



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**COMMUNICATION TO CITY COMMISSION
RESCHEDULED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
CENTRAL CITY REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2023 – 3:30 PM
CRA OFFICE - 2nd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
914 SISTRUNK BOULEVARD
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33311**

Board Members	Present/Absent	Cumulative Attendance September 2023-August 2024	
		Present	Absent
Ray Thrower, Chair	P	2	0
Edward Catalano	P	2	0
Linda Fleischman	P	2	0
Justin Greenbaum	P	2	0
Jason Hoffman	P	1	1
Christina Robinson, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Carlton Smith [via Zoom]	P	1	0
Nikola Stan	P	2	0

At this time, there are 8 appointed members to the Board; therefore, 5 constitute a quorum.

Staff:

- Clarence Woods, CRA Manager
- Cija Omengebar, CRA Planner/Liaison
- Anthony Fajardo, Assistant City Manager
- Alfred Battle, Deputy Director, Development Services Department
- Lorraine Tappen, Principle Urban Planner
- Tania Bailey-Watson, CRA Senior Administrative Assistant

Communication to the City Commission:

Motion made by Mr. Greenbaum, seconded by Mr. Catalano to request the City Commission consider a Zoning in Progress for properties located in the Central City CRA. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.



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Others:

Troy Liggett, President, Middle River Terrace Neighborhood Association
Jaime Sturgis
Abby Laughlin
Randall Klet
Christian Marcello
Linda Taylor, H.O.M.E.S. Inc.
Guy Kempe, H.O.M.E.S. Inc.
Matt Lyons
Eric Edidin
Ken Zarrilli

Communication to the City Commission:

Motion made by Mr. Greenbaum, seconded by Mr. Catalano to request the City Commission consider a Zoning in Progress for properties located in the Central City CRA. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

I. Pledge of Allegiance

Board members recited the pledge of allegiance.

II. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum

Chair Thrower called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Roll was called, and it was noted that a quorum was present.

Motion by Mr. Catalano, seconded by Ms. Fleischman to allow Mr. Smith to attend via Zoom. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

III. Introduction of Board Members and Staff

Board members and staff introduced themselves.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Regular Meeting: September 6, 2023

Motion by Mr. Catalano, seconded by Mr. Stan to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2023 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

V. Informational Presentation

Troy Liggett, President, Middle River Terrace Neighborhood Association

Mr. Liggett presented his Neighborhood Consensus Rezoning Plan, a copy of which is attached to these minutes for the public record.

Mr. Catalano asked if the Middle River Terrace Neighborhood Association had agreed to this plan and Mr. Liggett stated they had. The Board had voted 8-0 to support the orange area [Sunrise Boulevard and the railroad tracks] and voted 7-1 to support removing the other two areas. He said he would make this presentation to the Central City Alliance the following week.

Public Input

Abby Laughlin did not appreciate that this was being called the “Neighborhood Consensus Rezoning Plan” because she stated they already had consensus, based on public meetings and workshops since 2010 that hundreds of people had attended and contributed to. She objected to the plan’s recommendation that owners could not assemble properties because this denied property rights. She thought the plan was not in keeping with the CRA’s redevelopment plan. She also objected to the changes in parking requirements and said they must have the same exemptions as on the Sistrunk corridor. Ms. Laughlin stated they needed the additional density to encourage redevelopment. She noted the new State “Live Local” law usurped any new local government zoning regulations.

Randall Klet distributed current photos of the 5th Avenue neighborhood with paved swales and inadequate parking. He said redevelopment in this area had not happened because

the “hoops to jump through” were expensive and time consuming. He said this rezoning had been in the works for two decades.

Christian Marcello thought the only way to improve the area south of 13th Street was to rezone it and encourage mixed use. He stated he supported the CRA plan 100%

Linda Taylor, CEO of H.O.M.E.S. Inc., said she had worked in this community for 16 years and their goal had always been to support the neighborhood and revitalization. It was important to provide affordable housing, including rentals, so people could afford to live here and work here. She recalled holding a charette 16 years ago asking the neighborhood what they wanted. The community had indicated they wanted to be known for art, and for being a walkable, bikeable, safe neighborhood. She remarked on the progress on 13 Street since then but said rezoning was needed on the inner streets to address problems there.

