

City of Fort Lauderdale

City Hall
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
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Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Tuesday, November 4, 2014

12:00 PM

Joint Workshop with Central City Redevelopment Advisory Board

City Commission Conference Room

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

JOHN P. "JACK" SEILER Mayor - Commissioner
ROMNEY ROGERS Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District IV
BRUCE G. ROBERTS Commissioner - District I
DEAN J. TRANTALIS Commissioner - District II
BOBBY B. DuBOSE Commissioner - District III

LEE R. FELDMAN, City Manager
JOHN HERBST, City Auditor
JONDA K. JOSEPH, City Clerk
CYNTHIA A. EVERETT, City Attorney

Meeting was called to order at 12:12 p.m. by Mayor Seiler.

ATTENDANCE ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Mayor John P. "Jack" Seiler, Vice-Mayor Romney Rogers, Commissioner Bruce G. Roberts and Commissioner Dean J. Trantalis

Not Present; Commissioner Bobby B. DuBose

Also Present: City Manager Lee R. Feldman, City Auditor John Herbst, City Clerk Jonda K. Joseph and City Attorney Cynthia A. Everett

Central City Redevelopment Advisory Board: Stephen M. Stahl Sr., Ray Thrower, Ronald Weinbaum, Tim Smith, Katharine S. Barry and Chairman Randall Klett

Not Present: Central City Redevelopment Advisory Board Members Christine T. Jones, Vice-Chair Shannon Harmeling and Justin Greenbaum

14-1447

REVIEW OF CENTRAL CITY REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD PLAN AS TO EXERCISE OF CITY COMMISSION'S POWERS AS A COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN AND EFFECTUATE THE PURPOSE AND PROVISIONS OF COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT ACT

Mayor Seiler introduced Commissioner Trantalis as this community redevelopment area lies in District II. Commissioner Trantalis indicated this workshop agenda seems to focus on a request for appropriations to clean up certain parts of the Central City Community Redevelopment Area. It was highlighted at the district meeting that some of the improvement projects are on private property. Perhaps those owners should simply be cited. He wanted to hear from the City Manager on this topic but first wished to hear comments from the Board chair.

Central City Redevelopment Advisory Board Chairman Randall Klett noted difficulty experienced by the Board when this CRA was formed and the economic downturn. Tax increment financing (TIF) revenue estimates for this year are between \$38,000 and \$40,000, which will be the first revenue this CRA will receive. He confirmed for Mayor Seiler that the CRA has roughly \$25,000 in debt for development of the CRA plan and \$10,000 for City staff time. The Board plans to budget roughly \$10,000 for City staff time in the next fiscal year. They would like to expend a small amount on simple things to improve the neighborhood. Most of those items can probably be done through staff. They would like to start paying off the \$25,000 debt in the next fiscal year, possibly \$5,000 each year over a five-year period.

Commissioner Trantalis pointed out that the CRA has proposed rezoning. In order to create a tax base that makes sense and bring their vision into a reality, the residential zoning needs to be changed to either mixed-use or commercial. He wanted to focus on this.

Klett presented an aerial map, which is attached to these minutes, and drew attention to specific areas that would need to be rezoned in order for redevelopment to occur. The Board would like to examine zoning in the commercial areas first, in other words those areas with the greatest potential to generate TIF revenue. He pointed out that the lots zoned commercial on Sunrise Boulevard are so narrow it is difficult to redevelop them well. The same problem exists along 4 Avenue and NE 13 Street.

Mayor Seiler felt this CRA is at a turning point. If they are able to move quickly on budgeting and zoning, the greatest impact can be achieved. He would not object to extending the loan repayment provided it is repaid. He felt that the need for rezoning is obvious. Commissioner Trantalis, Commissioner Roberts and Vice-Mayor Rogers all agreed. Vice-Mayor Rogers expressed concern about how the zoning pattern was initially created and the City's role versus that of the developer. Vice-Mayor Rogers wanted to see a master plan. Klett advised that is what the Board is requesting. . Mayor Seiler felt the time to act is clearly now.

Commissioner Roberts suggested involving the Urban Land Institute (ULI). The City Manager agreed that could be a potential first step. It would cost roughly \$250,000 to \$300,000 for a master plan. Mayor Seiler questioned whether a Regional Activity Center (RAC) could be implemented along the Sunrise Boulevard corridor that would provide flexibility. He was concerned that a master plan would take too long. Commissioner Roberts wanted to involve the ULI in the interest of expediency and minimizing costs.

Board Member Katharine Barry agreed that there is a window of time but it is small. Flexibility will entice people to bet on a relatively empty area. The current zoning is a hodge podge. There is a mix of residential, commercial and industrial. A RAC would encourage creative flexibility. Board Member Smith added that developers are talking about development, but there is still some uncertainty. If the Commission makes some move, the word will get out to investors. Vice-Mayor Rogers raised the idea of attracting residential development because current activity in the area is residential. Commissioner Trantalis did not think it would be appropriate for residential on the corner of 4 Avenue and Sunrise. Commissioner Trantalis felt that both commercial and residential development are hot now however the depth of the commercial lots is too narrow. Vice-Mayor Rogers explained his concern is going too fast, missing the opportunity to plan or should a quick hit be found to get things going. Mayor Seiler did not think government should set trends, but rather provide flexibility. Vice-Mayor Rogers commented that in theory, commercial should follow residential. Commissioner Trantalis noted that commercial development will not come unless there is sufficient lot size. Vice-Mayor Rogers agreed but added that the commercial also needs to be supported by residential. Mayor Seiler did not think it is solely dependent on residential within the CRA. Vice-Mayor Rogers commented that in terms of density and multi-family residential, rezoning would be needed. Commissioner Trantalis felt both residential and commercial should be the focus. The lots need to be expanded. Rezoning is needed.

