

APPROVED MINUTES

VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING CENTRAL CITY REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (CCRAB) CITY HALL WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021 – 3:30 PM

September 2020 – August 2021

BOARD MEMBERS		<u>Regular Meetings</u>		<u>Special Meetings</u>	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Luis Castillo-Olivera, Chair	P	6	0	0	0
Laxmi Lalwani, Vice Chair	P	3	3	0	0
Robert Ayen	P	6	0	0	0
Pieter Coetzee	P	4	2	0	0
Adam Gellar	P	6	0	0	0
Charlene Gunn	P	4	2	0	0
Peter Kosinski	A	3	3	0	0
Theodore Spiliotes	P	5	1	0	0
Zachary Talbot	A	3	3	0	0
Ray Thrower	P	2	0	0	0
Dennis Ulmer	P	2	0	0	0

At this time, there are 11 appointed members to the Board; therefore, 6 constitute a quorum.

Staff:

Clarence Woods, CRA Manager
Cija Omengebar, CRA Planner/Liaison
Lizeth Del Torres, Senior Administrative Assistant
Jamie Opperee, Prototype Inc.

Others:

Mark Alvarez
Abby Laughlin
Matt Walters
William Cody
Edward Catalano
Andrew Segaloff
Andy Perrott
Justin Greenbaum
Susan Scelfo

I. Call to Order

Chair Castillo-Olivera called the Zoom meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Roll was called, and it was noted that a quorum was present.

II. Approval of CCRAB Meeting Minutes

- **March 3, 2021**

Chair Castillo-Rivera referenced Page 4 and noted that the date was after 2008 and prior to 2012, but they did not have a specific time in which sidewalks were installed as part of a CRA grant in 2017; it in 2017, but maybe in 2010.

Mr. Thrower commented that it was a CDBG grant, and it was probably in 2012, not 2017.

Ms. Omengebar advised that she would research and clarify the correct date.

Mr. Thrower mentioned Page 5 and noted it should read as, "PPP", not PPE.

Chair Castillo-Rivera referenced Page 3 and stated that he meant nothing has been done to change zoning on NW 8th Avenue and NW 7th Avenue.

Ms. Omengebar commented that the February 3, 2021 minutes were approved; however, it should be noted that NW 4th, NW 3rd, etc. should be NE.

Motion made by Vice Chair Lalwani, seconded by Mr. Thrower, to approve the March 3, 2021 regular meeting minutes as amended. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (9-0)

III. Project and Program Progress Reports

- **NE 4th Avenue Project**

Ms. Omengebar indicated that an update was provided last month when they were in the Task Order Negotiation Phase with Transportation Mobility and their Civil contract. The project is close to approval and once they get through meetings with the Consultants, renderings will be brought to the Board.

- **Rezoning Project Update**

Clarence Woods, CRA Manager, mentioned that the Board's Communication was conveyed to the City Commission last night and staff was asked to speak with the Consultant regarding the cost to rezone the areas from NW 9th Avenue to NW 7th Avenue between NW 13th Street to NW 16th Street. Consultants have been saying it would be better to do rezoning during the Comprehensive Plan Change Amendment and underlying Land Use, but staff was asked to get time and cost estimates and whether it would interfere with the current project. Staff is meeting with the Consultants tomorrow and will request an estimate of cost and what it would take as far as timing. They heard from the Department of Sustainable Development Director, Anthony Fajardo, who suggested there might be something that would not be as time consuming or costly. There will be a meeting to see if that can be accomplished without going through the Comprehensive Plan Change. Information should be available during the special meeting on Friday, April 16, 2021.

Chair Castillo-Rivera commented that the Board felt they had been dropped from the process when they have been saying they need to be in the process. Somewhere in the City Administration it was thought this was not important and it was removed from the first meeting at War Memorial Auditorium. If Administration would have listened, the project would have been in the process and now they are trying to postpone for seven years.

Ms. Omengabar advised staff is not making the decision to stop the project. This project is funded by the CRA and the previous project was for a specific amount. The original Consultant was tasked to do the project within the budget confines they had and because the underlying Future Land Use for that area is residential, they decided it was not achievable at the time. The City Commission requested staff investigate to see what the project would entail and how long it would take.

Mr. Coetzee questioned why it takes so long to get a budget together for something so simple.

