

**APPROVED MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
CENTRAL CITY REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (CCRAB)  
REGULAR VIRTUAL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2021 – 3:30 PM**

September 2020 – August 2021

<b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>		<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	7	0	1 in person	0
Laxmi Lalwani, Vice Chair	P	4	3	1 via zoom	0
Robert Ayen	P	7	0	1 via zoom	0
Pieter Coetzee	P	5	2	1 in person	0
Adam Gellar	P	7	0	1 in person	0
Charlene Gunn	P	5	2	1 via zoom	0
Peter Kosinski	P	4	0	1 via zoom	0
Theodore Spiliotes	A	5	2	1 in person	0
Zachary Talbot (arrived at 3:40 p.m.)	P	5	2	1 via zoom	0
Ray Thrower	P	3	0	1 via zoom	0
Dennis Ulmer	P	3	0	1 via zoom	0

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

**Staff:**

Cija Omengebar, CRA Planner/Liaison  
Clarence Woods, CRA Manager  
Mark Alvarez, Corradino Group  
Jamie Opperee, Prototype Inc.

**I. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum**

Chair Castillo-Olivera called the Zoom meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. Roll was called, and it was noted that a quorum was present.

**II. Approval of CCRAB Minutes  
April 7, 2021 Regular Meeting**

Mr. Thrower mentioned Page 7, Paragraph 4, and stated that it says NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and should be, “**NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**”

Page 9, Paragraph 6, says the City and County did not want to lose that tax base and it should read, “**The County did not want to lose the tax base.**”

**Motion** made by Ms. Lalwani, seconded by Mr. Coetzee, to approve the April 7, 2021 regular meeting minutes as amended. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. (11-0)

**III. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Discussion & Approval  
Central City CRA**

Clarence Woods, CRA Manager Project, reported that revenues in 2021 were \$552,187 and after expenditures, the current funding balance is \$404,000. The proposed budget for next year is \$563,000. The current year's budget does not reflect the Emergency Business Investment Program where between \$100,000 and \$110,000 was spent. Staff is going to ask the City to roll remaining funds to the upcoming year's revenue, so they can begin to build a significant amount of funds for incentive projects and perhaps some streetscapes or other programs. Potentially, they could have between \$800,000 and \$900,000 for incentive projects. He noted there will not be an Emergency Investment Program next year.

Chair Castillo-Olivera mentioned last year's budget and stated that about \$100,000 was disbursed for the Emergency Business Investment Program and questioned how many people received those funds.

Mr. Woods stated those funds represented about 10 to 11 businesses.

Chair Castillo-Olivera questioned if this information would be taken to the City Manager, who would then take it to the City Commission. He noted there would be four people to lobby, the City Manager and three Commissioners.

Mr. Woods replied yes.

Mr. Woods responded affirmatively to Mr. Thrower's question if funds available for incentive projects would be discussed later.

**Motion** by Ms. Lalwani, seconded by Ms. Gunn, to approve the budget as is for FY2022. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. (11-0)

#### **IV. Projects and Programs Progress Reports**

- **Rezoning Project Update**

Cija Omengabar, CRA Planner, thanked everyone for attending or providing comments online for the April 16, 2021 meeting. A summary of the presentation from Mr. Alvarez is provided in the backup.

She questioned if the meeting was useful or helped solidify what they are doing next. As mentioned, the next meeting will be in August.

Mr. Thrower commented that the summary was well-written.

Mr. Ayen was pleased to know what was going on, so they are more transparent.

Mr. Ulmer mentioned the Board never received an update and questioned if Mr. Fajardo was at the meeting. He stated that Mr. Fajardo was going to talk about a Text Amendment within the zoning code and questioned the status.

Ms. Omengebar advised that staff met with the consultant at which time they charted how they are moving forward with the proposal, which was how Mr. Alvarez was able to put together the presentation for the April 16, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Woods indicated at the prior Board of City Commissioners, Anthony Fajardo, Director of Sustainable Development, mentioned the meeting and said they may be able to deal with the area of concern between NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street and NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street by a Text Amendment without going through the whole Comprehensive Plan Change as well as the underlying Land Use Change. There was a meeting in preparation for the meeting a few weeks ago when Mr. Alvarez mentioned how they would be able to accomplish what most people want to see in that area. Currently, zoning is R-15S, which means if there were demolition of existing duplexes, etc., the only thing that could be built would be single-family residents. From his understanding, that was the will of most people in the neighborhood when the zoning was proffered. Now, there is a different desire to see other development in the area. Mr. Fajardo's suggestion was to remove the "S", so if people purchased property, they would not have to build single-family residences, they could build up to 15 units per acre.

Chair Castillo-Oliviera questioned if that included the possibility of aggregating lots.

Mr. Woods thought that would be possible. There has never been a prohibition to buy multiple lots, it was just what could be built if multiple lots could be bought.

- **NE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Project**

Ms. Omengebar reported there was a delay due to paperwork. The purchase order was created; however, the project has not started and there has not yet been a meeting with the designers. An update should be available in a month or two. She spoke with the Project Manager about trying to compliment or mirror landscaping and street walk designs on NE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and they said they would discuss it with the designer.

