strike-throughs of removed items and underlined sections that highlight new language. This will allow the Board to review the amended document in greater detail. She emphasized that the changes presented at today's meeting are intended to ensure that the Board may legally spend money on certain initiatives, rather than to investigate the details of those initiatives.

Mr. Earle emphasized that if an initiative or program is not part of the Plan, the Board may not undertake it; however, even if a program is in the Plan, they are not obligated to proceed with it.

Ms. Barber requested clarification of how much flexibility the Plan provides with regard to housing: for instance, if the Board is restricted to supporting public housing, or if they may work directly with homeowners on improvements or initiatives. Ms. Briesmeister replied that the Board should avoid spending money on a program that another Federal, State, or local program may be spending money on. She added that if the Board wishes to add housing as a category, RMA would review the Plan to ensure that this section is sufficiently broad to allow for a range of expenditures.

Ms. Burrows asked why a demographic analysis might not be necessary, as there have been demographic changes to the District itself since the CRA Plan was first adopted. Mr. Strawbridge agreed, pointing out that without accurate demographic information, it could be more difficult for the CRA to work toward the eradication of crime, slum, and blight. Ms. Briesmeister advised that updating the demographic profile is only legally necessary if the CRA undertakes a program or expense that is directly associated with this information. Mr. Earle confirmed that this information could be updated as part of Phase 2 of the amendment process.

Mr. Strawbridge noted that the changes described by Ms. Briesmeister include both new and previously existing items, and asked if a vetting process determined the new items to be included in the Phase 1 update. Ms. Briesmeister replied that these items were found in CRA documents, as RMA reviewed all existing documents and sought to ensure that if the Board wished to undertake any of these initiatives, they were referenced in the CRA Plan.

There being no further questions from the Board at this time, Chair Lucas opened the public hearing.

Doug McCraw, private citizen, stated that he is a resident of FAT Village. He advised that other municipalities are spending significant amounts of money toward initiatives such as art walks, which play a role in gentrifying areas within those cities. He asserted that the art walks and similar programs have had a positive economic impact on the City that is disproportionate to the amount spent on them.

Charles King, private citizen, commented that he would like to see the Plan focus more closely on changes the private sector cannot achieve for itself, such as road, sidewalk, and transportation improvements. He was not in favor of land purchases or additional low-income housing. Mr. King concluded that the City Commission should be held accountable for its decisions related to the CRA.

Chair Lucas requested clarification of whether or not a project such as the upsizing of utilities to incentivize development was allowed under the CRA Statute. Ms. Briesmeister said this is an allowable legal expense, but comes with specific restrictions: a CRA may not spend money on this initiative for three years if it is part of a city's existing capital improvement program (CIP). A CRA may, however, provide underground utility infrastructure and above-ground streetscape capital improvements to encourage development.

Jim Ellis, President of the Flagler Village Improvement Association, asked if RMA would be able to assist the Board or other interested entities in extending the CRA past its current expiration date. Ms. Briesmeister replied that if the agency wishes to extend the life of the CRA, it would require extensive communication with the County. She explained that CRAs formed prior to 2002 can operate for 30 years; if they amend their plan or issue debt, they may extend their term for another 30 years.

Ms. Briesmeister continued that when a CRA is formed, they must receive delegation of authority from the County, which means the County agrees with the following:

- The proposed area meets the criteria for slum and blight
- The defined geographic area
- The CRA Plan

It was noted, however, that the County has the ability to withhold authority if it chooses. Broward County has retained the approval of amending the CRA Plan, which means the City Commission cannot extend the CRA's term or expand its boundaries without the agreement of the County. It was noted that Broward County has not been receptive of either type of expansion in recent years.

Mr. Ellis asked if there were procurement issues that could affect the potential hiring of an ambassador program. Ms. Briesmeister stated that CRAs may create and draft their own procurement documents, although some follow city procurement processes. She clarified that some cities allow "piggybacking" of contracts: for example, if a city has gone through the RFP process and entered into a contract, the CRA may hire the same

firm, but only for the same service at the same value and pricing. She concluded that she was not familiar with Fort Lauderdale's or the Northwest CRA's procurement processes. Mr. Earle reiterated that even if piggybacking is allowed, the service must still be included in the CRA Plan.

Mr. Ellis asked if public-private partnerships are addressed in the CRA Plan. Ms. Briesmeister replied that a public-private partnership consists of two parties: one public, such as the City or the CRA, and one private, such as a developer or property owner, both of which enter into a contractual relationship. Because a CRA is a not-for-profit entity, however, any funds earned through this partnership must go back into the trust fund to be used for other redevelopment activity.

Mr. Wilkes stated that he did not feel today's meeting met the criteria for a public hearing as set forth in the CRA Statute, as the Board and the public were not provided with a draft of the amended CRA Plan. Chair Lucas advised that this draft will be presented at the next meeting.

Karen and Chad Cherry, private citizens, agreed that demographic information is very important to the CRA, as some areas, such as the Sistrunk Corridor, have changed significantly in recent years. Ms. Cherry emphasized that the CRA should consider the needs and activities of different communities on both the east and west sides of the railroad tracks.

Ms. Cherry asked if the recent recommendations by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) play a role in determining the CRA's future actions. Ms. Briesmeister advised that while she has not reviewed these recommendations, they may be implemented if they are written in the plan. Ms. Cherry explained that the Board has approved funds for a build-out of her small business; however, one of the business's funding partners has expressed a lack of confidence in the CRA. She asked if the Board plans to review its approval process, which she characterized as very restrictive.

Mr. Cherry agreed, pointing out the need to bring new people and businesses into the Sistrunk Corridor, and advised that their business may not be located within the CRA, as they cannot go through with the build-out at present. He emphasized the need for the CRA Plan to include assistance for small businesses, and to consult with actual small business owners to determine their needs. He concluded that this will bring tangible assets to the City.

Mr. Earle explained that today's meeting is part of a process to update the CRA Plan. Over the next few months, the Board will also review and update its incentive programs to make sure they are still relevant. Any changes to the programs must be approved by the Redevelopment Advisory Board as well as by the CRA Board. He agreed with Mr. and Ms. Cherry's characterizations of the small business incentive program. Ms. Briesmeister confirmed that rental assistance is allowed under the CRA Statute.

Annalito Sanibal, private citizen, emphasized the need for the CRA to stand up for diversity and assist communities that are already part of Fort Lauderdale's makeup.

Mr. Earle confirmed that when the draft CRA Plan is brought before the Board at their October 28 meeting, they will be able to make changes before it is sent to the CRA Board. Ms. Briesmeister recommended that the draft document be distributed to the members after its completion on October 19, so the members may submit their comments prior to October 28. She reiterated that specific needs may be addressed when the Board determines its annual budget. Chair Lucas estimated that the budget would be discussed further in January 2016.

Ms. Breitmeister advised that she had not heard any programs mentioned at today's meeting that the Board would not be allowed to pursue once the CRA Plan has been updated. She explained that if the CRA is legally challenged, the Board will need to make sure its standing is clear.

Mary Ann Cohen, private citizen, commented that some programs may not be able to survive until the Board discusses programming further, such as trolley access to the art walks.

With no other individuals wishing to speak at this time, Chair Lucas closed the public hearing and brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Strawbridge emphasized to the members of the public that the amendments do not address the validity of specific programs, but instead address governance and the need for the Board to follow the law.

Chair Lucas thanked the members of the community for their input, and thanked Ms. Briesmeister for her work on the CRA Plan.

IV. Communication to CRA Board

None.

V. Old / New Business

None.

VI. Adjournment

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

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Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

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