

City of Fort Lauderdale

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

Monday, November 7, 2016

12:00 PM

**Joint Workshop with the Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights
CRA Advisory Board**

City Commission Conference Room

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

***FORT LAUDERDALE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS***

***JOHN P. "JACK" SEILER - Chair
DEAN J. TRANTALIS - Vice Chair
BRUCE G. ROBERTS - Commissioner - District I
ROBERT L. McKINZIE Commissioner - District III
ROMNEY ROGERS Commissioner - District IV***

***LEE R. FELDMAN, Executive Director
JOHN HERBST, City Auditor
JEFFREY A. MODARELLI, Secretary
CYNTHIA A. EVERETT, General Counsel***

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

Also Present: Executive Director Lee R. Feldman, City Auditor John Herbst, Secretary Jeffrey A. Modarelli, General Counsel Cynthia A. Everett, Jonathan Brown Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights (NWPFH) Area Manager

Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights CRA Advisory Board Members

Present: Chair Ron Centamore, Vice Chair Sonya Burrows, Leann Barber, Alan L. Gabriel, Esq., John Hart, Dylan Lagi (arrived at 12:44 p.m.), Steffen Lue (arrived late), John P. Wilkes, Esq.

Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights CRA Advisory Board Members

Not Present: Jessie Adderley, Mickey Hinton, John D. Hooper, Scott Strawbridge

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Seiler called the Joint Workshop with the Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights CRA Advisory Board to order at 12:07 p.m.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

[16-1410](#)

Discussion - Board Business

Chair Seiler thanked the Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board (Advisory Board) for making themselves available to meet with the Community Redevelopment Agency Board (CRA Board). Chair Seiler noted for members of the Advisory Board that the restructuring of the seating at a Workshop meeting is intended to promote better interaction among the attendees.

Ron Centamore, Chair of the Advisory Board, thanked the Commission for the meeting with the Advisory Board and gave brief opening remarks. Chair Seiler commented on the need for the Advisory Board to capitalize on the City's recent economic growth and expansion and the need for the CRA Board to assist in this endeavor.

Jonathan Brown, Area Manager of the Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights (NWPFH) CRA, advised Chair Seiler that the two items for

discussion for this meeting includes:

1. The direction the CRA Board would like to see the Advisory Board follow going forward; and
2. The composition of the Advisory Board to ensure members can move forward with the vision of the CRA Board.

Discussions began with Chair Seiler raising the issue of the adequacy of the composition of the Advisory Board to ensure the right talent is in place to address its needs. He requested the members of the Advisory Board to express their thoughts on anything lacking in the current composition of the Advisory Board regarding skills or expertise. He stated the reason the CRA Board needs this input is to focus on new appointments to the Advisory Board.

Mr. Centamore said he thought there is a good composition of the Advisory Board and also noted their dedication and the scrutiny they give applicants for the NWPFH CRA's programs and incentives.

Chair Seiler noted there are three current vacancies and asked what types of qualifications and expertise the Advisory Board feels is necessary to fill these positions. Commissioner McKinzie raised the issue of losing good talent due to conflicts of interest with the past and future Advisory Board members. Mr. Centamore noted the recent resignation of Vicky Shift due to her having a conflict of interest with her employer.

Mr. Brown discussed his recommendation to the CRA Board for members to have experience in the areas of housing rehabilitation projects, first-time homebuyers, and new construction of single family homes. Mr. Brown recommended the appointment of a general contractor with expertise and solid input in those areas. Comments and discussions continued on the City Staff's expertise in these sectors and the need to have an Advisory Board member that has this type of knowledge, background, and experience.

Commissioner McKinzie said there needs to be balanced input from both the Advisory Board and City Staff on incentives. Further discussions continued on the topic of incentives focusing on the need to consistently move forward with the CRA's goals and its purpose of eliminating slum and blight in all CRA areas of the City. Commissioner McKinzie spoke about addressing the current troubled areas in the NWPFH CRA that include individual stores, industrial zones, and

junkyards that are in need of rehabilitation and require appropriate focus. Vice Chair Trantalis agreed and noted Sistrunk Corridor as a successful example. Vice Chair Trantalis also stated it is not the job of the CRA to redevelop every square foot in the NWPFH CRA; rather, the CRA should provide an inviting environment to attract and motivate private investors. It was noted that there is still much to be done in the Sistrunk Corridor and the need exists to sustain in order to ensure success.

