

APPROVED
BEACH REDEVELOPMENT BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301
MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2015 – 2:00 P.M.

FEB 2014/JAN 2015

MEMBERS	REGULAR MTGS		SPECIAL MTGS		
		Present	Absent	Present	Absent
Anthony Abbate, Chair	P	6	0	4	0
Ina Lee, Vice Chair	P	5	1	4	0
Thomas B. McManus	A	3	1	3	1
Dan Matchette	P	6	0	4	0
Melissa Milroy	P	4	2	4	0
Andy Mitchell, Jr.	P	4	2	3	1
Judith Scher	P	6	0	4	0
Tim Schiavone	P	5	1	3	1
Shirley Smith	P	5	0	4	0
Aiton Yaari	P	4	2	3	1

Staff

Don Morris, Economic Reinvestment Administrator
Eileen Furedi, Clerk II
Jenni Morejon, Deputy Director, Department of Sustainable Development.
Emilie Smith, Budget Manager
Laura Reece, CIP Assistant Grant Manager
Tom Green, Engineering Design Manager
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Guests and Presenters

Paul Kissinger, EDSA

Communications to the City Commission

The Board voted unanimously to send the following communications to the City Commission:

1. While the Board is in favor of the staff's recommendations, the Board noticed that the City has a \$32 million contract to build the aquatic center that in the Board's view, is unlikely to be met. In City staff's report on the development of the aquatic center, the budgetary consideration was much greater than the contract amount. The builder had attended the Board's meeting and indicated the cost would be more than the contract amount. The Board would like the Commission to take a close look at the contract and determine if they wanted to go forward with it.

2. The Board agrees that the three key anchors/priorities of the beach redevelopment area are: The A1A/Oceanfront public space; the marina expansion and the aquatic facilities.

3. The Board has an important interest in an RFP process and/or the unsolicited proposal for the marina and wants to be kept abreast of any developments.

I. Call to Order/Roll Call – Anthony Abbate, Chair

Chair Abbate called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Quorum Requirement

As of this date there were 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 would constitute a quorum. It was noted there was a quorum at the commencement of the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes – Anthony Abbate, Chair

- **November 17, 2014**

Motion made by Ms. Lee, seconded by Mr. Yaari, to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2014, meeting.

III. Beach Improvement Projects - Don Morris, Economic Reinvestment Administrator

- **Review of Projects and Budget**
- **Review of CRA Goals and Plan Objectives**

Mr. Morris provided a Power Point presentation, a copy of which is attached to these minutes for the public record.

Mr. Green confirmed that the total CRA contribution would be \$26.8 million.

Chair Abbate said the documentation was very helpful and the Board's task was to review the recommendations and ensure that the goals and priorities were aligned with the goals and objectives of the plan.

- **Recommendation of Priorities - Paul Kissinger, EDSA, Inc.**

Mr. Kissinger recalled that the original goal was to have no net loss in parking between the Las Olas/A1A lot and the Intracoastal lots: 835 spaces. They had reviewed the data to determine if they really needed that much parking. They concluded that they did not want to lose any parking on the beach, counted toward the total the 534 spaces proposed at the aquatic center and dropped parking garages. Mr. Kissinger said the garage on the Intracoastal lot could be 50 feet in height, which would decrease the cost of the garage and reduce the CRA contribution from \$15 million to \$4 million. This

garage would also make money within the first year and offset costs, enabling them to do some of the other projects.

Mr. Kissinger said having parking garages along the entire barrier island was preferable to having "one big, honkin'" garage in one place in the middle, to spread the uses. Mr. Matchette said it seemed there would be a heavy concentration of parking at the south end of the beach. Mr. Kissinger stated there were discussions underway for other parking farther north. Mr. Matchette was concerned about the number of cars accessing the parking at certain times in denser traffic areas. Mr. Kissinger said the density of parking was at Las Olas and A1A.

Mr. Yaari felt converting the Las Olas/A1A parking lot to a park would take the pressure off that area and move traffic west. Ms. Lee asked if cost had been factored in to run a tram from the four-story garage to the beach. Mr. Kissinger said this would be operational, not a capital improvement. They wanted to have a bit of a contingency to figure out how to make this work.

Chair Abbate stated Atkins' design/development estimate for the aquatic Center was \$41-46 million, above the \$33 million they were discussing by a considerable amount more than the contingency. Mr. Morris replied that Atkins' figure was an estimate, but the City had a guaranteed maximum price.

Ms. Scher asked if they had made a decision about a four-story garage by the bridge and Mr. Morris said there had been some agreement and some Board members had issues with it, but this was staff's professional recommendation. They were proposing the garage on the north side of the bridge.

