



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**City Commission Agenda Memo**  
**CRA BOARD MEETING**

**#19-0714**

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**TO:** CRA Chairman & Board of Commissioners  
Fort Lauderdale Community Redevelopment Agency

**FROM:** Chris Lagerbloom, ICMA-CM, Executive Director

**DATE:** August 20, 2019

**TITLE:** Motion Approving a Forgivable Loan in the Amount of \$125,000 Under the CRA Façade Program Incentive and a Forgivable Loan in the Amount of \$225,000 Under the Property and Business Improvement Program Incentive to the Robert Bethel American Legion Post 220, Inc. located at 1455 Sistrunk Boulevard - (**Commission District 3**)

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**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board of Commissioners approve a forgivable loan in the amount of \$125,000 under the CRA Commercial Façade Improvement Program Incentive ("Façade Improvement Program") and a forgivable loan in the amount of \$225,000 under the Property and Business Improvement Program ("Property Improvement Program") incentive to the Robert Bethel American Legion Post 220 Inc. ("American Legion Post 220"), located at 1455 Sistrunk Boulevard and authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and execute the development agreements and any and all other documents or instruments necessary or incidental to consummation of the transaction, subject to the review of the CRA General Counsel.

**Background**

American Legion Post 220, an organization that has served this community for more than 70 years, has applied for CRA funding to renovate and expand their facility. A location map is attached as Exhibit 1. The application seeks a forgivable loan from the CRA Façade Improvement Program in an amount not to exceed \$125,000 and from the CRA Property Improvement Program in an amount not to exceed \$225,000, secured by a five-year forgivable mortgage on the property.

The American Legion is an organization chartered by Congress in 1919. It provides a variety of programs that benefit the nation, veterans, service members, families, youth and ordinary citizens. These programs make a difference to hundreds of thousands of lives each year.

Post 220 is a local post in existence since 1947. It provides ROTC scholarships, academic scholarships, sponsorship of a little league baseball team, targeted food giveaways,

Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets to veterans and other services, in addition to providing fellowship to its veteran members. It maintains a Women's Auxiliary Unit which enhances their ability to serve area veterans, youth and children, needy families and the community. The Auxiliary works with Post 220 in providing services to the community with an additional focus on women veterans, children and youth services and supplies to disabled veterans. Additional information about Post 220 is attached as Exhibit 2.

Post 220 occupies a 3,114 square foot parcel and 960-square foot building at 1455 Sistrunk Boulevard. The building is 68 years old and is functionally obsolete. Both the size and condition of the facility makes it difficult for Post 220 to attract new members, provide services to the community or to allow for fundraising activities necessary for the long-term sustainability of the organization. The building lacks a kitchen, handicap accessibility and sufficient meeting and activity space.

The small building would be gutted, renovated and expanded at a total cost of approximately \$374,000. The proposed improvement would almost triple the size of the facility to 2,544 square feet, and will offer a large meeting area that can also be rented out to members and others for special events serviced by a new modern kitchen; new accessible restrooms; an outdoor social gathering and event area; and office and storage space in a new contemporary, open and attractive facility with high ceilings, ample windows, street frontage and good visibility. Photos/plans and illustrations of the Project are attached as Exhibit 3 and Construction Cost Estimates are attached as Exhibit 4. Corey Ritchie, CRA Project Manager and state-certified general contractor, will directly bid and manage this construction project. He estimates the total project cost between \$374,000 and \$390,000. At their meeting of July 8, 2019, the membership of the American Legion Post 220 approved this project.

Sistrunk Boulevard is a CRA Focus Area which requires a funding match from applicants but allows for flexibility in the maximum funding limits under the CRA Façade Improvement Program and Property Improvement Program. Under the Façade Improvement Program, these funding limits are 100 percent of the first \$75,000 and 95 percent of the cost between \$75,000 and \$125,000, not to exceed \$125,000. Under the Property Improvement Program, funding limits are 90 percent of the project cost not to exceed \$225,000. The CRA Board can increase these limits on a case-by-case basis in the Focus Area. Post 220 has sufficient funding to cover their funding match and still have an adequate operating reserve. In 2017, the Florida Panthers Foundation provided a \$25,000 donation to Post 220 to help them with this capital project (Exhibit 5).

It will take approximately six months for the project to complete development review, construction documents and permitting, and another eight months to bid the project and complete construction. The CRA Advisory Board unanimously recommended funding this project at their meeting of July 16, 2019.

#### Consistency with the NPF CRA Community Redevelopment Plan

The Northwest-Progresso-Flagler Heights Community Redevelopment Area ("NPF CRA")

Community Redevelopment Plan is designed, in part, to stimulate private development of areas planned for commercial development. This project is consistent with the NPF CRA Community Redevelopment Plan which provides for direct physical improvements to enhance the overall environment, improve the quality of life and attract sound business and commercial development that provide employment and job opportunities.

Per the CRA plan, the CRA will establish incentive programs to address redevelopment obstacles. The CRA Five-Year Program, which is incorporated as part of the Plan, identifies strategic objectives, goals and measurements that include targeting and attracting businesses, retail uses and industries to establish a presence in the redevelopment area. In addition, it calls for investing in development projects that create job opportunities for area residents, promote public private partnerships and investment in the redevelopment area.

The Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (ULI TAP Report) of 2014 recommended by the CRA Advisory Board and approved by the CRA Board of Commissioners recognized the CRA as a place of strong community pride and unique African American heritage. It recommended expanding opportunities for existing stakeholders to participate in the revitalization of the area and to put together incentive packages that focus on existing buildings and people who have already invested in and own property in the community.

Providing CRA assistance to American Legion Post 220 for renovating and expanding its facility at 1455 Sistrunk Blvd is consistent with both the Community Redevelopment Plan and the recommendations of the ULI Tap Report.

### **Resource Impact**

Fiscal Year 2019 Fiscal impact to the CRA of \$350,000 in the following accounts:

Funds available as of August 1, 2019					
ACCOUNT NUMBER	INDEX NAME (Program)	CHARACTER CODE/ SUBJECT NAME	AMENDED BUDGET (Character)	AVAILABLE BALANCE (Character)	AMOUNT
119-CRA091902-4203	Property & Business Improvement Program FY 19	Other Operating Expenses/Redevelopment Projects	\$960,955	\$585,995	\$225,000
119-CRA091901-4203	Commercial Façade Improvement Program FY 19	Other Operating Expenses/Redevelopment Projects	\$382,000	\$296,347	\$125,000
				<b>TOTAL ►</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>

### **Strategic Connections**

This item is a *Press Play Fort Lauderdale Strategic Plan 2019* initiative, included within the Neighborhood Enhancement Cylinder of Excellence, specifically advancing:

- Goal 5: Be a community of strong, beautiful and healthy neighborhoods

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan: We Are Community and We are Prosperous*.

**Attachments**

Exhibit 1 - Location Map and Broward County Property Appraiser Information  
Exhibit 2 - Additional Information  
Exhibit 3 - Photos/Plans and Illustrations of the Project  
Exhibit 4 - Construction Estimates  
Exhibit 5 - Florida Panther Foundation Donation  
Exhibit 6 - Developer's Application for Funding  
Exhibit 7 - PBIP Agreement  
Exhibit 8 - Façade Agreement

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