

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
BOCA RATON COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2009
*1:30 P.M.

*The Regular Meeting of the Boca Raton Community Redevelopment Agency was called to order by Chairman Scott at approximately 4:15 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:

ROLL CALL:

Chairman Constance Scott
Vice Chairman Anthony Majhess
Commissioner Susan Haynie
Commissioner Michael Mullaugh
Commissioner Susan Whelchel

Also attending the meeting were:

Boca Raton City Manager Leif J. Ahnell, Agency Director
Boca Raton City Attorney Diana Grub Frieser, Attorney to the Agency

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

There were no amendments to the agenda.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 14, 2009

Motion was made by Commissioner Whelchel, seconded by Commissioner Mullaugh, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously on a voice vote; Chairman Scott, Vice Chairman Majhess, Commissioners Haynie, Mullaugh and Whelchel voting yes.

REGULAR BUSINESS - PART I - QUASI-JUDICIAL & RELATED PUBLIC HEARINGS:

There were no items for consideration.

PUBLIC REQUESTS:

Lenore Wachtel spoke to special assessments paid by property owners in the Sanborn Square area, opining that beautification was never provided at that location. She indicated that approximately \$2 million was set aside that could be used for the pedestrian spine or Sanborn Square and then stated she was not in favor of public/private partnerships, referring to the debt incurred by taxpayers in connection with Mizner Park and Crocker Partners. Ms. Wachtel urged the Agency to encourage development that is pedestrian-friendly, small, and enjoyable. She then concluded her remarks by touching on the high pension costs for police and fire and, again, suggested an efficiency expert be hired to review fire-rescue operations and the use of equipment.

Glenn Gromann, Chairman of the Downtown Boca Raton Advisory Committee, referred to the Committee's April 22, 2009 letter to the CRA, which contained their suggestions for consideration at the goal setting sessions. They were as follows: 1) final design guidelines for the downtown, 2) pedestrian crosswalks, 3) transportation design for livable communities, and 4) the downtown library. Citing these as critical issues, Mr. Gromann concluded by asking that the Mayor and Council examine these items at the upcoming goal setting sessions.

Responding to Vice Chairman Majhess, the City Manager explained that UDA (Urban Design Associates) was currently working on the final design guidelines and would bring same before the Agency when completed. In addition, based on a request made at the last CRA meeting, Mr. Gindroz was asked to review his schedule in order to make a presentation before the CRA; at this time, Mr. Gindroz was anticipated to appear before the Agency in June or July.

Mr. Ahnell then provided information on the Mizner Park bonds, which were issued in 1989/1990 for approximately \$63 million. He explained that the bonds have been refunded several times and the debt service would be paid in full in 2018. Initially, the City tendered money to help pay for the bonds and maintain services in the downtown; that amount is currently about \$23 million. At this point, the City anticipates a \$2.5 million reimbursement per year from the CRA over the next 10 years, which is approximately the same amount of money that the City fronted the CRA. Therefore, in 2018, the loan should be paid in full, there would no longer be any debt service left on the bonds, and approximately \$7 million in cash flow would come to the City each year. Details were provided on all the above.

REGULAR BUSINESS - PART II – RESOLUTIONS AND REGULAR PUBLIC HEARINGS:

There were no items for consideration.

OTHER BUSINESS:

There were no items for consideration.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

1. Marketing Survey Update

Manager of Administrative Services for Development Services Ruby Childers reviewed the survey results previously provided at the January 12, 2009 CRA meeting and indicated that, at that meeting, it was suggested that additional input be obtained from the survey respondents. Consequently, staff sent a notice to those respondents who had provided contact information about a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 21, 2009. The meeting was held last week; Ms. Childers reported that there were 11 participants, none of whom was a downtown merchant. There followed a summary of comments obtained from that meeting, which were as follows: 1) more flexibility was needed in connection with visual marketing efforts, 2) residential leases should contain an acknowledgement regarding nearby commercial noise, 3) the City should be more supportive of events happening in the downtown, 4) a portion of the CRA budget should be used to hire someone to solely promote downtown activities and work in conjunction with the Historical Society, 5) there was a lack of common interests among merchants, 6) regular events should be restored in the downtown, 7) 80% of businesses along Palmetto Park Road are empty and there is a lack of pedestrian orientation, and 8) marketing efforts should include an annual directory, a downtown website, and weekly events. Details were provided on all the above.

Chairman Scott referred to the Chamber of Commerce and indicated that the CRA could speak with Chamber representatives about possibly assisting the downtown merchants with an annual directory, organizing of marketing efforts, and advertising. Mr. Ahnell advised that when this matter arose before, the Chamber volunteered to help create a merchants' association; however, for some reason it was very difficult to generate interest. In discussion that ensued, it was generally agreed that taking the City out of marketing the downtown and having the Chamber work with downtown merchants was probably the best direction in which to move forward. It was also suggested that any downtown website be serviced by a private entity and that Chamber of Commerce President Troy McLellan be invited to participate in the upcoming goal setting.

The City Manager again advised that Mr. Gindroz was expected to be in attendance at a future CRA meeting, probably in June, to provide an update on the downtown design guidelines. Responding to Agency members, Mr. Ahnell advised that the summer schedules for Council and the CRA were expected to be set at the first meeting in May; therefore, everyone should begin looking at their calendars now.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

The City Attorney had nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:

Commissioner Haynie suggested that a time certain for CRA meetings be reinstated, noting that this topic could be discussed at the goal setting sessions. Commissioner Whelchel suggested scheduling the CRA meeting first and possibly moving the time up to 1:00 p.m. The City Manager advised that staff would review these suggestions.

Commissioner Haynie advised that GGP (General Growth Properties) filed bankruptcy and questioned what the impact would be on Mizner Park. Mr. Ahnell advised that no impact on Mizner Park is anticipated, since it is a very profitable property for GGP; details were provided.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Commissioner Whelchel, seconded by Chairman Scott to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously on a voice vote; Chairman Scott, Vice Chairman Majhess, Commissioners Haynie, Mullaugh and Whelchel voting yes.

The regular meeting of the Boca Raton Community Redevelopment Agency adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m., Monday, April 27, 2009.

Constance Scott, Chairman

ATTEST:

Sharma Hagerty, City Clerk