Guy Kempe, Director of Real Estate at H.O.M.E.S. Inc., stated prohibiting additional height and the assembling of properties would result in fewer units of affordable housing.

Matt Lyons thanked the Board and staff for the progress that had already been made.

Jaime Sturgis agreed this neighborhood had come a long way but parts were still blighted with drug use and crime. He said the project at 1334 NE 4th Avenue, which was frequently mentioned as an ideal project, was not financially viable. He thought comingling the green area on Mr. Liggett’s plan, the RMM-25 and CB zoning, was a mistake; they were two totally different zonings. Mr. Sturgis also thought that 13th Street and 4th Avenue, as the main thoroughfares, were best equipped to handle traffic and it should not be transferred deeper into the neighborhood. He said density was important to make projects financially viable. He thought depriving owners of property rights was unconscionable.

Eric Edidin said he had purchased a building on 4th Avenue thinking they could assemble it with another property. He did not agree to taking away an owner’s right to assemble properties. He stated allowing additional density would bring in more housing units and lower rents. It would also mean fewer empty lots, less blight, and more people to support the businesses there.

Ken Zarrilli said this area used to be the active core of four neighborhoods. He said they needed to attract investment to rehabilitate the area. He discussed development he had been involved in in Miami and difficulties redeveloping in Fort Lauderdale. To encourage redevelopment in this area, he said they needed changes to the parking requirements. It must be made easier for people to invest in the area.

Mr. Stan and Mr. Fajardo discussed assembling properties, height restrictions and setbacks, as well as incentives. Mr. Fajardo stated staff had developed a market-driven approach.

Ms. Robinson questioned the neighborhood consensus vote and noted there were only 14 owner-occupied single-family homes, out of a couple hundred. She and Mr. Liggett discussed the different housing types currently there in the RMM-15 area. Crime and statistics were discussed. Ms. Robinson had spoken with business owners who were concerned with crime and security, describing homeless people sleeping behind their businesses. She pointed out the 14 owner-occupied homes in the neighborhood and cautioned this did not represent the opinion of everyone in the district. Mr. Liggett responded and talked about his outreach efforts and specific residents he had spoken to who agreed with his plan. He stated he had sent letters to every single-family home in that area, and said surrounding Poinsettia Heights, Lake Ridge and South Middle River supported the position.

Chair Thrower stated he was on the South Middle River Civic Association and they had not seen the presentation, indicating the proposal was presented to the neighborhood board but not to the association. He added that Mr. Liggett may have received blessing from the board but that did not represent the association.

Ms. Robinson talked about the need to educate property owners of the economic benefits of increasing land value. Mr. Smith commented that not everyone was about money.

Chair Thrower noted the meeting was getting off track and asked if other Board members had comments.

Mr. Stan commented on the quality of life and impact to the people's lives, noting it would be hard for some of them so stay there with the rezoning.

Chair Thrower stated they had been working on this plan for twenty years and the only goal was to improve the area, adding that rezoning was needed south of 13th Street.

Ms. Taylor said when neighborhoods were in transition, it was critical for the people in those neighborhoods to have the information they needed to make the best decisions. She stated H.O.M.E.S. Inc. was offering to bring someone to the neighborhoods to teach residents about revitalization.

Chair Thrower thanked everyone and indicated it was an informative presentation.

Mr. Liggett asked if the presentation would be provided to the consultant to be evaluated. Chair Thrower confirmed the input would be provided to the consultant.

VI. Program and Project Status Updates

1) Commercial Incentives Program

Ms. Omengabar said H.O.M.E.S. Inc. had submitted an application to renovate their building's roof. A Call to Africa at 920 NE 13th Street was considering renovating as well but had not submitted an application yet. The new swimsuit business located on NE 13th Street wanted to activate the space behind the building and would apply for funding.