Chair Castillo-Rivera responded that large portions of the City move from a certain type of zoning to another; they have a timeline, and it is budgeted to be done that way.

Mr. Woods reminded everyone that the budget is the budget of the CRA and funding in the CRA budget is a function of the increase in the Tax Increment Financing (TIF). There has not been a substantial amount of money in the CRA's budget and that is why they are unable to do many different things. As the increment grows, their budget can grow. Last year, the budget was \$530,000 and \$340,000 was used for the Emergency Business Investment Program and other portions were salaries. There is about \$200,000 left to do an Incentive Project.

Vice Chair Lalwani commented that the concern is by the time the budget grows it might take 20 years to be included.

Mr. Woods stated that is exactly what happens in CRA's and that is what they are experiencing in the northwest. Now that there is funding to do projects, the northwest is going to go away in four more years. Typically, taxing authorities get together and allow the life of the CRA to be extended. This is Tax Increment Financing and if there is no appreciation in real estate where the ad valorem taxes grow, the budget can stay stagnant; some years it gets worse because there is real estate depreciation.

Mr. Coetzee questioned if the establishment of this budget was based on the income from the area through taxes.

Mr. Woods advised it is from the ad valorem property taxes. An increment above the base year was established in 2012, so there has not been a much time for any significant appreciation in the ad valorem property taxes.

Mr. Coetzee commented that there is a budget and money is being spent on other projects. This rezoning project is important; it is not often that a City gets such a major rezoning; therefore, he proposed that the next budget be directed to get this done.

Mr. Woods stated that a great deal of lobbying could be done to get the Commission to say this could be done and funds could be reallocated from another program for rezoning. They are going to ask the Consultant to give a cost of what it would take to accomplish the rezoning for that area and once there is a good understanding of the cost, it might just be reallocating some of the monies available. All the money for the Emergency Business Investment Program has not been used and perhaps it could be reallocated to go towards the expense of getting this total rezoning done.

Mr. Ulmer mentioned the Circle K and noted there may be better news next month.

Mr. Woods thought they would have information to share during the special meeting on Friday, April 16, 2021.

Abby Laughlin thought the first mission would be to eliminate slum and blight. She questioned why that section could not be changed with a Land Use Plan Amendment and if a Consultant was really needed.

Mr. Woods advised that he spoke with Mr. Fajardo, who wanted to see what could be done relative to a Text Amendment within the zoning code or ordinance. They are going to have a conversation and perhaps there may be a path forward without a total Comprehensive Plan Change.

Ms. Laughlin requested that someone from Planning attend the special meeting on Friday, April 16, 2021.

Ms. Omengabar advised that the special meeting on Friday, April 16, 2021 is a public presentation by the Consultant and staff from the Planning Department would be present. In advance of that meeting, staff is meeting internally with the Consultant to work out some of the issues being discussed and other dates are planned with staff to discuss alternate solutions.

In response to Ms. Laughlin, Mr. Woods stated there is approximately \$200,000 left in the Emergency Business Investment Program funds.

Ms. Omengabar stated there is a little more than \$200,000; they have provided at least \$100,000 in checks and one would be issued soon, so that would be \$110,000 total.

Ms. Laughlin mentioned a new store in the Central City neighborhood; Domicile, which has moved onto 4th Avenue from the Gateway, and it is nice home furnishing store.

Ed Catalano referenced Cumberland Farms that moved to NE 4th Avenue and Sunrise Boulevard is already open and Sherwin Williams, which would be opening. He mentioned other projects along NE 4th Avenue that should bring in tax dollar since the properties have been vacant for years. That is another way of getting the money to the CRA and that is something to look at. He noted the tax base in the area is going up and there is a lot of activity that is going to bring tax dollars to the City.

Mr. Woods stated one of the main things they need to do is manage expectations. New development in areas where there was not any development will provide a significant boost. They do not get all the tax money for existing projects or buildings and new development, they only get the increment, meaning the appreciable value, above the base year in which the CRA was created.

Mr. Catalano commented that Cumberland Farms spent well over \$1 million, and Sherwin Williams also spent a lot.

Chair Castillo-Rivera indicated there is a lot of development happening on NE 4th Avenue north of Sunrise Boulevard up to NE 12th Street that is new construction in lots that were vacant. He felt the City Commission might be willing to do this; they understand this is an area where there are problems with Code Enforcement, Police, quality of life, and the area is getting increasingly bad.