- **Emergency Business Investment Program**

Ms. Omengebar indicated that originally a budget of \$340,000 was set aside for incentives and the current balance is \$220,000. One application has been processed since April 7, 2021 and it is believed no other applications will be received for the year. She noted that the City's fiscal year ends on September 30, 2021 and the new cycle starts on October 1, 2021. As Mr. Woods mentioned, if all funds are not used in the Incentive Program or Emergency Business Loan Program, they are hopeful the City will roll that funding back to the Incentive Program.

- **Non-residential Incentive Program**

Ms. Omengebar advised as far as the Business Incentive Program, façade and renovations, no one has approached. There have been discussions with future private projects developing in the area along NE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, but no applications have been submitted. Businesses are aware of the program, but some of the challenges include timing and how much can be offered. She reviewed a food truck application a few months ago; however, the application is incomplete and out for corrections.

In response to Mr. Ulmer, Ms. Omengebar stated the Emergency Business Investment Program will end; it was a result of their response to the pandemic. The Residential Incentive Program will also end, so whatever funding is not used goes back to the City.

Ms. Lalwani questioned if the process for the Incentive Program was too complicated to encourage applications or if it was because of the amount of dollars that could be offered.

Ms. Omengebar indicated that some businesses that approached them were not large projects. They were aware of the program and the amount, but they did not know their full plan to apply. Hopefully, the budget can be raised by time they apply.

Chair Castillo-Olivera questioned how approved projects are monitored. He mentioned the Christmas store.

Ms. Omengebar stated payments have not yet been issued. That project was on hold throughout the pandemic, which was last year. Staff is talking to them about required documentation for the file. The payment structure of the agreement is in phases. As staff, they do their best to evaluate the work and inspect the site to make sure the applicant is doing what they are supposed to do.

Mr. Thrower asked which project was being discussed.

Ms. Omengebar clarified it was Pride Factor building.

## **V. Old and/or New Business**

- **Code Cases shared at the April 16, 2021 Special Meeting**

Ms. Omengabar advised that Chair Castillo-Olivera shared data from Code Enforcement during the April 16, 2021 Special Meeting, which showed percentages of what types of cases exist in the area and in Central City overall. A lot of data was received, and it was noted there are two reports online labeled Code cases between 2017 and 2021. Police Department calls were between the years 2020 and 2021. It was noted there were 1,395 Code cases and 80 are currently active in the area between NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and between NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street and NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street. She noted there could be multiple calls for one incident.

Mr. Ulmer requested the Code Inspector for that area attend a meeting. There are issues in the business area on NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Sunrise Boulevard and the school, and if those businesses are in violation as to landscaping, etc., he would like the Code Inspector to listen to the concerns.

Chair Castillo-Olivera stated that area is in bad shape. He mentioned north of NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street to NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street, which is part of the CRA, that they did not want to touch. The area on the opposite side of the shopping center on the east side of NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue is bad and businesses do not take care of anything. He would also like a Code Inspector to attend the meeting and he would like to know why the area between Powerline Road and Sunrise Boulevard is so dilapidated and left out.

Mr. Gellar advised that information is typically a charging document when someone is being prosecuted; it is possible that it means something that results in an arrest; it is one of the higher numbers.

Mr. Thrower believed the reports show there is a major concern in the area; the numbers are horrific. Most of the businesses on NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Powerline Road, between Sunrise Boulevard and NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street are churches and non-profits that are in bad shape.

Chair Castillo-Olivera mentioned people who live around north/south Middle River and questioned if they were surprised NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue was the street with 169 calls while NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue had 461 calls and NW 7<sup>th</sup> Terrace had 281 calls.

Mr. Thrower commented that those numbers did not make sense; they do not add up.

Mr. Gellar questioned if there were calls about problems on NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Ms. Omengabar indicated that she conducted a search of calls made from properties located on NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and there were 169. Each line item documents what addresses the calls came from and she will double-check the information. Regardless, the frequency of calls and types of calls gives an idea.

Chair Castillo-Olivera would like to invite the Police Captain Steven Scelfo to the next meeting. Mr. Ayen thanked Ms. Omengabar for putting the documentation together; there is a lot of activity in the area.

Ms. Gunn mentioned that 67% of South Middle River is rentals. She noted there is a lot of property for sale on the north side of Sunrise Boulevard, which is the CRA area up to NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street. When speaking to Code Enforcement, one must be specific on comments. Properties with many violations go to the Code Abatement Board and they will make the decision what to do with the property. The Police Department has every community broken down in the City of Fort Lauderdale and a few months ago, when she looked at the breakdown, statistics showed that South Middle River has the largest crime. Chair Castillo-Olivera indicated that the statistics usually include the whole neighborhood from Powerline Road to NE 4th Avenue.

### **Member Suggestions for next meeting agenda**

Ms. Omengebar advised she would invite Police Captain Scelfo to the next meeting as well as Code Inspectors assigned to the South Middle River and Sunrise Boulevard areas, as well as the Code Supervisor.

Ms. Omengebar stated she is off the first week of June and questioned if the Board wanted to reschedule the meeting to June 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, or 9<sup>th</sup>. There was a consensus to reschedule the meeting to June 9, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.

### **VI. Communication to City Commission**

Mr. Thrower questioned if they could have a Communication to the Commission regarding the rollover of the funds.

Ms. Omengebar advised it was too early; they need to wait for the year to close and for the books to balance.

### **VII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 9, 2021.

**Motion** to adjourn the meeting was duly made and seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:23 p.m.

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