Mayor Seiler wanted to look at 13 Street, Andrews Avenue, 4 Avenue and Sunrise Boulevard for a RAC instead of a master plan.

Board Member Tim Smith noted that their discussion has covered short term and long term. He suggested that in the short term, they put out the message that the City is looking to provide new flexibility along the corridors and look at the interior over the long term. Vice-Mayor Rogers felt the Board should explore the topic of parking.

Mayor Seiler discussed the history of Wilton Manors. He believed 13 Street has the same potential as Wilton Drive. Commissioner Trantalis pointed out that Wilton Manors has been held back because it did not rezone. The lots facing Wilton Drive are not deep enough. Mayor Seiler supported the Board looking at what zoning could go forward quickly and staff look at the financial aspect. If they are able to change the street by changing zoning or creating a RAC, the financial aspect will diminish because developers will be more willing to invest. Commissioner Roberts expressed concern on how a RAC would impact the surrounding neighborhood. He felt that the Board should assess how that will work out. Chairman Klett noted that in some sense, this is putting lipstick on a pig but it is better than status quo. Immediate as well as long term changes are needed. When people have confidence in the City, the community and the CRA, they will be willing to gamble.

In response to Mayor Seiler's question about extending the loan repayment, the City Auditor advised that the City can provide an advance from the general fund for the CRA. It should be set up in a formal fashion. The City Manager pointed out that unlike other CRA districts, this one is solely supported by the general fund. A general fund loan transfer to a general fund TIF is cleaner than it would be in other instances where there are various contributing entities.

Commissioner Trantalis felt that the properties with code violations should be cited. Mayor Seiler agreed. Board Member Smith also agreed but at the same time wanted the problem corrected. He was concerned that code issues are cumbersome. Mayor Seiler was concerned about precedent. Board Member Smith pointed out that a lot of the work is in the right-of-way.

Board Member Ray Thrower emphasized the need for larger commercial lots. Sunrise Boulevard is an important component because it is a gateway to the beach. It needs improvement. He supported moving quickly on establishing the commercial areas that he saw as Sunrise Boulevard and NE 4th to the railroad tracks and NE 4th between 13th and Sunrise Boulevard. Commissioner Trantalis pointed out the significant improvements along a one-mile stretch of PGA Boulevard between Interstate 95 and the turnpike. There is no reason that could not be done along Sunrise Boulevard. There are opportunities; investors want to come to Fort Lauderdale. It is important to lay the groundwork with the zoning and an RAC. He wanted the Board to develop guidelines and share them with City staff. The City Manager said that staff is currently undertaking an effort in Progresso Village with the Northwest RAC, which is going before the Planning & Zoning Board in November and hopefully the Commission in December and January. He suggested the Board look at that RAC to determine if it would be what they are envisioning for the other side of Sunrise Boulevard and along the railroad track. It could be a good launching point with traction. Vice-Mayor Rogers added that when planning the Flagler Village area, property owners to the north of the railroad tracks wanted to get involved. Transit-oriented development was raised. This CRA also has that opportunity. He agreed with the City Manager on taking advantage of what is already in motion instead of a study.

Mayor Seiler noted that the Commission is on board conceptually. He asked the Board to come back with a consensus for RAC boundaries.

Board Member Smith wanted to look at the code violations quickly in that a large event is planned in February as well as improvements to public properties.

Mayor Seiler opened the floor for public comment.

Laura Croscenco, 1616 North Dixie Highway, displayed photographs, which were made a part of the record. She asked that Middle River Terrace be shielded from any potential social services zoning. In response to Mayor Seiler, the City Attorney agreed to look into whether adjustments could be made to the ordinance. Croscenco went on to say that the Dixie Highway project should be expedited in order to attract development. She commended the City Manager for working to clean up a blighted area on the corner before Home Depot. She pointed out that the neighborhood association spent its own funds to clean up a grocery store property. Care should be taken about this because it rewards property owners for not maintaining their property. She also displayed photographs of maintenance issues in the neighborhood.

There was no one else wishing to speak.

Chairman Klett pointed out that the Redevelopment Plan (Exhibit 2) suggests looking at the boundaries of the CRA, specifically expanding east to 15th or perhaps Federal Highway, north to 16th or perhaps the Wilton Manors line and west to include Lauderdale Manors, where residents have asked to be included.

Mayor Seiler felt the Board would likely become distracted with issues that could arise and miss a window of opportunity. There is already a large enough area to make an impact. Commissioner Roberts added that the County is already on the record of opposing any CRA extensions. The timing is off at this time.

Board Member Stephen Stahl favored extending the depth of properties for zoning purposes but not into the neighborhood. Both Mayor Seiler and Commissioner Trantalis indicated that is not something on the horizon. Stahl was concerned about height beyond four or five stories in relation to the neighborhood. The City Manager clarified he is suggesting the Board decide if they approve of the criteria and decide where they would recommend it be applied. Staff would then have some direction to move forward with a RAC zoning. The Northwest RAC process has been in the works for a year and is just now reaching a conclusion. Mayor Seiler felt there was more consensus in this instance. He emphasized that there is only a small window available to make this happen. In response to Klett, Mayor Seiler indicated he would be amenable to another workshop of this format in January or February provided the Board has reached a consensus.

Chairman Klett asked if the Commission would approve the requested funding for the public right-of-way projects identified in backup materials (Exhibit 5). The Commission reviewed the slides in the exhibit and rejected some. The City Manager advised that the Commission cannot take formal action in this forum, but he agreed to work with the Board.

There being no other matters to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 1:23 p.m.