Mr. Ayen commented on previous discussion regarding code violations and crime reports and questioned if anything became of that.

Ms. Omengebar advised that she would contact Code Enforcement and the Police Department to see if someone could attend the May meeting.

Mr. Thrower stated that in previous years, the Board received an annual report of the top 20 code violations and Police calls. He noted that NW 9th Avenue has had hundreds of code violations.

Ms. Omengebar stated she would do that.

- **Emergency Business Investment Program**

Ms. Omengebar reported that 11 checks were issued for a total of \$100,000 and one might be paid by the end of the month, so the total would be \$110,000.

- **Non-residential Incentive Program**

Ms. Omengebar did not have anything to report. She stated the funds are still there and the Program is still open for businesses and/or property owners to apply.

IV. Visioning Discussion II

- **Central City CRA**

Clarence Woods, CRA Manager, mentioned visioning, branding, and marketing the area. A streetscape project was discussed at the last meeting, something similar to what is being done on NE 4th Avenue. With that project they are talking about light poles that are currently on NE 13th Street. One of the focuses on this branding idea would be NE 13th Street, which would be considered the main commercial corridor or thoroughfare through the area, notwithstanding NE 4th Avenue and Powerline Road, which is NW 9th Avenue. A photo was displayed showing an existing street pole. He suggested the Board come up with design standards and guidelines for the corridor, which would identify street lighting and noted that different types of lights could be applied, as well as pedestrian improvements, such as pavers on the sidewalks, and treatments in the crosswalks. There is no budget; this is visioning of what could be at some point and time. The most important thing is to get the zoning done, and after zoning is accomplished, the question is what is next; what the Board wants to see and if there is a vision for the area. There is a façade program, and another question is if the Board wants design standards and guidelines to identify fenestrations. Many different things can be done; street trees, widening sidewalks, etc. If this is something the Board wants to do, they could look at a Consultant to help with a street scape design as well as facades; the whole idea of branding the area.

Vice Chair Lalwani expressed concern with hiring Consultants since money is not available. She drives on NE 13th Street every day and it is one thing to have a vision for that area, but to dream and not know how many years it would take to get to the point where anything could be implemented or when the funds would be available to hire someone to provide options. Her perspective was that whoever was doing something should be able to dictate the vision at that time. She thought people coming in and spending money to make something happen should help contribute with this vision.

Mr. Woods commented that they have to dream; CRA's are about potential. New businesses and potential revenue are coming. They understand rezoning of the area is paramount; it is the first thing that must be done. Once that is done, they do not want to have money sitting in the Redevelopment Trust Fund with no plans; that money must be returned every year. It is pay as you go; they do not undertake projects until they have it. A project may have to sit until they have the money, but they do not want to wait and not have a plan.

Vice Chair Lalwani stated her concern was that they did not have funding for a Planner to help with this.

Mr. Woods indicated that was why staff was there, so they could have conversations. The more understanding and consensus they have from the Board, the easier it would be for them to give a scope when a bid goes out.

Mr. Coetzee commented that the City has enough guidelines for this area. They need to find money to bring in developers.

Mr. Woods thought they were dealing with what the Board wanted to see and thought there would be an answer; they are trying to manage expectations.

Mr. Coetzee stated if developers were brought to the area there would be a cashflow in the CRA; it starts with rezoning.

Mr. Woods understands how it happens. If there is no desire to look beyond the rezoning, then they can make that the primary mission and get that accomplished, then look at other things another time. They want to fill the agenda with things that would go towards the transformation they see CRA's bringing about in communities like this. He stated they work for the best of the Board and the community. If that is the way in which the Board wants to go, they are more than happy to follow their lead.

Mr. Ulmer commented that if there was a plan as a development comes in then they could designate a specific tree that could be part of the planning process for their approval. It is beneficial because as development comes in, the Board could say what they prefer. This is what they need to do because then it is not their expense, the developer would do it as part of their project; he thought a vision was needed.

Ms. Omengabar indicated that she has been talking with staff to determine if the City has a standard of how lights should look. There is a standard of how wide sidewalks can be and trees cannot obstruct the roadway; but in terms of the character of the area, there are no design standards. As far as rezoning, that started way before the CRA was created; that is what the community wanted, and it took that long for the project to start in 2018. They are there now and want to see more happen in the area around NW 9th Avenue, but those discussions are moving along with staff in the next couple days.

