



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**1<sup>st</sup> DRAFT**

**RESCHEDULED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
CENTRAL CITY REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2025 – 6:00 PM  
TOWER 101, 11TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
101 NE 3 AVENUE, FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33311**

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Present/Absent</b>	<b>Cumulative Attendance September 2024-August 2025</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Kimber White, Chair	P	9	0
Antoinette Wright, Vice Chair	P	7	2
Christopher Casey	P	3	0
Edward Catalano	A	8	1
Linda Fleischman	A	7	2
Fiona Johnson*	P	2	0
Thomas Mabey	P	9	0
Thomas Manos	P	3	1
Jason Ross**	P	5	3
Nikola Stan***	P	9	0
Bobby Tinoco	P	8	1

\* Ms. Johnson arrived at 6:19 p.m.

\*\* Mr. Ross arrived at 6:42 p.m.

\*\*\*Mr. Stan arrived at 6:03 p.m.

**Staff:**

Chris Cooper, Acting Assistant City Manager  
Vanessa Martin, CRA Business Manager  
Cija Omengebar, CRA Planner/Liaison

**Others:**

Randall Klett  
K. Cruitt, Recording Secretary, Prototype Inc.

**Communication to the City Commission:**

None.

**I. Pledge of Allegiance**

Board members recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll was called, and it was noted that a quorum was present.

### III. **Approval of Minutes – April 21, 2025 Regular Meeting**

**Motion** by Mr. Tinoco, seconded by Mr. Mabey, to approve the April 21, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes as corrected. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

### IV. **Discussion and Recommendation: Property Safety Enhancement Program**

Board Members reviewed the strategies; funding structure; eligibility requirements; forgiveness terms, and application process of the proposed Property Safety Enhancement Program as presented by CRA Planner, Ms. Cija Omengebar. A copy of her presentation is part of the public record.

Highlights of the discussion that ensued included the following:

- **Property Eligibility Requirements.** Chair White recommended that the verbiage be revised to indicate that property types could be: “1) An existing free-standing commercial building used for office, retail or service-oriented operation **or** 2) Located within a mixed-use building with active ground floor commercial uses and residential units above ...”. Vice Chair Wright agreed; she then further recommended that the words “free-standing” be eliminated so that properties in commercial plazas could qualify.
- **Marketing.** Mr. Casey inquired how the CRA would market the program to business owners. Ms. Omengebar stated that information would be sent directly to the property owner addresses on file. Mr. Tinoco noted that most properties in the focus area are leased; Ms. Omengebar clarified that lease flyers would be sent to the site addresses. Mr. Cooper added that the information could be emailed to the business tax receipt contacts as a less expensive alternative to mailing it.
- **Funding Terms - Leased Properties.**
  - Chair White noted the following:
    - The City would need permission or approval from the owner if a property is leased.
    - The minimum requirement of a five-year lease for forgivable loan funding should be evaluated as the average turnover is less than five years. He recommended that funds be disbursed in the form of a grant because there would be no recourse from approximately 50% of the businesses.
    - It would be a disservice to property owners who have “more skin in the game” to include non-owners. Ms. Omengebar acknowledged that Chair White had good point, and clarified that she was seeking input from the Central City Board and Northwest Board prior to sending the proposal to the office of the City Attorney for their input.
  - Chair White explained why he felt the program should not be available to businesses that lease property; Vice Chair Wright and Mr. Tinoco agreed that better access to the equipment purchased, and continuity between leases were among the benefits of working directly with owners. Ms. Omengebar indicated it would likely be a joint agreement involving both owner and tenant; she would bring a revised intake form back to the Board for their review once it is further developed.
  - Members further discussed the minimum length of qualifying leases, then recommended that the CRA consider reducing the five-year requirement.
  - The ‘matching’ requirement was discussed; Vice Chair Wright reiterated that the funds be disbursed as a grant. Members agreed stating that they felt the \$7,000-

\$10,000 match would be burdensome for small businesses in light of the other restrictions; a potentially lengthy reimbursement process; the current economic environment, and increased tariffs. Ms. Omengebar indicated she would further consult with Procurement and relay her findings to the Board.

- Other key issues were discussed; this included the procurement process and potential nuances that could be clarified in the agreement.

