



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

Approved
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2020 – 9:00 A.M.

Cumulative

June 2020-May 2021

Committee Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Brandon Stewart, Chair	P	4	0
Frances Epstein, Vice Chair	P	4	0
Phallon Bullard	A	2	2
Uwe Cerron	P	4	0
Nancy Daly	A	3	1
Donnalee Minott	A	3	1
Margi Nothard	P	4	0
Edwin Parke (arr. 9:12)	P	4	0
Mayor Dean Trantalis/ (dep. 10:10)	P	1	0
Scott Wyman, Alternate			

Staff / Guests

Avis Wilkinson, Housing Programs Administrator/Staff Liaison
Bob Wojcik, Housing and Economic Development Manager
Lashanda Elliott, Administrative Assistant
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, ProtoType, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. ROLL CALL / DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chair Stewart called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. It was noted that a quorum was not present at the meeting.

The Committee welcomed Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis as a new member.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 14, 2020

In the absence of a quorum, minutes could not be approved at this time.

III. OLD BUSINESS

• Affordable Housing Trust Fund Balance Update – Avis Wilkinson

Ms. Wilkinson reported that \$242,007.16 remains in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund balance, including roughly \$122,000 allocated to the Fort Lauderdale Community Development Corporation (CDC) project that has not yet been removed from the fund.

Chair Stewart requested an update on the status of a recommendation to the City Commission regarding the Fort Lauderdale CDC. Ms. Wilkinson advised that this City Commission Agenda Item passed with the recommendation that the CDC be permitted to use these funds as they had requested. The two projects in question will proceed.

Mr. Parke arrived at 9:12 a.m.

Chair Stewart stated that any members who have recommendations or suggestions regarding the Affordable Housing Work Plan, including ideas related to racial equity in affordable housing, should send these to Ms. Wilkinson's office to be forwarded to the Committee. Discussion of the Work Plan will continue at the November 2020 meeting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- **Community Redevelopment Agency's (CRA's) Affordable Housing Projects – Bob Wojcik**

Bob Wojcik, representing the Fort Lauderdale Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), showed a PowerPoint presentation on how these agencies contribute to the development of affordable housing. CRAs were established under the Community Redevelopment Act, which confers power to local governments to plan and execute redevelopment programs and activities. The Broward County Board of County Commissioners adopted this Act for Fort Lauderdale in 1989.

The City's Northwest Progresso-Flagler Heights (NPF) CRA was established in 1995 and consists of approximately two square miles (1400 acres), with boundaries from Broward Boulevard to Sunrise Boulevard and Federal Highway to NW 24 Avenue. The NPF CRA has a 30-year lifespan: it is set to expire in 2025. Its Board of Directors is the Fort Lauderdale City Commission, with the City Manager acting as Executive Director and the Mayor acting as Chair. The NPF CRA also has a 15-member advisory board.

The objective of redevelopment plans is to formulate workable programs to meet the needs of the community while remaining consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. CRAs provide opportunities for private participation in the rehabilitation, preservation, and redevelopment of properties. The City aggressively pursues the purchase of all vacant land for large-scale development, as well as strategic properties. Key redevelopments in the NPF CRA include infill housing, small business development, connection to "green streets," and traffic calming measures.

The redevelopment plan itself does not target low- or very low-income housing, but discusses development of housing that is consistent with the City's Future Land Use Plan. This plan encourages development of low- to moderate income housing within the City's Northwest Regional Activity Center (RAC). The CRA is divided strategically into two different areas: the section east of the railroad tracks is part of the Downtown RAC and includes unique zoning for the City Center and Flagler Village, permitting higher-intensity

development. The Northwest RAC, which lies west of the railroad tracks, is significantly larger. Its zoning may be changed more easily because its underlying land use is Mixed-Use. High-intensity development is not planned for this area, which instead encourages single-family and infill housing.

When the NPF CRA was first created, the Flagler Village area was demographically similar to the Northwest RAC. It then began redeveloping with the incentives offered to the CRA and became an economic engine for the area. The CRA first borrowed from the City to undertake and incentivize certain projects, using its own funds when it began to grow.