Mr. Morris explained that the marina and promenade would be built around the parking garage. Mr. Yaari suggested that the rpf for the marina include a requirement to create the promenade; this would leave the City \$11 million to use elsewhere. Mr. Kissinger agreed this was an opportunity, but said, "The clock is ticking on spending this money."

Mr. Mitchell said this was very impressive and it gave them the opportunity to invite private development of the marina and promenade. Mr. Matchette pointed out that the proposed parking garage was in the same place the parking garage would be for the hotel project, which converted surface parking to marina space and eliminated the promenade.

Ms. Milroy asked what the City Commission had decided about the additional items for the aquatic center: the screening on the garage and moving the pools. Mr. Morris said the \$41 million estimate included moving the pools, but staff was not recommending that be done; the pools would meet all requirement for a successful facility. The screening of the garage was also not included in the \$41 million. Mr. Kissinger said the

screening was still a challenge. Mr. Morris confirmed that the aquatics complex as proposed was adequate for the YMCA and U.S. Dive. Ms. Lee asked how important room nights for the aquatic center were for business owners. Mr. Yaari felt they had “massaged it (the aquatic center plan) from every angle possible” and he wanted to move forward.

Chair Abbate wanted the Board to consider the most essential projects to meet the requirements of their goals: to revitalize business; promote pedestrian activity; stimulate redevelopment; capitalize the rejuvenation of the beach. The question about the aquatic center had always been how much to spend and what the return would be. He agreed that “head in beds” was important but there was another dimension to the beach economy: people who used the beach and retail establishments but did not stay in hotels. Chair Abbate said the question was how to distribute the money in a way that would generate the maximum potential for the beach. Mr. Yaari felt staff had done their best to fit their needs into the budget.

Mr. Matchette thought the marina aspect of the project should be weighted fairly heavily and he still had lots of questions about the aquatic center. He stated this was not a public use facility like a park, so they were basically subsidizing filling hotel beds. Mr. Matchette was concerned about authorizing a project that would be a tax drag on the City. Mr. Morris remarked that every public improvement would cost City for maintenance. The aquatic complex would not only put heads in beds, it would also put people in restaurants and retail establishments.

Chair Abbate said the question was what it would take to bring the aquatic facility up to the level needed to be competitive and world class again. He asked if staff had investigated these costs. Ms. Scher said the proposed plan for the aquatic center was “just pools.” There was nothing glamorous and it had no “wow;” it was a building with a parking garage. Mr. Morris reminded the Board that the decision had already been made; the City had a contract and they were moving forward. He cautioned that removing parking from the aquatic center would necessitate providing more parking elsewhere.

Mr. Mitchell said the aquatic center provided diversity and attracted families to the beach. The marina was important but he did not think there was sufficient money in the budget to do both. He thought staff had done a good job with the budget they had. The City’s improvements would set the field for developers to come in and they must ensure that developers’ visions and the City’s vision fit.

Mr. Schiavone asked what decision had been made and what the Board could do to move the process along. Mr. Morris explained they had an approved contract for \$32.4 million for the basic aquatic center proposal. There was a proposal for the upgrades the Board had discussed which had not been approved yet, but staff was recommending its

inclusion. Mr. Schiavone asked if they were building a training facility and/or a venue to host international competitions. Mr. Morris stated it would do both.

Ms. Lee asked how events were brought to the aquatic center. Carol Hudson, Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB, said they worked closely with the City and she marketed the destination year-round, sport-wide. Ms. Lee asked if larger events were happy to come to the destination as proposed. Ms. Reece stated they were "waiting and excited...worldwide and also nationwide." Ms. Lee requested an estimate of the annual room nights that would be generated once the facility was built. Steve Zunt, Courtyard Fort Lauderdale Beach, stated they had actualized 14,400 room nights since 2008 related to swim events. He said people who came for events often returned for vacations.

Public Input

Doug Buchan was pleased the Board backed reconstruction of a new, world class facility. Abby Laughlin stated she had looked at the SFA economic analysis of the Swimming Hall of Fame, and it seemed they were spending 40-50% of the budget on "something that should be distributed for maximum potential." She noted that the boat show brought revenue to the City and they did not contribute "one dime" to that. Ms. Laughlin remarked that they could let the aquatic center "go fallow, and fund every single other project that you have and look for other partnership opportunities for the Swimming Hall of Fame."

Patrick Reece, general manager of the Bahia Mar Hotel, said there was return on investment to offset the project's cost. He stated he supported the aquatic center.

Debby Eisinger, resident, thanked the Board for their service to the community. She had heard it said that the aquatic center was to Fort Lauderdale as Wimbledon was to tennis. She hoped they would move forward with the plan. Ms. Eisinger pointed out that the cost to swim was nominal and even residents on a limited budget could easily afford it. She was aware that the marine industry was important, but this was for an elite few; it was not open to everyone.