2) Façade and Landscape Program

Ms. Omengebar had received emails from interested parties but they were outside the pilot area. She already had three applications, one of which was complete. She said the Board would discuss expanding the program in the near future.

3) NE 4th Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project

Ms. Omengebar said work had commenced and only the bike lanes were closed. They needed to identify the location of utilities before digging. Work should take a year.

4) Road Closure Light Installation Project

Ms. Omengebar said they were waiting until the November budget clean up because they did not have the \$28,000 yet to purchase the light.

5) Rezoning Project

Ms. Omengebar stated nothing had changed from the last presentation and the consultant was working on revisions. They would hold a few meetings with neighborhood associations, the Central City Alliance and public participation meetings.

Discussion ensued on the Façade and Landscape Program. Chair Thrower asked whether a meeting would be needed to discuss the expansion of the landscape program.

Ms. Omengebar said they would allow the three applicants to finish in order to generate buzz and avoid opening the program with limited funding. Mr. Woods remarked on the timing and limited resources, and wanted to allow the properties an opportunity to finish.

Mr. Catalano asked if there were signs being used. Ms. Omengebar stated she provided yard signs to property owners.

Ms. Robinson said she believed it was time to open the program to NW 3rd Street. Ms. Omengebar suggested adding the item to the November agenda to be discussed thoroughly.

Ms. Robinson stated at the past two meetings the Board had discussed having a workshop to decide what to do going forward. She wanted to ensure the Board was implementing more projects. Ms. Omengebar reminded the Board that staff was waiting on numbers before scheduling a workshop. Should funds and balances become available by November 1st, the workshop could be scheduled at the same meeting.

Chair Thrower asked if both funds and programs could be discussed at the November meeting and Ms. Omengebar confirmed that if they were available, the Board could discuss them. She noted the workshop's purpose was to know how much money was available and to prioritize where it went.

VII. Communication to City Commission

Mr. Greenbaum informed the Board about an application for a storage facility that was going through the Development Review Committee (DRC) and questioned how the application would coincide with the rezoning project. Mr. Fajardo explained the City Commission could take formal action via a zoning in progress and explained what that meant.

Ms. Omengabar informed the Board that they had been in communication with the storage facility project's representative and made it known that the agency did not support a storage facility for the space. Mr. Greenbaum asked if it would be beneficial to invite the storage representative to make a presentation to the Board so they could decide if a communication to the City Commission was needed. Mr. Fajardo clarified that the City always asked developers to reach out to neighborhood boards who had an interest in their projects. Mr. Greenbaum asked if the Board could make a communication to the DRC or the Planning on Zoning Board.

Mr. Fajardo advised that the Board could make a communication to the City Commission requesting they consider a zoning in progress. That would start the process, and then the City Commission would talk about it at a meeting and City Attorney or Interim City Attorney will be able to opine on it.

Mr. Greenbaum asked if neighborhood compatibility was one of the criteria for that site and Mr. Fajardo confirmed that it was if the project was 100 feet from residential development. Mr. Fajardo cautioned the Board that even if the City Commission enacted a zoning in progress, the developer has already submitted the application, so It may not affect it.

Motion made by Mr. Greenbaum, seconded by Mr. Catalano to request the City Commission consider a Zoning in Progress for properties located in the Central City CRA. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Election of Officers

Mr. Greenbaum nominated Mr. Thrower for Chair, until his term ends, seconded by Ms. Robinson. In a voice vote, Chair Thrower was elected unanimously.

Mr. Catalano nominated Ms. Robinson for Vice Chair, seconded by Mr. Stan. In a voice vote, Ms. Robinson was elected unanimously.

IX. Old/New Business

- Miscellaneous

Mr. Liggett requested the Board hold a meeting at 5:30 so more members of the public could attend.

- November Agenda Suggestions

1. Discussion of expansion of the Residential Façade and Landscape Program

Mr. Stan requested putting an update item on the agenda for the rezoning project with all of the opinions that had been presented and the changes the consultant could make. Mr. Woods said they would provide the consultant with Mr. Liggett's presentation and staff would consult with him.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on November 1, 2023.