



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
CENTRAL CITY REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2024 – 6:00 PM
CRA CONFERENCE ROOM
914 SISTRUNK BOULEVARD, SUITE 200
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 3331

Cumulative Attendance
September 2023-August 2024

Board Members	Present/Absent	Present	Absent
Troy Liggett, Chair	P	6	0
Carlton Smith, Vice Chair	P	9	1
Edward Catalano	P	11	0
Linda Fleischman	P	10	1
Justin Greenbaum	P	10	1
Thomas Mabey	P	1	0
Christina Robinson	P	9	2
Nikola Stan	P	11	0
Bobby Tinoco	P	4	0
Kimber White	P	1	0
Antoinette Wright	P	3	0

Staff:

Susan Grant, Acting City Manager
Anthony Fajardo, Assistant City Manager
Laura Reece, Acting Assistant City Manager
Yvette Wright, Acting Director Office of Management and Budget
Clarence Woods, CRA Manager
Cija Omengebar, CRA Planner/Liaison
Vanessa Martin, CRA Business Manager

Others:

Ross Parker, Owner, Call of Africa Marketing
Mel Lenet, Operations Director, Call of Africa
Joshua Carden, Cultural Affairs and Public Art Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale
MacKendy Philippi, Project Manager II, Transportation Mobility
Blaise Nageon, South Middle River
K. Cruitt, Recording Secretary, Prototype Inc.

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 6:02 p.m. Roll was called, and it was noted that a quorum was present.

Chair Liggett gave special thanks to Susan Grant, Acting City Manager, for attending the meeting.

III. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Mr. Catalano, seconded by Mr. Smith to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2024 regular meeting as corrected. In a voice vote, motion passed 8/3; Mr. White and Mr. Mabey abstained because they were not members then; Ms. Wright had not yet arrived.

IV. **Funding Request – Call of Africa Realty Inc.**

Mr. Ross Parker, owner of Call of Africa Marketing, gave a PowerPoint presentation on proposed renovations and improvements to his existing 11,437 square foot property owned by Call of Africa Realty at 920 N.E. 13th Street.

The project will include the addition of a new fine art gallery, and 4 new retail bays fronting 13th Street which he expects to include a restaurant. They recently renamed the area Studio City. The estimated cost of the project is \$1,456,901 of which just over \$1 million will be self-funded. Their CRA funding requests are: \$125,000 for non-residential façade improvement, \$225,000 for property business improvement and \$62,607 for streetscape enhancement.

Carlton Smith thanked Mr. Parker for all the work he has been doing in the area and asked if he could guarantee a restaurant in that space. Mr. Parker said he could not but would try to hold the space for a good restaurant.

Mr. Smith also asked what the project would do for residents aside from improving the appearance of the area. Mr. Parker stated that the additional retail stores would make the area more pedestrian-friendly with restaurants, bars and galleries once it becomes established; more people will be drawn to the street just with his clients.

Mr. White asked what his wish list timeline was for completion. Mr. Parker said plans had been with City since the end of November, and that his builder is ready to go. Mr. Mel Lenet, Call of Africa's operations director, added that they are in the second phase of comments, nothing major is holding them up and they are well in the process. He estimated the buildout timeline, once approved, at 6-8 months.

Ms. Wright stated it sounds like an amazing project and asked if they anticipated a significant amount of disruption to traffic flow during construction. Mr. Lenet said no as there will be a lot of parking; Mr. Parker added there would be 30 spots of their own for staging.

Ms. Wright also asked if there was a standard for how their funding requests are applied to each category as they were asking for almost 30% of their cost to be

funded by the CRA. Mr. Lenet stated they had taken the work that was applicable to each program and the only portion they were low on is the streetscape because there isn't as much within the right of way; they were well under in the other programs. Ms. Omengabar added that the project is on 13th Street, a focus area, so they can provide funding up to 90%, noting that this project is mostly self-funded.

Mr. Stan noticed that the existing shade trees were removed from the renderings. Mr. Parker stated that those trees had lifted the sidewalk and that the coconut palms would stay; he has been fighting for trees that don't disrupt the sidewalks and have a 12 foot spread.