The NPF CRA area identifies a number of sources of revenues, including federal and state Housing and Community Development Funds, which are used to develop moderate- and low-income housing along with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Program, and State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) funds. Neighborhoods within the subject area include Northwest Gardens, Home Beautiful, the Flagler Arts and Technology (FAT) Village, Dorsey Riverbend, and others.

Mr. Wojcik reviewed a number of specific NPF CRA affordable housing projects, beginning with Sweeting Estates. These properties are owner-occupied single-family homes that have been purchased through an assistance program by individuals who would not qualify for assistance under other City affordable housing income restrictions. Sweeting Estates homes for which purchase assistance is used have deed restrictions that keep them affordable. They must remain owner-occupied by single families for a period of at least seven years. Most of these homes have been closed upon within the last fiscal year.

Ms. Nothard asked if any studies have been done to address racial inequities or an impact analysis of rezoning by developers. Mr. Wojcik replied that some properties within the NPF CRA were rezoned at the request of the community. In addition, a number of commercial properties along Sistrunk Boulevard were purchased by the CRA and removed, as they were considered to be blighted. Any new housing within the Sweeting Estates neighborhood is required to be single-family. There was no specific study of inequalities that may have been affected by rezoning.

Another project approved by the City Commission is River Gardens, which are 25 owner-occupied town home units with frontage on Sistrunk Boulevard. The developer purchased the majority of the property, the remainder of which was owned by the CRA and sold to the developer at market value. The lowest-priced units are available for purchase assistance under the City's program for persons with low to moderate incomes.

Chair Stewart expressed concern that the price points listed for available units may still be too high to attract young people and families within targeted professions, particularly from within the surrounding community. Mr. Wojcik advised that the Sweeting Estates project, for example, is located within the redevelopment plan area, which calls for the

development of market-rate housing because that is the community's desire. He characterized these homes as workforce housing rather than low-income housing. Ms. Wilkinson further clarified that the maximum purchase price eligible for the City's purchase assistance program is \$259,500.

Mr. Wojcik continued that the City currently has 46 sites under request for proposal (RFP) to be developed with single-family owner-occupied homes. These sites were purchased by the CRA from the City and are scattered throughout the NPF CRA area. A number of these lots are of a size once considered substandard for residential development, and some are further limited by their zoning designations. The CRA will select up to five developers for this project and is providing the land at no cost.

One major requirement of the RFP is that the developers must pass their savings in land costs on to the buyers. The sites will be open to modular or prefabricated housing as well as new construction.

Chair Stewart asked if revenue generated by the sale of these sites would be eligible for inclusion in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Mr. Wojcik confirmed that the money paid by the NPF CRA to the City went into the Trust Fund.

Ms. Wilkinson asked if development on the various lots would require developers to conduct a market analysis. Mr. Wojcik replied that price of these properties would be a major consideration of the RFP process. Each developer must conduct his/her own market research and take costs, including zero land costs, into consideration when setting the price for these properties, which are expected to be affordable. Purchase assistance will not be available for these units unless CRA funds are specifically allocated for this purpose.

Ms. Wilkinson asked how the developed parcels would be marketed to the public. Mr. Wojcik replied that each developer must have his/her own marketing plan in addition to the plan, design, and construction of the units. There will be no income limits placed on the units, as they are not part of a purchase assistance program.

Mayor Trantalis left the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Mr. Wojcik continued that the RFP will be out for bid for at least 90 days, after which time it will go before an evaluation committee, followed by the NPF CRA Advisory Board for a recommendation and the City Commission for contract award. Individual agreements may also need to be approved. The developers then have 20 months to create the products, which are required to be at least two bedroom/two bath homes.

Mr. Wojcik noted that the NPF CRA has funded numerous projects over its lifetime. It will receive \$15,314,000 in the current fiscal year through tax increment financing (TIF). The taxing authorities that contribute to the CRA are the North Broward Hospital District, Broward County, the City of Fort Lauderdale, and Children's Services. Most of the funds

coming in for the current fiscal year have already been allocated to a number of uses by the CRA Board; in addition, there are several multi-year projects that receive funding each year by the CRA over a longer time frame.