Mr. Centamore continued the discussion on the potential of the 4th Avenue to 9th Avenue turning into an arts area similar to the Wynwood Art District area of Miami Beach. He also discussed the needs of the Sistrunk Corridor and areas north of Sistrunk. Chair Seiler noted his concern with the NWPFH CRA's timelines. Chair Seiler asked the Advisory Board if it should focus on programs, projects, and concepts or real estate and redevelopment. Commissioner McKinzie noted problems in the Sistrunk and other areas from NW 4th Avenue to NW 9th Avenue that are in need of Code Enforcement. Mr. Centamore agreed that completing the Sistrunk area is a priority. Commissioner Rogers said the demand still exists for housing and recommended projects coming out of the ground to house people that will result in the dynamics of the area changing.

Alan Gabriel, Advisory Board member, commented on the Advisory Board vacancies and conflicts of interest issues. He acknowledged the need for Advisory Board members such as Scott Strawbridge, who has daily knowledge of the area, and the importance of his valuable input to the Advisory Board. Mr. Gabriel noted the need for those with interest in this CRA Area to be on the Advisory Board. Discussions continued focusing on addressing the issue of conflicts of interest.

Mr. Gabriel noted that the Advisory Board had awarded funds in the past and nothing subsequently happening. Shoney's Restaurant was cited as an example. Commissioner Roberts stated that the Advisory Board is not being informed of subsequent actions and details of the approvals and recommendations they had made. Mr. Gabriel noted that previous City staffing issues had negatively impacted the Advisory Board. Commissioner McKinzie noted the CRA Board had addressed this and things should improve moving forward. Chair Seiler noted the importance of keeping the Advisory Board informed and the need for better communication from City Staff.

John Hart, Advisory Board member, discussed the conflict of interest issue and the consistency in how it is being defined. He asked if there was a way to ensure transparency for those having a conflict abstaining

on issues but not precluding them from being a member of the Advisory Board. General Counsel Everett stated that living in or having a business in the CRA Area was not a conflict. However, if a sitting member is requesting or receiving a monetary award, it is a conflict. She noted there is a provision in State Statutes stating the conflict can be waived, but it must be brought before the CRA Board and the City Commission for the conflict to be addressed and waived on a case by case basis. Further discussions and explanations on this issue continued.

Sonya Burrows, Advisory Board Vice Chair, noted that before the amendments to the Advisory Board's programs and incentives, members had recused themselves. Ms. Burrows recommended a safeguard be put in place when programs and incentives are amended, such as a one-year waiting period before an Advisory Board member could apply. Comments and discussions ensued with Mr. Brown noting a previous conflict related to a property tax reimbursement issue.

John Wilkes, Advisory Board member, commented on the subject of waivers and conflicts regarding the CRA Board and the City Commission. City Attorney Everett stated there should not be conflicts on any level noting that conflicts can take various forms and can vary on a case by case scenario.

Chair Seiler commented on recent situations involving an Advisory Board member having conflicts and noted that due to the set of facts, a simple waiver was not an option. Chair Seiler also raised the point of having a defined policy for a waiver and issues associated with perceived conflicts.

City Auditor John Herbst noted the general rule regarding conflicts as being, "you do not do business with your agency." Commissioner Rogers recommended Ms. Burrows' point of instituting a waiting period similar to the restriction on City Commissioners waiting two years before doing business with the City.

John Wilkes, Advisory Board member, asked about the policy regarding members of the Advisory Board with particular talents serving in the decision-making process and focusing on goals of the Advisory Board without putting members of the Advisory Board or the CRA Board in a position of a possible conflict of interest. Mr. Wilkes noted that waivers on a case by case basis are harder to manage.