Chair Castillo-Rivera commented that perhaps NE 13th Street should be the signature of the area, especially NE 4th Avenue and NE 13th Street. He did not see any other areas that were commercial in which they would have that much control. He noted that Sunrise Boulevard was another area.

Mr. Gellar questioned if Mr. Woods was looking for a suggestion for a theme or design elements.

Mr. Woods stated that the right first step in rezoning the area has been taken. If there are not any design standards and guidelines, once the area is rezoned and developers are coming with their own ideas and thoughts of how they want their project to look, there will be everything.

Mr. Ayen mentioned that the City is known for their mid-century architecture regardless of who is on the Board. Anything that would have that kind of influence in future design element would be important to him.

Mr. Thrower stated that the Board looks forward to implementing design guidelines in the future. This is supposed to be part of the NW CRA; it was going to be approved at the same time the NW Flagler Heights area was approved, but it was carved out because of the Home Depot being built and the City and County did not want to lose that tax base. In the past, instead of trying to redevelop new guidelines or façade improvements, they have relied on what was done in NW Flagler Heights as a guideline, so they would not have to reinvent the wheel. He thought the Board wanted to focus on rezoning.

Ms. Laughlin indicated that the only way transformation would happen was with new investments, and you cannot get a new investment until you rezone, so the focus needs to be on rezoning. Regarding design standards, this is covered in the Redevelopment Plan; there are pictures.

Chair Castillo-Rivera apologized to Ms. Omengabar and Mr. Woods and told them not to feel like they were the target in this renewed enthusiasm.

Vice Chair Lalwani commented that the Board has been talking about rezoning forever. She suggested focusing on the rezoning and while getting closer to the rezoning to start talking about landscaping, lights, and visual effects.

Mr. Cody questioned if any Consultants have visited the neighborhood and observed the condition of the houses.

Chair Castillo-Rivera assumed Corradino has; they have been working with the City for a while and they have a better grasp of what is going on.

Ms. Omengabar stated they have had site visits with previous Consultants and noted that Corradino has other projects with the City. She questioned if Mr. Alvarez has done a tour of the Central City CRA area.

Mr. Alvarez advised that he has not done a formal tour, but he has been going around the neighborhood even at night. From his perspective, staff can do all they want on the maps, but being there makes a difference.

Ms. Omengabar indicated that she would invite someone from Code Enforcement and the Police Department to attend the May 5, 2021 meeting and report on top violations in the area.

Chair Castillo-Rivera advised that he would like to have a one-on-one conversation with Abby Laughlin regarding her plans and what they look like.

Ms. Laughlin agreed to meeting with Chair Castillo-Rivera.

Mr. Cody questioned if Aldi's on Sunrise Boulevard was within the District. He complained that Aldi's does not have cameras in their parking lot.

Chair Castillo-Rivera indicated that Aldi's is in Progressive Village and he was unsure if they had that kind of protection in other stores; he did not know how the City could force them to install cameras.

Mr. Woods advised that Mr. Cody could probably report the lack of cameras to the Department of Sustainable Development. He was not sure if they had cameras and believed they would not have been able to open if it were a requirement.

Ms. Omengabar announced that the special meeting would be blended; in person and via Zoom and noted there would be limited seating.

Chair Castillo-Rivera asked who wanted to physically attend and noted that perhaps they could have priority access. He stated that he would attend in person, as well as Mr. Gellar, and Mr. Thrower said he would like to attend in person but could not guarantee it. Everyone else preferred to attend via Zoom.

Ms. Omengabar stated the meeting was a presentation and she would let the Board know about voting.

Mr. Thrower commented if they were voting on a presentation, he would like to be there in person.

Chair Castillo-Rivera advised that he was appointed as Chair this year, but he would be termed out next year and so would Vice Chair Lalwani. He thought Board members should start thinking about a Chair and Vice Chair for the next term.

V. Old and/or New Business

- Member Suggestions for next meeting agenda

Ms. Omengebar mentioned earlier that she would contact someone from Code Enforcement and the Police Department to attend the May 5, 2021 meeting.

VI. Communication to City Commission – None.

VII. Adjournment

The next Special CCRAB meeting will be held in person and via Zoom on Friday, April 16, 2021.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was duly made and seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

[Minutes written by C. Guifarro, Prototype, Inc.]