



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
CENTRAL CITY REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2025 – 6:00 PM
CRA CONFERENCE ROOM
914 SISTRUNK BOULEVARD, SUITE 200
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33311

| Board Members | Present/Absent | Cumulative Attendance September 2024-August 2025 | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---|--------|
| | | Present | Absent |
| Kimber White, Chair | P | 8 | 0 |
| Antoinette Wright, Vice Chair | P | 6 | 2 |
| Christopher Casey | P | 2 | 0 |
| Edward Catalano | P | 8 | 0 |
| Linda Fleischman* | P | 7 | 1 |
| Fiona Johnson** | P | 1 | 0 |
| Thomas Mabey | P | 8 | 0 |
| Thomas Manos | A | 2 | 1 |
| Jason Ross | A | 4 | 3 |
| Nikola Stan | P | 8 | 0 |
| Bobby Tinoco | A | 7 | 1 |

*Ms. Fleischman arrived at 6:05 p.m.

**Ms. Johnson arrived at 6:08 p.m.

Staff:

Chris Cooper, Acting Assistant City Manager
Vanessa Martin, CRA Business Manager
Cija Omengebar, CRA Planner/Liaison
Tania Bailey-Watson, CRA Senior Administrative Assistant

Others:

K. Cruitt, Recording Secretary, Prototype Inc.

Communication to the City Commission:

None.

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 6:03 p.m. Roll was called, and it was noted that a quorum was present.

III. Approval of Minutes – March 5, 2025 Regular Meeting

Motion by Mr. Catalano, seconded by Vice Chair Wright, to approve the March 5, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chair White welcomed Ms. Fiona Johnson as the newest member of the Board.

IV. Discussion and Recommendation:

Modification of Residential Façade & Landscaping Program

Cija Omengebar, CRA Planner, presented an overview of the current Residential Façade & Landscaping Program which was designed to enhance the visual appeal of the neighborhood by focusing on public-facing improvements which contribute to curb appeal and cohesion in the community. A copy of her presentation is available in public record.

It was highlighted that no applications had been received for two- to four-unit multi-family properties. While the CRA had fielded a few inquiries from owner-occupied units for a \$5,000 disbursement instead of \$2,500, they were declined based on current guidelines.

The list of non-eligible expenses were discussed. Chair White felt that owner-occupied, multi-family units should be recognized as a primary residence. Vice Chair Wright requested data on the number of multi-family units so it could be determined whether a large percentage of the population was being excluded. Mr. Chris Cooper, Acting Assistant City Manager, asked Ms. Omengebar to pull data from the GIS on single parcels with multiple units that include a Homestead Exemption for a future meeting.

Ms. Omengebar outlined the current application approval and work-flow processes, and noted that only six of the 15 applications received since 2022 had been completed.

Discussion ensued on the low participation rate and what was perceived to be a cumbersome quote process. Ms. Omengebar clarified that funds are distributed directly to property owners upon completion of the work; they in turn pay the contractors. Mr. Cooper informed Members that the City requires evidence of reaching out to three vendors, as opposed to submittal of three quotes. Members were receptive to his suggestion that the CRA consider applying that standard.

Ms. Omengebar advised that while attempting to find an alternative to the three quotes that are currently required, Procurement raised a concern regarding liability with identifying contractors that could be referred. Ms. Vanessa Martin, CRA Business Manager, referenced the Commitment of Commencement section under Statue 713 as the reason for that concern, and stated she would reach out to Legal to explore the issue further. Ms. Omengebar indicated she would also discuss these issues with Procurement and Legal.

Ms. Johnson requested that Staff follow up with individual owners that had not completed their projects to determine what the specific issues are. Ms. Omengebar agreed to do so.