Chair Seiler asked what the Advisory Board would support regarding a definitive policy definition as to how the CRA Board permits waivers,

time deadlines and member discussions when a possible conflict exists. He noted that this proposed policy should be clearly defined and would allow a waiver as a matter of policy from this point forward. Discussions continued on the City Commission working with the City Attorney to come up with a policy that clearly navigates the issue of conflicts of interest. Chair Seiler said this policy would be circulated going forward to any future appointees and members of the Advisory Board. Chair Seiler noted there was a consensus and Vice Chair Trantalis concurred that this is a good start.

Chair Seiler asked for confirmation as to the Advisory Board's position on mandating members having specific qualifications such as being an architect, a contractor, or a developer. Vice Chair Trantalis commented on this, and there was a consensus that these positions should not be mandated. Chair Seiler asked the Advisory Board for its recommendations for current Advisory Board vacancies and to please let him know as he will be filling these positions.

Commissioner McKinzie noted that the Advisory Board member who had recently resigned did not participate in the discussions regarding Advisory Board's amendments.

Chair Seiler asked for clarification from the Advisory Board as to future expenditures, asking whether to spend money on programs to create activities and events, housing in the district, redevelopment, or if there is a percentage the Advisory Board would recommend.

Mr. Centamore stated he had never been an advocate of events and felt that the money should go into rebuilding and housing to make the neighborhood attractive. Chair Seiler confirmed Mr. Centamore is a proponent of infrastructure. Vice Chair Trantalis asked if any of the previous events in the NWPRFH CRA attracted developers. Mr. Centamore stated that after speaking with developers, events do not necessarily have an impact on their decisions.

Ms. Burrows raised the issue of a maximum number of nine members on the NWPFH CRA Advisory Board. Chair Seiler confirmed the CRA Board was not mandating a smaller Advisory Board. Mr. Brown noted he welcomes the input of all board members to inform the CRA Staff about issues and concerns in their neighborhoods. Ms. Burrows confirmed there has never been a problem with having a quorum at the Advisory Board meetings.

Ms. Burrows commented that she saw a benefit from having events in the

area to attract developers. She would also like to see money spent on rehabilitating, repurposing and redeveloping what currently exists west of the railroad track, focusing on the CRA's objectives to eliminate slum and blight and bring about economic growth. Vice Chair Trantalis noted the government could only do so much and the market forces must take over at some point. Chair Seiler cited Flagler Village as an example of Vice Chair Trantalis's point. Ms. Burrows noted that as a result of the City's Operational Audit, the reasons why some programs did not work were made clear. Ms. Burrows stated she hoped the issues pointed out in the Operation Audit would be identified and addressed.

Mr. Gabriel discussed the benefits of events in the community and recommended continued funding of events for the people who reside in NWPFH CRA. Mr. Gabriel also noted infrastructure is also necessary, citing Sistrunk Boulevard as an example. He suggested a combination of infrastructure and event promotion serves to attract the interest of developers.

Leann Barber voiced concerns regarding her property in Flagler Village stating she had rehabilitated the property. Ms. Barber stated her concern with high-rise buildings in the area to accomplish the goal of higher density. She recommended the idea of empowering current residents already living in the area to do things to improve the area and suggested the Advisory Board pursue this goal. She also expressed concerns with the Advisory Board giving large amounts of funding to developers who are creating residences that current area residents could never occupy. Vice Chair Trantalis noted the need for residents and business owners in the area to have disposable income to promote economic growth. Ms. Barber recommended the Advisory Board fund things that would marshal the energy of those currently in the community such as grants and small business loans.

Mr. Wilkes said that there is no universal answer and each of the CRAs has different needs and solutions. He suggested that in the Flagler area, capitalization is no longer necessary, and funding could go to other parts in the NWPFH CRA. Additionally, there is a need to recognize there are different needs in various areas of capital and infrastructure, programs and events, and marketing and incentives. He acknowledged the need to refocus on the Progresso area and western portions of the NWPFH CRA and to embrace the uniqueness of those areas. He stated clear goals are necessary to develop programs that are a good fit for each of these areas.

Commission Rogers agreed that there should be specific focus areas in

NWPFH CRA, getting priorities in place, and shifting the strategy to what is working. Steffen Lue, Advisory Board member, noted there should not be just one focus area but prioritizing what is most important and focusing on those priorities.