Jack Newton, resident, said he was pleased with the Board's discussion but urged them to "think more like sociologists." He wondered about spending \$12 million to replace the parking lot across from the Elbow Room, because "The City residents love coming and driving and parking next to the sand." He doubted the need for a splash pond and considered it a liability. Mr. Newton remarked that the parking lot brought in \$1.4 million per year. Regarding the marina, Mr. Newton said the Marine Advisory Board had been working on a marina expansion proposal for five years. He stated the cost for the marina expansion had been exaggerated by City staff at \$25 million; the largest marina builder had stated they would build it for \$20 million. Mr. Newton wondered why there

was no CRA money in the marina project, where they would get economic multiplier effects forever.

Dev Motwani, hotel owner, said the aquatic center had been part of his life since childhood. As a hotel owner, he reported they did not get a lot of business from large conventions, but they had “a ton of business” when the aquatic center was busy. He added that the swim traffic did not reduce in an economic downturn. Mr. Motwani wanted the project to move forward.

Anne Hilmer, Idyllwild resident, said she supported open space on the Intracoastal, but not multiple parking garages clumped in that area; she supported parking on the beach. She reminded the Board that there were only a couple of pieces of City land on the beach and asked them to guard those. Ms. Hilmer stated in December, the Idyllwild board had met with the owners of Bahia Mar, who stated their vision was for “more and more and more hotels,” which would reduce open and viewing space.

Close Public Input

Mr. Matchette questioned why one document stated the cost to develop the aquatic center would be \$44.9 million but the budget was only \$32 million. Joe Cerrone, Recreational Design and Construction, said the \$32 million was the maximum guaranteed price of their contract, but they had been delayed over a year and he estimated it would be an additional \$700,000 - \$800,000. Mr. Matchette said there was a “laundry list” of expensive items not included in the budget and Mr. Cerrone stated, “Some of those were included in their costs and some of them are borne by the City.” Mr. Matchette thought the budget did not mean anything and the project would cost 40% more.

Motion made by Mr. Yaari, seconded by Ms. Lee to approve staff recommendation. In a roll call vote, motion passed 8-1 with Chair Abbate opposed.

Ms. Lee noted it was Mr. Matchette and Ms. Milroy’s last meeting and thanked them for their service on the Board.

IV. Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) - Don Morris, Economic Reinvestment Administrator

Mr. Morris said they had embarked on a FIND grant with a consultant who was on a continuing services agreement. They had been unable to complete the grant cycle before the consultant’s agreement expired and had been unable to get the consultant back on board due to the CCNA requirements. The work that had already been done, that could still be used for the next grant cycles, needed to be funded by the Board. Staff was requesting the Board refund the \$215,000.

Motion made by Ms. Scher, seconded by Ms. Milroy, to approve. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

V. Communications to the City Commission

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Mr. Mitchell remarked that the Board found out about projects after-the-fact and wanted any development of any kind that was being considered to be presented to the Board beforehand to ensure it fit with the Board's priorities.

Mr. Matchette recalled that in the six years he had been on the Board, time and again, they had been approached at the last minute to fund something that, "if you don't fund it right this minute, it's going away." He felt the Board had been a "de facto piggy bank" for some events on the beach and he wanted the Board to be more discerning in its decision making.

Mr. Matchette asked Chair Abbate why he had voted against the staff recommendations. Chair Abbate replied that they were spending a huge amount of money on a facility that did not meet the criteria in the master plan. The community spoke very clearly about shielding the parking garage and he did not understand why this had not been included; the master plan stated there could be no parking visible to the public without shielding. Chair Abbate stated the City needed to clean up its act and the development community needed consistent rules; it was currently a very political, negotiated situation.

Mr. Morris said there was not a lot of new development within the CRA and there was no specific requirement for a developer to present a project to the CRA. Staff

understood the Master Plan requirements and handled applications at the staff level. He could recommend a developer come to the Board but there was no requirement.

Mr. Yaari suggested the Board's agenda include a "Staff News-What's New" item to make the Board aware of proposed projects. Chair Abbate said when there were exceptions or special decisions to be made at the Commission level, it would be nice if the Commission had the Board's input before they made a decision.

Ms. Lee remarked there was also private development that affected the public area about which the Board was not informed, making it difficult for them to integrate it all. She pointed out that any major development had to go to the CBA for review. Ms. Lee felt the Commission paid a lot of attention to the CBA, but they did not pay a lot of attention to the BRB.

Mr. Morris reminded the Board that the City had EDSA now, and he assured the Board that staff was "watching the store."

VI. Old/New Business – none

Mr. Yaari felt that Saturday Night Alive was best thing they done in the CRA and he wanted to bring it back.

Hearing no further business, Chair Abbate adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Attachments:

PowerPoint presentation on beach improvement projects, including budget spreadsheets.

[Minutes prepared by J. Opperlee, Prototype, Inc.]