Mr. Randall Klett inquired where the \$10,000 came from, noting that that amount would not make much of an impact. In his opinion, \$25,000 to \$30,000 would be needed to provide “real” security enhancements such as impact windows and doors. Chair White reminded everyone that the goal was to address safety, security, and lighting issues; \$10,000 was based on the limited funds available, and the desire to help as many businesses as possible.

Discussion returned to the matching funds requirement. Members felt that the funding structure was more of a reimbursement program than a match. Ms. Omengebar clarified that the CRA would contribute up to 75% of eligible improvement costs, up to \$10,000; the actual cost could be much more.

- Ineligible Business Types. Mr. Stan inquired why nightclubs, bars and some other businesses were excluded. Ms. Omengebar clarified that the list was based on CRA guidelines.
- Mr. Tinoco suggested minimum requirements be considered for the security measures that would qualify.
- Award amounts. There was general agreement with the recommendation by Mr. Manos that reference to the 75% match should be removed and replaced with language that simply indicates up to \$10,000 is available in focus areas, and \$7,500 in non-focus areas of the CRA.
- Eligible improvements. Mr. Cooper shared that it may be necessary to narrow or prioritize the list of uses the City is looking to fund, and noted that the proposed list was focused on CPTED guidelines. It was agreed that lighting is a priority from a community enhancement and safety perspective. Ms. Omengebar reminded Members that the program is in partnership with the Police Department; security measures are an important component of CPTED assessments; this program would run in tangent with other programs, and CIP master planning.
- Mr. Manos recommended the CRA create short form agreements for landlords to sign off on to facilitate the process, and that the five-year lease requirement be eliminated. There was general agreement, and it was noted that the short form should include a requirement that the equipment funded must stay with the building in the event a lease is terminated.
- Ms. Omengebar clarified for Ms. Johnson that businesses could qualify for upgrades to existing equipment, subject to an assessment by the Police Department. Ms. Omengebar explained how the Police Crime Prevention department would liaise with the owner or tenant that applies for the program.
- Ms. Martin shared that a recent amendment to the procurement plan reduced the requirement from three quotes to one, for expenses between \$5,000 and \$25,000. This was considered beneficial to this and other CRA programs, and would be communicated outwards.
- Repeat applications. Mr. Stan recommended that repeat applications should not be permitted; there was general agreement, however, it was determined that more insight

was needed on the criteria that would be considered by the Police Department. Chair White requested that Ms. Omengebar provide more information on this. Mr. Cooper added that the Police could be invited to speak with the Board.

- Ms. Johnson inquired how the CRA would handle owners with multiple properties. It was agreed that the best approach would be for discretionary decisions to be made based on both the owner and property address.
- Mr. Cooper noted that the current budget will limit the program to 15-20 opportunities.

#### **V. Discussion and Recommendation: Fiscal Year 2026 Budget**

Ms. Vanessa Martin, CRA Business Manager, presented the FY 2026 Proposed Budget Summary. The estimated allocation is \$1,389,995, of which \$1,064,806 would be for incentives. Ms. Martin inquired whether Members wished to recommend changes to the incentive 'buckets' as presented. She clarified that it is possible to reallocate those funds at a later date within the incentive budget, and fielded various questions from Members.

Discussion ensued on whether some of the funds allocated for Property & Business Improvement should be shifted to Commercial Façade, as it would be more in line with the Board focus on community enhancement. Ms. Martin stated that justification would be needed to change the weighting as the budget was based on historical expenses, such as the FY 2025 expenditure of \$404,000 for Call of Africa.

Chair White recommended that \$200,000 be taken from Property and Business Improvement, leaving over \$289,000, to Commercial Facades; there was general agreement. He stated, on behalf of the Committee, that they would like to see more enhancements and improvements to the property exteriors to entice more people to come into the community. Vice Chair Wright added that there are active programs in all of the other spaces, excluding the PBIP, so this would shift the funds towards programs that would be promoted.

**Motion** by Vice Chair Wright, seconded by Mr. Manos, to shift \$200,000 from the PBIP to Commercial Façade Improvement line item for FY 2026. In a roll vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Omengebar clarified that Streetscape Improvement funding is for any work on the right of way, such as sidewalks. The City master plan would pick up some sidewalk planning, lighting, and trees with details to be determined at a future date.