The NPF CRA not only contributes to new residential or commercial development within its boundaries, but has provided funds for parks and portions of streetscape improvements. The West Village mixed-use project is underway on Sistrunk Boulevard and NW 3 Avenue. In exchange for the CRA's contribution over multiple years, occupancy at this development will be restricted to families earning up to 160% of the area's average median income.

A number of new zoning districts have been created along Sistrunk Boulevard, including:

- NW RAC Mixed-Use West (west of 7 Avenue)
- NW RAC Mixed-Use East (east of 7 Avenue)
- NW RAC Mixed-Use Northeast

These classifications allow for the same uses, although the NW RAC Mixed-Use East permits greater height than the other two districts. This allows for construction of buildings with heights comparable to the Flagler Village area.

Ms. Nothard asked if different ranges of average median income (AMI) are considered when the NPF CRA is planning how to distribute its funding. She expressed concern that lower income ranges may not be given the same consideration. Mr. Wojcik advised that there are two types of CRA projects: those initiated by the CRA itself, and those planned within the CRA boundaries that come before its Board seeking incentives. Funding is customized for these projects during the CRA Advisory Board process.

Ms. Wilkinson further clarified that the CRA focuses more closely on workforce housing, which serves a population earning up to 160% of the AMI. The market dictates the rental/purchase prices that will be charged. This differs from Housing and Community Development, which can assist people only below a certain income level.

Mr. Wojcik concluded that the West Village project is comprised of a full block including housing units, commercial space, and a parking structure. The project is considered to be a catalyst that will make the surrounding area more attractive for redevelopment. To allow for a height bonus to 65 ft., 10% of the property's units must be maintained in perpetuity as affordable housing for families not exceeding 100% of AMI. The CRA provided an \$8.4 million forgivable loan and a \$3.6 million 0% interest loan. When the \$3.6 million is repaid, it will go into the NPF CRA's Economic Development Corporation, which will continue after the CRA's sunset in 2025.

The CRA has partnered with Housing and Community Development (HCD) as well as the Housing Authority of Fort Lauderdale to create housing opportunities for individuals and families with low incomes. They work with additional nonprofit organizations to create infill

housing on roughly 25 vacant lots throughout the CRA, market-rate housing along the riverfront, and affordable single-family homes in the Sweeting Estates neighborhood.

The CRA also has a program that provides \$10,000 for the rehabilitation of houses, including painting and landscaping. Qualifying homes must be single-family owner- or renter-occupied. They have also partnered with HCD in the Dorsey Riverbend neighborhood for the development of owner-occupied homes in this area. Two developers were selected to participate in this project. Homes built on HCD-owned properties were required to be affordable, while homes on CRA property could be market-rate.

The CRA has also collaborated with nonprofit organization Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO) for a mixed-use project on Sistrunk Boulevard, including business and counseling offices as well as affordable housing for formerly incarcerated persons transitioning into the community. They have worked with the Housing Authority, which offers 100% affordable housing, to construct the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) –certified neighborhood in the southeastern United States.

The NPF CRA has assisted with the Housing Authority's request to designate parts of the Northwest Gardens development as brownfields, which provides redevelopment incentives including funds for cleanup of contamination, liability protection, and reimbursement for sales taxes on construction and building materials. The Housing Authority is the largest provider of affordable housing within Fort Lauderdale.

The CRA participates in a number of low-income housing tax credit projects as well. There are two types of tax credits: 9% credits, which generate roughly 70% of development equity, and 4% credits, which provide approximately 30%. The 9% tax credits are more highly sought after through an annual competitive process. Development equity means these projects can have relatively small first mortgages with lending institutions, which allows projects to be affordable into perpetuity.

Mr. Wojcik reviewed additional affordable and market-rate projects under development within the CRA, some of which receive CRA funding. Chair Stewart advised that the Committee may be able to offer support when CRA projects go before the City Commission for approval.

V. AGENDA TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

Chair Stewart encouraged the members again to send recommendations for consideration in the Work Plan to Ms. Wilkinson's office.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

None.

VII. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE – November 2, 2020

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

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.]