Mr. Tinoco asked if they planned to add a mural to the building. Mr. Lenet advised that while murals are great, that wouldn't be the right approach for their building or target tenants.

Mr. Tinoco also asked if the gallery would be open to the public. Mr. Parker said yes, they will initially be closed on Mondays and Sundays but hope to be open seven days a week.

Motion made by Mr. Greenbaum, seconded by Mr. Catalano, to recommend approval of the funding request as presented. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Marjorie McGinley, Treasurer of the Central City Alliance advised that they think this project will be transformational and hopes the board will support it.

Chair Liggett inquired about the process for transferring grant funding. Vanessa Martin, CRA business manager, advised she would do a budget transfer contingent on receiving the recommendation.

V. Discussion: NE 13th Street Beacon Sculpture

Mr. Joshua Carden, Cultural Affairs & Public Art Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale gave a PowerPoint presentation. He indicated that the Central City Unity Beacon had not been constructed with techniques to ensure longevity. The hand poured resin was not suitable for public art in Florida and had started to crack; the wood base is rotting and the untreated metal is deteriorating. He presented two options, the first of which was conservation, noting it would need to be entirely rebuilt and re-commissioned.

Chair Liggett asked what the estimated cost would be. Mr. Carden estimated the cost to rebuild it to be between \$150,000 and \$200,000 using different materials.

The second option presented by Mr. Carden was to commission a whole new piece, noting that the CRA proposed a contribution of \$150,000 for a new sculpture

which would take 21-24 months; examples of similar pieces made with more durable, hurricane compliant materials were presented.

Mr. Catalano asked how long such a new piece would last. Mr. Carden said 30-40 years with annual or every-other-year maintenance and that the current sculpture had not had any upkeep.

Chair Liggett asked about the funding process and if the City would govern the process. Mr. Carden stated the City would facilitate the project.

Mr. Smith asked whether they would use local or national artists. Mr. Carden said it would depend on the parameters of the call to artist or RFP process; they would work with the neighborhood, advisory board and City Commission.

Mr. Stan asked about the lifespan and conservation of the project. Mr. Carden said the life span would depend on materials used, especially with the salt and humidity in South Florida; that precautions would be taken to ensure it would last longer than the existing piece, and a maintenance plan would be required from the artist.

Ms. Wright asked whether the current piece was safe to remain where it is considering the critical flaws he pointed out. Mr. Carden said he is not an engineer or compliance officer so could not say on behalf of the City. Ms. Wright suggested they have someone look at it to ensure it is safe to stay.

Mr. Tinoco asked how much the initial cost was. Mr. Carden said it was \$100,000 in addition to in-kind contributions from the City as it was in the midst of a streetscape project. Chair Liggett added that the cost included the base and electric.

Mr. Greenbaum asked whether there was artwork already existing that could work for this site to save time and money, similar to Tunnel Top Park. Mr. Carden said there could be, but that best practice would be to have a piece reflective of the community that is site specific; he added there were donations for Tunnel Top and the City had worked with an art advisor to select the pieces.

Mr. White said uniqueness is very important for 13th Street, that the piece will be a focal point so going out for artists is needed to open up ideas.

Motion by Ms. Wright, seconded by Mr. Catalano, to make a recommendation to proceed with commissioning a new piece to replace the existing one with funding at \$150,000. In a roll vote, motion passed 10-1 with Ms. Robinson opposed.

Ms. Robinson asked whether they would be giving the money to the Central City Alliance. Chair Liggett advised the City would requisition and contract, with funding coming from the CRA.

Ms. Robinson asked if maintenance would be included in the \$150,000. Mr. Carden advised that 15% of the contract would be used as contingency, then rolled into a maintenance endowment for the fees.

Ms. Robinson also asked if the base had cost \$100,000, whether we need only fund \$50,000 or \$60,000. Ms. Wright acknowledged her concern and added that the area needed a focal point to attract businesses. Mr. Stan agreed it would be a focus area and Chair Liggett added that the original funding was not through the CRA.

Mr. White commented that they had already seen what other cities have done for \$150,000 and they need to fund 15% additional for maintenance.