Ms. Martin highlighted that the carryover for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) is approximately \$2.9M; of which \$2,452,260 for street scape improvement; \$211,000 for Central City lighting on NE 4 Ave, and \$200,000 for the NE 13 Street sculpture, and \$38,000 in the NW 4 Ave Complete Streets project study. The \$2.9M was described as a "rolling number".

It was clarified that funding for the safety enhancement initiative would be available on October 1, 2025.

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

None

#### **VII. Old Business Update**

Ms. Omengebar provided an update, and highlighted the following:

- Commercial Incentive Programs.
  - Call of Africa is starting their renovations.
  - Three businesses have expressed interest in the program:
    - 1226 NE 4 Avenue: Under review, \$225,000 was requested in PBIPB and Façade
    - 1301 N Dixie Highway: Pending application for an animal hospital.
    - 900 NE 13 Street: – Pending application for a new business, “Art of Tea”.
- Residential Paint & Landscaping. Seven projects were completed; nine are in progress, and pending receipt of contractor quotes. While only one quote is now being required, Ms. Omengebar stated that she would have to check on whether that would apply to these agreements which were previously established. Applicants were last contacted by email in March 2025 to advise them to contact her if assistance were needed, and to inform them that they would lose funding if quotes were not submitted prior to the end of the fiscal year. Chair White asked whether the CRA could determine whether one quote would suffice so that a communication could be expedited to them. Ms. Omengebar later clarified that applicants can re-apply for increased funding (if approved) in the event they do not meet the FY 2025 deadline.
- NE 5 Terrace Closure – Installation of Light Fixture. Ms. Omengebar had been notified that this was completed; confirmation is pending.
- Light Pole Installation at Eight Permanently Closed End-Streets. Follow-up is pending; the City and FPL were working on a solution after FDOT declined to approve the permit.

Ms. Martin noted that a recommendation from the Board was needed regarding the FY 2026 budget.

**Motion** by Mr. Ross, seconded by Ms. Johnson, to approve the FY 2026 budget with the recommended changes. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Omengebar continued with her update:

- NE 4 Avenue Complete Street Project – Light Poles. The work has been completed, with the exception of the installation of 11 light poles; they are in the execution phase of the contract; she anticipated that work would start in late July or early August. Ms. Omengebar will obtain photos of the light fixtures for the Board.
- Land Use Plan Amendment. This item is still under Procurement review. Vice Chair Wright expressed concern with the delay, given the importance of it, and requested “line of sight” on when a response could be expected.
- Capital Improvement Master Plan. The Selection Committee was due to meet on June 20, 2025; the successful bid would then go to the CRA Board and the City Commission for approval. Ms. Omengebar estimated that once approved, it would take up to two months for execution. She would report back with confirmation.
- Andrews Avenue Improvement Corridor. Chair White stated that this road project is moving forward; while it had not yet started, completion is slated for 2027. \$200,000 has been set aside for this.

Members inquired about the status of the rezoning project. Ms. Omengebar clarified that the proposed amendments were being drafted based on recommendations by this Board. They would then be sent to the office of the City Attorney for vetting prior to being submitted to the Planning and Zoning Board for approval; the draft would not be returned to this Board prior to being submitted to Planning and Zoning. Mr. Cooper added that there would be a public

participation meeting at least 30 days prior to the hearing before the Planning and Zoning Board; the goal would be to get it adopted by the end of the calendar year. He then fielded several questions on the land use plan amendment, mixed use projects and Live Local and other zoning district issues. Mr. Cooper clarified that it could take up to a year for the land use amendment to be done after the rezoning is approved.

Chair White requested an update on the “triangle” and self-storage project and on NE 13 Street. Mr. Cooper advised that the Planning and Zoning Board would consider the platting for that property that week; he anticipated that approximately 6,000 square feet would be delineated for open space use, so the warehouse structure would be set back from Progresso and NE 13 Street to create a buffer between it and NE 13 Street. Mr. Cooper offered to provide more details, including the conditions of approval, on this project.

Discussion ensued on the re-scheduling of the next meeting, initially calendared for July 2, 2025. Ms. Omengebar will work with Members to find an alternate date.

**VIII. New Business Suggestions**  
None.

**IX. Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by K. Cruitt, Prototype, Inc.]