Dylan Lagi, Advisory Board member, addressed the issue of zoning as it had an impact on the economic development of the area and recommended following the approved zoning. Mr. Lagi stated he felt the goals of slum and blight can be directly addressed with brick and mortar, but events and marketing are also important. He asked City Staff for the budgeted amounts for events and marketing in the operating budget.

John Hart, Advisory Board member, discussed the appealing aspects and elements of the Triangle Redevelopment that includes setting up a regional headquarters and their commitment to creating and maintaining 55 jobs in the district. Mr. Hart recommended attracting other businesses that would provide these elements and benefits to the NWPFH CRA. He suggested strategically identifying these types of businesses and the types of housing needs in the NWPFH CRA's focus areas to provide reliable information for recruiting and attracting business activities.

Chair Seiler commented on the NWPFH CRA's marketing expenditures over the past two years. Mr. Centamore raised the issue of the NWPFH CRA's marketing plan, stating the Advisory Board requested updates and backup information in their packages before their meetings and did not receive them. He also expressed his disappointment there was no discussion before the vote on the marketing item because the Advisory Board did not get this information.

Ms. Burrows commented that Mosaic was put on hold numerous times due to changes in City Staff and the need for better communications with the Advisory Board. Vice Chair Trantalis expressed his concern noting there has been consistent visioning despite changes in City Staff. He also questioned the need for Mosaic to champion the visioning that has existed for an extensive amount of time and his concern about the necessity of having Mosaic. Vice Chair Trantalis requested the Advisory Board point out the value Mosaic has provided, stating he is not prepared to continue with Mosaic's contract. Ms. Burrows explained the focus of the visioning for Mosaic and the results of subsequent changes in Staff.

Chair Seiler confirmed his agreement with Mr. Wilkes comments that the visioning needs to prioritize and focus on the 7th Avenue and the west

end. Discussions and observations continued on the refocusing of efforts in the NWPFH CRA.

Mr. Centamore requested a need for improvements in the process, especially when voting on items more than a million dollars, and the importance of having all necessary backup material given to the Advisory Board well in advance to allow for an informed decision when voting. Further discussions continued between Commissioner McKinzie and Mr. Centamore on this issue.

Commissioner Roberts commented on the need for the proper process to ensure progress in the NWPFH CRA. He recommended Mr. Centamore contact the City Commission in situations when the necessary backup is not being provided. Discussions continued on marketing, recruiting and the visioning process for economic development in the focus areas of the west and Progresso areas.

Mr. Brown commented on adopting the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Study recommendations in the Progresso area. Mr. Gabriel stated there should be an understanding that despite the fact that the Advisory Board is still vetting projects and allocating funds that are not in the identified focus areas, going forward the remaining funds should go into the focus areas identified, although there may be exceptions.

Vice Chair Trantalis confirmed the Advisory Board's mission is the same, but the focus is different. Commissioner Roberts agreed stating the ULI Study is more of a critical long-term strategic vision and the strategic plan should become the focus area. Mr. Brown asked the CRA Board if the CRA Staff should accept its current applications and allow the Advisory Board to review them. Vice Chair Trantalis stated the Advisory Board should be given all applications for vetting and consideration. Comments and discussions continued on this topic. Ms. Burrows also noted the importance of the Advisory Board reviewing all applications.

Executive Director Feldman stated he would arrange a presentation of the development activities going on in and around the NWPFH CRA. Executive Director Feldman noted there currently are 57 projects in the entire area and it is import to give the Advisory Board an overview. Ms. Burrows commented on the importance of keeping the Advisory Board better informed.

Executive Director Feldman stated before he can commit to a CRA Board Meeting on December 6, 2016, he needed Mr. Brown to confirm

there would be an Advisory Board Meeting to present the NWPFH CRA in-fill lots issue so it can be addressed at the CRA Board on December 6, 2016. Due to the upcoming holidays, Chair Seiler asked for confirmation that the Advisory Board would have a meeting to address the CRA in-fill lots issue so the CRA Board can meet to discuss this at their December 15, 2016, meeting. It was confirmed there would be a meeting date for an Advisory Board Meeting before the December 15, 2016, CRA Board Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Seiler adjourned the workshop meeting at 2:04 p.m.