Mr. Woods and Ms. Omengabar stated that they cannot fund maintenance. Mr. Carden said that no maintenance would be necessary in the first few years; only cleaning at about \$1,000.

Mr. Stan asked if the cost of removing the existing structure was included. Mr. Carden said no, and they would need to offer the artist the first right of refusal with removal at the artist's expense; if the artist did not want the sculpture back, the City would unbolt and remove it.

Mr. Tinoco commented they should only consider local artists and pay attention to the corrosive behavior of metal in Florida. Mr. Carden said the City would work on a community survey in conjunction with the Board, the call to artists would reflect the results of the survey and the Public Art and Placemaking Board would make the final recommendation to the City Commission; he did not recommend going out exclusively to local artists. Mr. Fajardo added they can put a preference for local artists and Mr. White stated the fabricating could take place here.

Public Comment

Marie McGinley said she was involved with the process from the beginning, and that the community spent a long time deciding on the shape. The community foundation, in partnership with Art Serve and Homes Inc., paid for the sculpture and required that the community make it. Ms. McGinley asked that the Board listen to the community to see whether they want a re-creation of the rendering in the proper materials or a brand-new piece. She added the reason it wasn't maintained is no one knew who owned it, she then explained the funding and that it included a very solid base.

Mr. Parker did not recommend limiting the selection to local artists, and said stainless steel would be the best material for the project.

VI. Supplement Funding Request: NE 4th Avenue Complete Street Project, \$80,000

Mr. MacKendy Philippi, Project Manager II, Transportation Mobility gave a PowerPoint presentation a copy of which is attached for the public record. He

stated that this \$1,000,000 project included \$152,000 for the design, and \$865,000 to widen the sidewalks; add trees, landscaping, irrigation and signage; install colored stamped asphalt sidewalks and add new pedestrian lighting. The project manager is Transportation and Mobility. Mr. Philippi added that lighting was intended to be the second phase, but FPL had never created an invoice and were never scheduled. He stated they needed extra funding for the lighting component overrun which includes light pole and light fixture installation; conduit and pole boxes are already installed. Their goal is to complete this grant project by September; they have until the end of December 2024 to submit all their paperwork.

Chair Liggett asked how much of the \$1,000,000 grant was set aside for the light poles, and how much was currently available. Mr. Philippi said there were no funds for the lighting currently; it was to have cost \$106,000 in the second phase.

Chair Liggett said the project was to have been substantially completed by June 1st and the Flexi-Pave has not been installed around the trees; he added there are 3 or 4 deadlines that had not been met so he is very hesitant to authorize this funding without a full accounting of the project. He stated that during a walk-through with Mr. Philippi, FPL, the contractor and engineer during the second week of June, he learned the City had not followed up on receiving a signed contract from FPL since 2021. He was told that FPL would have to put in their own boxes and conduit to install their lights so their best bet is to hire a contractor. Mr. Philippe stated that they had been in contact with FPL on a consistent basis and that that meeting was a follow-up, some of the people from FPL were not very familiar with the project and that things were clarified after that meeting. Mr. Philippi added that there was nothing wrong with the specifications. After additional discussion, Mr. Fajardo stated that while he wasn't familiar with that aspect of this project, he constantly gets conflicting information from FPL and had observed substantial turnover dealing with them can be a challenge.

Mr. White reminded the group that streetlights for NE 4th Avenue were never in the \$1,000,000 first-phase budget and they need to be funded. He added that FPL was going to charge \$106,000, that the first phase is over budget, and they could get it done for less by not using FPL.

Mr. Woods clarified that FPL wasn't saying what was installed was incorrect, but that FPL has to use their own materials and would not install over the work of another contractor.

Chair Liggett asked if approved today, when it would be installed. Mr. Philippi said it would take a budget amendment and he would have to get two more quotes; it could take 45-60 days after he received the quotes.

