

Members asked about the current road closures that result in commuters cutting through the neighborhood.

Ray Thrower made a comment that NW First Avenue is the only street between Andrews and Powerline that's currently open, so the 9-block stretch of road has a high volume of traffic. He continued by saying that most of the street closures in the area were used to deter criminal activity.

Members discussed the best time to conduct the traffic count.

#### **IV. Eat the Tea Restaurant**

"Eat the Tea Restaurant" is a vegetarian restaurant formerly located at 900 NE 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Former board member Katharine Barry, HOMES, Inc. introduced the owner, Maureen Ruggeri; then shared with the board a power-point presentation and the conceptual plans of the project, (see attached).

The property needs a new roof, windows, doors, updated plumbing and electricity, wheelchair access and new floors.

There are a number of hurdles in getting this project approved, like lack of parking; so shared parking was discussed. The CDBG funding will not be sufficient for the number of improvements that will be needed; they're also additional expenses such as DRC, Architects, Change of Use, etc. Assistance with expediting the process was also discussed. TAM Director, Diana Alarcon explained that there are a number of processes that because of laws and regulations that have to be followed; however, there are things that can be done in house like parking reduction.

Chair Vonder Meulen inquired about the "employment generating grant" and was told by staff that this program is not available at this time.

Vice Chair Greenbaum asked about the impact that this project might have on the "non-profit" status of HOMES, Inc. Ms. Barry said that the restaurant property would be put on the tax rolls.

Members also want to make sure that the establishment stays open past 4:00 p.m. since this would be beneficial for the neighborhood to have "eyes on the street".

Motion made by Vice Chair Greenbaum, seconded by member Thrower to recommend that the CRA Board approve funding assistance from the City of Fort Lauderdale in the amount of \$100,000 from the Department of Housing and Urban development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to assist with this project.

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