



City of Fort Lauderdale  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

February 9, 2022, 3:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Michael Stara, Chair	P	2	0
Nicholas Kuchova, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Jay Adams	P	2	0
Dudly Etienne-Harvard	A	1	1
Michael Lorigas	P	2	0
Katherine Koenig	P	1	1
William Feinberg*	P	2	0
Aaron Baron	P	2	0

\* Excused Absence

**Staff**

Suzy Joseph, Economic Development Representative

Daphnee Sainvil, Government Affairs & Economic Development Manager (absent)

**Communication to the City Commission**

*Communication 1 - Recommendation from EDAB to the Commission:* Motion to recommend the City Commission to take positive action to extend the CRA with the statewide sunset provision to 2039 was made by Vice Chair Kuchova. The motion was seconded by Member Baron. The motion passed unanimously.

*Communication 2 - Recommendation from EDAB to the Commission -* That the City Commission direct the Government Affairs & Economic Development Division and Development Services to participate in the “Franchise Expo South 2022”, being held at the Broward County Convention Center on September 9-10, 2022, was made by Member Baron and second by Vice Chair Kuchova. The motion passed unanimously.

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

**Chair Stara** called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM. Roll was called, and it was noted that there was no quorum at the time. Therefore, minutes cannot be approved, nor official business be conducted. At 3:09 PM a quorum was determined.

**II. Approval of the January 12, 2021, Meeting Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Member Baron and second by Vice Chair Nick Kuchova. The motion was passed unanimously.

**III. Old Business**

**IV. New Business**

*Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Presentation- CRA Manager Clarence Woods*

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**Clarence Woods:** The board was provided with a detailed overview of the Community Redevelopment Agency's (CRA) operations. Prior to its sunset, the Central Beach CRA was one of three in the city. His statement included that the Northwest-Progresso-Flagler Heights CRA and Central City CRA are both under his leadership. The CRA was created by Section 163 of the Florida Statutes specifically for Florida municipalities. This law allows the municipality and county to create an agency for the sole purpose of eliminating slums and blight, especially in areas of the city that are deprived or underinvested. In order to be considered slum and blight, an area must meet two out of eight criteria from the finding of necessity study. NW-Progresso Flagler Heights CRA's boundaries are located north of Broward Blvd, south of Sunrise, west of City Line and east of Federal Highway. Boundaries of the Central City CRA are north of Sunrise and west of Powerline. An understanding of these boundaries reveals areas of blight and slums. The state vests power in counties and cities to create CRAs. The County is the main governing body where taxes collected by the City and County go into a trust fund.

Florida law now provides that all CRAs are to expire in 2039, unless it is changed by the Legislature. He confirmed the Northwest-Progresso Flagler Height CRA will end in 2025. A property within the CRA boundaries pays ad valorem taxes in which the Tax Increment Fund is used to redevelop the area. Money is collected and placed into a trust fund. It is then the agency's duty to create a redevelopment plan, which is a guide to improving the conditions found in the finding necessity study. In addition, he explained that the funds are coming from properties in the CRA area rather than the general fund of the City, because the designated area has been neglected. The neglected nature of the area is a result of the limited enforcement, policing, and upkeep to mitigate the slum and blight. More so, funds that should have been used to maintain those CRA boundaries are instead put into other projects. He continues to explain, a municipality cannot use the CRA funds to fund normal government functions or expenditures. Most commonly, CRA funds are used to fund infrastructure.

CRA funds help incentivize private investors, making it easier for development to take place. However, the funds can also be used to enhance services provided by the government. Providing overtime for policing in CRA areas is one example. Specifically, he emphasized the importance of including CRA boundaries around areas where it is possible to anticipate future growth and development. Using the example of the City of Miami CRA, he mentioned that the CRA boundary lines were drawn in the Park West neighborhood, just off Biscayne Blvd, where there were few developments. Once a parking lot, it was converted into a 2-billion-dollar project funded with tax increment financing upon the start of the real estate boom. Following the sunset of the Northwest Progresso CRA, Mr. Woods inserted the county may allow it to continue, but the increments funds may not be available. A CRA can be in operation for a maximum of two 30-year terms. The Empowerment Zones are the same as the Opportunity Zones which let investors divert taxes in a census tract that qualifies for CRA incentives. A portion of capital gains can be deferred depending on the investment term, there are multiple terms, but most people elect to invest for 10 years because there are no capital gains taxes.