Discussion continued around the perceived challenges and barriers to participation; the requirement for contractors to be licensed and insured was highlighted in light of the relatively small budget for jobs that would qualify. Vice Chair Wright noted that it is necessary to remove

barriers because after three years, only six homes were completed. She was of the opinion that the spirit of the program is not being executed while funds are available. Chair White agreed that some of the smaller parameters should be stripped for “handyman” work in order for the program to work. Ms. Martin cited success with using the same contractors multiple times in the Northwest Progresso area; she would determine whether they were licensed and insured. Ms. Omengebar highlighted that that area primarily has single-family units; their disbursements were up to \$7,500 as compared to \$5,000 (in this CRA); and those contractors were primarily referred by word of mouth.

Ideas for promoting the program and identifying suitable contractors were discussed. Suggestions included the use of flyers that could include a list of “previously used” or “recommended” contractors, and promoting to contractors that could be interested in the program.

Vice Chair Wright reiterated that it was necessary to look at the program differently. Mr. Casey stated that evidence a property owner reached out to three contractors should suffice if they submit one or two bids; Chair White agreed. Ms. Martin confirmed she would investigate with Legal. Ms. Fleischman suggested they also investigate the use of disclaimers. It was agreed there is a need to move forward; Ms. Omengebar and Ms. Martin were asked to provide feedback from Procurement and Legal at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued on allowing reimbursement for self-improvements given the positive impact that could have on the program. Ms. Martin did not believe that CRAs are able to pay for self-improvements.

Mr. Stan raised the concept of allowing the painting of chain link fences as a way to enhance beautification at a low cost. Members later agreed that should be added.

Ms. Johnson encouraged the planting of hedges in place of fences to be considered, in conjunction with urban forestry initiatives, to supplement beautification initiatives. Mr. Cooper indicated that Staff would look into the Tree Preservation Program as a means to supplement plantings on public property and right-of-ways.

Chair White recalled that Mr. Clarence Woods said he would look into support for lighting at commercial properties. Ms. Omengebar advised that was “in the works” under a separate program that would allow non-profits to apply.

Chair White reiterated the importance of allowing multi-family structures with two to four units to participate, given their prevalence and potential for improving neighborhood aesthetics.

Motion by Mr. Catano, seconded by Mr. Stan, to allow owner-occupied two- to four-unit multi-family structures under the Façade Program within the same improvement parameters that currently apply to single-family homes. In a roll vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Fleischman recommended assembling a package be put together for prospective applicants as a way to communicate what beautification could look like in the neighborhood; it should include a list of approved local contractors. Other members suggested the inclusion of pre- and post-photos, the use of yard signs to highlight completed projects, and guidance on

Code requirements. It was agreed that such a package would educate residents and remove some of the barriers.

Ms. Omengebar highlighted the process required for implementation of program changes; \$150,000 is available for beautification and enhancement of the curb appeal in the CRA.

There was a brief recess between 7:06 p.m. and 7:09 p.m.

Members agreed that funding limits should continue to be available at 100% for homesteaded property, and at 50% for investor properties.

Motion by Mr. Stan, seconded by Mr. Catalano, to increase the program limit from \$5,000 to \$10,000, keeping the same funding parameters. The motion passed unanimously in a voice vote.

Ms. Omengebar highlighted that the current program specifically states that awards are a one-time benefit.

Motion by Vice Chair Wright, seconded by Mr. Stan, to allow applicants to re-apply for the total value of up to \$10,000 for projects that had not been previously covered. The motion passed unanimously in a voice vote.

Eligible expenses were debated in the context of the new limit of \$10,000, and total funding of \$150,000. While discussing Staff resource limitations, neighborhood or civic associations were viewed as a potential additional resource at the aesthetic stage.

Motion by Vice Chair Wright, seconded by Mr. Stan, to add all non-eligible expense items except removal of trees, and backyard landscaping to an eligible expenses list, with the clarification that fencing improvements will be allowed if they are superficial and in the front of the house; exterior lighting will be allowed in the front of the house if affixed to the building and landscaping. The motion passed unanimously in a voice vote.