Ms. Wright said that the sidewalk is not safe at night and there is a critical flaw because a whole block was not done; she agreed they need to authorize the

lights. Ms. Wright asked for an update on the project and whether they would consider fixing the block that was not done in phase two. Mr. Philippi explained that weather days and other events caused delays which are typical in construction; they will install the Flexi-Pave for existing trees, having not been able to do that on wet root systems, and that new trees already have Flexi-Pave on them. He added the project is substantially completed and they have until September for final completion.

Motion by Mr. White, seconded by Ms. Robinson, to recommend that the CRA appropriate \$83,000 from CIP funds of the \$1.3 million to complete the lighting of the streets. In a roll vote, the motion passed 10-1 with Chair Liggett opposed.

VII. **Discussion and Recommendation: Fiscal Year 2025, \$1,248,621**

Ms. Yvette Matthews, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget gave a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is attached to these minutes for the public record. Ms. Matthews reviewed the funding and expenditure allocations within the Central City CRA and CRA CIP budgets so the Board could begin discussions on what projects and incentives they wanted to allocate within the fiscal year; she indicated that funds could be moved between incentive projects. Unexpended FY 2024 incentive funding is \$1,562,630 with the roll-over from last year; all funds must be expended or returned to the City and the City Commission has historically re-appropriated funds back to the CRA upon request.

Mr. Smith asked if the pie chart numbers could be changed. Ms. Matthews said yes, and that those figures are considered starting points.

Ms. Wright asked if the land use amendment work that was planned for this year was completed, and if any of those costs needed to be a line item in the budget. Ms. Matthews said that an open encumbrance would automatically be rolled over; if there isn't a current encumbrance, a budget amendment would be needed to appropriate the funds.

Mr. White asked if funds for a streetscapes consultant would come from this fund. Ms. Matthew said yes.

Ms. Wright asked if the TIF amount allocated by the City could be increased, noting that other CRAs have much bigger budgets. Mr. Woods said it will grow over time; Ms. Mathews added that one of the unique features of the Central City CRA is the funding comes from just the city's millage rate.

Chair Liggett asked about the \$19,985 encumbrance. Ms. Matthews advised that would have been an already-approved incentive.

Chair Liggett said that Mr. White raised a good point about needing to pay for a consultant this year and asked whether that should be addressed here as a budget amendment. Mr. Woods said it would probably come from next year's budget. Ms. Omengbar reminded the Board that they discussed about \$200,000, and the funds

would have to be in place. Ms. Matthews stated the funds could be moved to Services and Materials from Incentives. The group agreed to move the funds now.

Motion by Ms. Wright, seconded by Mr. White, to recommend accepting the budget as proposed with one revision, which is to allocate \$200,000 from Incentives to Operations for the streetscape design consultant contract. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

VIII. **Discussion on Streetscape Improvements and Infrastructure**

Ms. Omengebar gave a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is attached to these minutes for the public record. She stated that the additional back-up that had been sent on discussions from February and April was meant to provide background for the new members. The community was surveyed for their input on prioritizing projects and the Board agreed to put \$1.3 million aside, but that was not enough to fund all the projects. The options were to estimate the cost for all the projects or establish a uniform standard; she asked that the board re-affirm which direction they wanted to go in.

Ms. Wright asked whether there wasn't already a vote and decision made on which option to pursue, and what had been done in the last four months.

Ms. Omengebar said staff has been having internal discussions with different departments on the second option, and that it takes a while to put together a scope for discussion by the Board; she did not want negative perceptions that staff wasn't doing anything. She added that after those discussions in April, there had been rezoning and other items on the agenda. Ms. Omengebar reminded the board of the project sequence, that she is only one staff and neither an engineer nor project manager, so she must coordinate with other departments having those areas of expertise.

Mr. Fajardo advised that he had spoken with staff earlier and clarified that Ms. Omengebar was responding to Board members that asked why they can't go with an individual project approach. He reminded the Board they could change their decision if they wished, however, he cautioned against that stating that they would be going from a uniform approach to an individual ad-hoc basis and lose consistency.

Chair Liggett stated that when they made this decision in April, he specifically said he didn't want it to take a year to have those designs. He thinks the project prioritization process should be going on now and would like the Board to ask the City to start prioritizing the projects, then come back in 2-3 months with a plan so that when we have the designs they would already have the priorities in order. Additionally, some projects would not be affected by streetscape design.