**Member Adams:** Stated there's a lot of traction and investment happening with the Northwest Progresso CRA and it disappointing to know that it will be sun setting in the next three years



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**Clarence Woods:** Advocates are needed to fight to extend the term. He said that Commissioner Glassman announced that now that new developments have begun, the city should explore ways to extend the term of the CRA.

**Vice Chair Kuchova:** Have any cities considered Real Estate Investment Trust as an investment vehicle?

**Clarence Woods:** CRA provided a prospectus, a document that showcases projects the CRA invested in to attract other investors. He said the CRA serves as a bank. The Community Reinvestment Act arose from historical redlining practices that impacted certain neighborhoods. Banks are now responsible for reinvesting into those neighborhoods with the Community Reinvestment Act. He added, to prove that they have invested and lent to struggling neighborhoods, banks must pass two tests. It was explained that the CRA monetized the revenue for the purpose of funding new development. A request for proposals was created to banks for the best terms of a lump sum to be paid back in 4 years for development. Banks benefit from lending to CRA to keep their charter as CRA invests into revitalized areas.

**Chair Stara:** Asked if the public is allowed to talk to banks to see if the City of Fort Lauderdale is getting their fair share of funds.

**Clarence Woods:** The City Finance Advisor is the recommended person. Continuing with his explanation, Mr. Woods states that small businesses need to provide a certain percentage, and the CRA provides a higher percentage depending on the size of the development.

**Vice Chair Kuchova:** Asked, how can the board help with the CRA initiatives?

**Clarence Woods:** Mr. Woods responded that the CRA has an advisory board and welcomes any EDAB board members to attend.

**Vice Chair Kuchova:** Inquired about the possibility of creating a joint statement or resolution to support the extension of the CRA between the two advisory boards.

**Chair Stara:** Asked who determines the school TIF funds?

**Clarence Woods:** City and County control the funds, he said.

It was discussed within the group that the City CRA should be extended until the state sunsets the CRAs.

**Vice Chair Kuchova** Also asked about how CRA efforts help with affordable housing.

**Clarence Woods:** As one of the primary goals of the CRA, the city has conveyed fifty-five properties out of which forty-three have been put out to bid for infill housing. Contractors were asked to provide evidence that they were capable of developing the requested housing initiative. Five shortlisted contractors were selected from 20 responses. They were each given five pieces of property to be redeveloped. During his remarks, he announced that twenty-five properties will be developed in the corridor.

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**Vice Chair Kuchova:** Asked for clarification on the term “infill”.

**Clarence woods:** An infill development is a grid of houses with vacant land. Additionally, he stated the CRA is partnering with a developer to build two 37-unit apartment buildings that will include ground floor retail, one of which will be an intergenerational building, and the other will include affordable housing. He stressed the importance of not over-saturating one area with one type of housing. Instead, middle-income housing, which serves the workforce, will be included in new developments. If the first contractor completes the development of the infill housing, they will have the opportunity to develop five more homes, for a total of ten. The CRA will acquire sixteen more houses from the city to create specifically habitat houses.

**Action Item- Chair Stara:** Proposed that the EDAB board provide a motion to extend the term of the CRA and forward the motion to the CRA Advisory board for approval/support.

**Motion for Communication to the Commission:** Motion to recommend the City Commission to take positive action to extend the CRA with the statewide sunset provision to 2039 was made by Vice Chair Kuchova. The motion was seconded by Member Baron. The motion passed unanimously.

**Group Discussion:** The group discussed how much of the low-interest loans that the CRA received from the bank goes directly to small businesses. The group will do more research.

#### *Area of concentration Updates*

**Chair Stara:** Changing his area of concentration to LGBTQ and Community Reinvestment Act.

**Vice Chair Kuchova:** Connections with Embassy International

Report: The honorary consul of Sweden has agreed to visit upon a specific date. He also inquired about Sister Cities collaborations and if possible, invite Sister Cities to share updates on the partnerships and programs at one of the future board meetings. Mr. Kuchova mentioned that the federal government runs a program called Select U.S.A., stating this is the first comprehensive inward investment promotion strategy for the government, and an opportunity for the U.S. Export Assistance Center based in Fort Lauderdale to provide an update on their initiatives so that the city would be informed and make connections. Additionally, he mentioned that early March he will be attending a luncheon with Port Everglades leadership and the opportunity for the City to engage with the export community to get an idea of the needs of that population.

**Member Adams:** Small Business and CRA

Will provide a session on how to run a small business.