V. Informative Discussion: House Bill 991 and Senate Bill 1242

Ms. Vanessa Martin, CRA Business Manager explained how CRAs could be significantly limited or eliminated by the recent filing of House Bill 911 and Senate Bill 1242. She noted that she just received notification that changes were made; they included “mark-outs” and additions.

Mr. Cooper clarified that the House Bill had been tabled, and the Senate Bill remains active. As of Friday, the amended version of the Senate Bill allows existing CRAs to continue, but it will restrict new CRA creation and boundary changes; it will also limit CRA funding initiatives due to findings of misuse. Mr. Cooper shared that it appeared the Central City CRA would not be greatly impacted. Staff will continue to track progress of the bills, and provide updates accordingly.

Chair White expressed concern about the potential impact on new projects; Mr. Cooper clarified the ban on new projects was removed from the current Senate Bill.

VI. Communication to City Commission

None

Chair White took the opportunity to notify Members that the Commission had approved their proposed changes to the CCRAB voting rules at their last meeting. It was noted that the next Board election would be in August 2025.

VII. Old Business Update

Ms. Omengebar provided the following updates:

- Capital Improvement Masterplan. Five proposals had been received during the solicitation process; a Selection Committee Meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2025. Subsequent approval would be required from the CRA Board of Commissioners and the City Commission.
- Call of Africa. Chair White advised that the project was approved at the last City Commission meeting. Ms. Omengebar added they are in the contract execution phase.
- NE 4 Avenue Complete Street Project – Light Poles. She will share the schedule once the contract is signed, and anticipates that completion by December 2025 as the lights have to be purchased and installed. Chair White advised that the project is with the permitting department at FPL.
- Land Use Plan Amendment. The RFQ was withdrawn by Procurement because a licensed engineer is not required; the project was re-scoped, and should be reposted the following week.
- Street Paving – 12 Street between NE 5 Terrace and NE 6 Avenue. The road is completed. Chair White observed that they had done a nice job.
- Commercial Safety and Security Enhancement Program. This continues to be a work in progress.
- Andrews Avenue Improvement Corridor. She will follow up with the DOT to schedule a virtual presentation via Zoom; a live presentation was not likely. Chair White clarified that the project scope would include bike lanes, new overheads, new right-of-ways, widening of blocks, cross walks and traffic calming between Sunrise and Oakland Park boulevards; funding has been procured. Ms. Johnson shared that she learned in a recent meeting that a similar project is planned for NE 15 Avenue.
- NE 13 Street Beacon Replacement Project. The sculpture was removed. Chair White understood that the concrete base is usable. Vice Chair Wright requested that that the “shelf” on the circle that impedes traffic be professionally assessed.
- Upcoming meetings.
 - Members agreed to cancel the May meeting due to lack of business.
 - It was agreed that the next meeting would held be on June 11, 2015.

Chair White advised Members that the proposed re-zoning had been approved, and was with Legal. Chris Cooper, Acting Assistant City Manager, added that they are drafting language based on the recommendations provided by the Committee to Staff. Public participation meetings would be scheduled prior to going before the Planning and Zoning Board in August, so there would be additional opportunities for input;. Members were reminded of the appropriate protocol for their participation.

Chair White added that it had been brought to his attention that proposals would be made; he reiterated the importance of adhering to Code of Conduct guidelines. Mr. Catalano disclosed that he was told what is being proposed; it involved setback and total height changes. Mr. Catalano stated the individual was advised that he would listen, but not respond during the SMRCA meeting that was scheduled for the following day. He emphasized that he made it clear there would be no discussion [on the proposal].

Chair White highlighted that this Board made their recommendations; suggested changes may be made through the ensuing process which includes community hearings and Planning and Zoning. He emphasized the importance of not participating in those meetings, and clarified that there had been no changes since to the proposal since it was voted on by the Board.

VIII. New Business Suggestions
None

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.