Mr. Woods stated that they need to manage expectations and while the Board had approved the second option, they were being asked to go back to individual

projects and prioritize them with the consultant; some are streetscape, infrastructure, design standards and guidelines. Chair Liggett clarified that he did not want to stray from what they decided in April. Mr. Woods said it was intended to be a holistic approach. After further discussion, Mr. White advised that Wilton Manors found that things they did not think were streetscapes, were such and it is important to have uniformity. Ms. Robinson agreed with Chair Liggett and suggested they take a step back considering that four members could now be on the board for the next three years, they now have funding and want to improve the community, so she recommended taking a long view look at the process.

Mr. Woods clarified that since the meeting in April, Ms. Omengebar had been coalescing with other departments and there had been movement, they're trying to do procurement which is a lengthy process. Ms. Omengebar added the scope is not ready, they would further define it then bring it back for discussion.

Ms. Robinson suggested it would be more productive to have a conversation about expectations and timeline since they don't have the resources, and asked whether they wanted to revote to make exceptions for emergencies.

Chair Liggett thanked Ms. Omengebar for her presentation.

IX. Discussion on Work Plan Schedule

Ms. Omengebar distributed a proposed FY 2024-2025 work plan and stated she would have it on future agendas on a rolling basis, as it is a fluid document. Chair Liggett liked the idea and said it would be their game plan moving forward.

**X. Old/New Business
Miscellaneous**

Chair Liggett said there were rezoning topics that needed to be addressed, including a parking presentation and that commercial property owners want to come to them in October with a presentation on feedback they want to make to the plan; he added the group had hired an attorney and are prepared to litigate against the plan. The group agreed to wait for the presentation.

There was discussion on whether to have a special rezoning meeting or to dedicate an entire CCRAB meeting for that purpose in September. Mr. Fajardo recommended allowing Mr. Crush and his team the time they needed before deciding.

Ms. Robinson stated that height restrictions had triggered this and all the business owners along 13th need to be considered. Chair Liggett said they could revisit the issue when they hear from the commercial business owners. Mr. White stated that the investors are not happy with the decision, and they need to be heard. Chair Liggett stated the areas that were carved out could not be done yet, that it was not

a decision of this Board, and none of those areas can be done until there is a land use amendment.

Mr. Wright reminded the group that as a point of order, items cannot be discussed or voted on unless they are on the agenda.

August 7th Agenda Recommended Items

1. Nomination and Selection Positions for Chair and Vice Chair
2. Discussion with Deputy City Attorney on Rezoning
3. Property Owners Informative Presentation
4. Façade & Landscape Program Discussion
 - Residential
 - Rebuilding Together

XI. Communication to City Commission

Ms. Wright stated there is an organization operating social services in a residential zoning area and felt the CRA had a role to speak up regarding their application for a permit from the City.

Mr. Blaise Nageon said he is cautiously optimistic that putting pressure to stop the illegal operation which includes feeding and showers would help keep attention on the issue until they find a proper location for their services. Ms. Wright clarified that residents in the community are not against homeless services, but are challenged by their operation in a residential zone and want them to follow the laws.

Motion by Mr. White, seconded by Mr. Catalano, to send a communication to the City Commission that CCRAB opposes the approval of social services facilities by Hope South Florida in their present location at 1100 N Andrews Avenue because the current operations violate local ordinances as written; specific concerns are that it is within 500 feet of a residential neighborhood, 100 feet from a school, 50 feet from a park and abuts several residential properties. The Board opposes the application for any permits related to social services in that location. It would deviate from the strategic plan to eliminate blight in the Central City Community Redevelopment Area. In a voice vote, motion passed 11-0.

Motion by Ms. Wright, seconded by Mr. Catalano, to send Board member Wright on behalf of the CRA to speak at the next available Commission meeting regarding Hope South Florida to provide clarification. In a voice vote, motion passed 11-0.

It was agreed that Ms. Wright would read the comments being communicated to the City Commission at the Special Magistrate meeting on behalf of the Board.

XII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.