**Member Baron:** Franchise Convention status report

Report: Spoke with a few people regarding the franchise convention and franchisors who would like to sell their businesses to interested business owners. It is his intention to encourage potential new franchisees to consider Fort Lauderdale for their franchise business. Highlighting fast track permitting and concierge-level services to help them establish their business. He stated the

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business guide should be printed and the web address of the Guide should be announced at the Expo and distributed to attendees as well as franchisors.

**Member Baron:** Suggested that the division work with the organizing team of the Franchise Expo (Franchise Expo South 2022), informing them that the success of the expo depends on the success of the franchisors, and City participation could contribute to that success. Mr. Baron provided the following contact information for the franchise expo organization: National Event Management Inc. 1-800-891-4859 [www.franchiseshowinfo.com](http://www.franchiseshowinfo.com).

Mr. Baron said they provide professional and valuable shows, and he has attended a franchise show in England. Additionally, he stated that the organization's goal was for the England country to succeed and that the City of Fort Lauderdale should participate in the Franchise show for its growth.

**Motion for Communication to the Commission** - That the City Commission direct the Government Affairs & Economic Development Division and Development Services to participate in the "Franchise Expo South 2022", being held at the Broward County Convention Center on September 9-10, 2022, was made by Member Baron and second by Vice Chair Kuchova. The motion passed unanimously.

**Vice Chair Kuchova:** Suggested including a video message from the Mayor and Vice Mayor and a QR code with the link to Doing Business in Fort Lauderdale.

The Board has volunteered to assist with manning the booth for the 2022 Franchise Show.

**Member Etienne-Harvard:** EDAB website and social media liaison

Absent- No report provided

**Chair Stara:** Suggested the board review the website at its next meeting and provide comments and suggestions.

**Member Feinberg:** Restaurant Industry and GFLCC Real Estate/ Construction

Excused Absence- No report provided

**Member Koenig:** Startups and Tech Hubs

Report: According to her report, she found a lot of tech startup hubs and resources but said there should be a central location to access the information. She said she compiled a list of resources and noticed that multiple economic development organizations' websites had valuable information that should be distributed to the general public.

**Suzy Joseph:** Assured the board that the division is developing an economic development resource guide that will contain detailed information about economic development resources and that Mrs. Koenig's findings will be included in the guide.

- **Action Item:** Mrs. Koenig will email Suzy her list of resources findings to be included in the massive business guide.



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**Member Lorigas:** EDAB Liaison to relevant City board/committee meetings

In the process of reviewing the past minutes and agenda of the various City advisory boards and committees, examining past discussions to identify where the board can fill in the gaps. At the April 12<sup>th</sup> board meeting, Mr. Lorigas plans to present a comprehensive report summarizing his findings and how the board can collaborate with other boards, in an effort to facilitate and achieve the goals of the board.

**Chair Stara:** If possible, proposed Mr. Lorigas attend the CRA advisory board to answer any questions concerning the motion to extend the term of the CRA.

**Ordinance No. C-12-11L:**

The board has decided to table the discussion for the March 9<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

Clarification is needed on the following statement:

ORDINANCE NO. C-12-11

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- (3) To advise the City Commission on specific issues regarding local, national and international business recruitment, retention and expansion.
- (4) To recommend funding allocations to organizations which will complement the City's promotional efforts based upon a budget provided to the Board by the City Commission.
- (5) To advise the City Commission on types of cultural activities that simultaneously support the cultural community and promote economic development in the City.
- (d) The Board shall select its own chairman chairperson and shall adopt rules of procedure for the conduct of its meetings.

*EDAB Video*

**Suzy Joseph:** Played Michael Stara's "Why Do Business in Fort Lauderdale" video as an example to the board to better prepare them for their recorded video.

**Chair Stara:** Reminded the board that they can choose to record their own "Why You Should Do Business in Fort Lauderdale" video or have Amber record their video during the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**V. Discussion and Final Remarks**

- **Action item:** Suzy will provide a copy of the EDAB ordinance and the link to the website for review and discussion at the next meeting.

**Chair Stara:** Reminded the board that they have the option of recording their own video or having Amber record their video during the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. He reminded the board to email Suzy any changes to the website, so that she can send them to Member Etienne-Harvard. Also, he mentioned that he may be absent from the next meeting. He asked if anyone was interested in volunteering to chair the meeting.



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**APPROVED**

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Katherine Koenig has volunteered to chair the meeting in absence of the Chair and Vice Chair.

**Motion** to adjourn the meeting was made by member Baron and second by Vice Chair Kuchova. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 4:43 PM.

**VI. Next Meeting: March 9<sup>th</sup> @ 3:00 PM; City Hall, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Rm.**

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