

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
BOCA RATON COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2006
3:30 P.M.

The Regular Meeting of the Boca Raton Community Redevelopment Agency was called to order by Chairman Baronoff at approximately 3:34 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:

ROLL CALL:

Chairman Peter R. Baronoff
Vice Chairman M.J. Mike Arts
Commissioner Steven L. Abrams
Commissioner Bill Hager
Commissioner Susan Whelchel

Also attending the meeting were:

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

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

Chairman Baronoff advised that he wished to add a report to the agenda under DIRECTOR'S REPORT, immediately following "Discussion with Downtown Visions Committee," regarding General Growth Properties (GGP) and the Cartoon Museum building, to be presented by Al Travassos. There was no objection.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 10, 2006

Motion was made by Commissioner Whelchel, seconded by Commissioner Hager, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Baronoff, Vice Chairman Arts, Commissioners Abrams, Hager, and Whelchel voting yes.

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

(The City Clerk advised that Resolution No. 2006-07-CRA should have been placed under REGULAR BUSINESS - PART II – RESOLUTIONS).

1. **Resolution No. 2006-07-CRA**

A resolution of the Boca Raton Community Redevelopment Agency ("Agency"), amending the rules of the Agency to change the time for regular meetings of the Agency; providing for severability; providing for repealer; providing an effective date

The City Manager advised that this resolution would change the meeting time for the CRA to commence immediately following the City Council workshop meeting or at 1:30 p.m. should there be no workshop meeting. The City Attorney added that this legislation was drafted pursuant to direction provided by the CRA at the last meeting.

Motion was made by Council Member Hager, seconded by Chairman Baronoff, to adopt Resolution No. 2006-07-CRA. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Baronoff, Vice Chairman Arts, Commissioners Abrams, Hager, and Whelchel voting yes.

Commissioner Hager left the meeting at approximately 3:40 p.m.

PUBLIC REQUESTS:

No one came forward to speak.

REGULAR BUSINESS - PART II - RESOLUTIONS:

OTHER BUSINESS:

There were no items for consideration.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

CRA Executive Director Jorge Camejo provided opening comments, advising that members of the Downtown Visions Committee were in attendance to discuss various issues related to the downtown. He added that representatives of General Growth Properties (GGP) were asked to attend this meeting as well, but they were unable to do so. However, he stated that Bill Moston, one of the principles of GGP, had contacted him this morning and indicated that GGP was willing to attend the next CRA meeting to provide an update with regard to Mizner Park. An email from Mr. Moston, confirming the date, was expected; Mr. Camejo would forward same upon receipt.

2. Discussion with Downtown Visions Committee

Chairman Baronoff mentioned that the Boca Raton Historical Society would be conducting a meeting on May 15-16, 2006, to discuss the pedestrian spine and their vision for the downtown. He stated that he wanted to know Committee members' thoughts on the direction they believe downtown should take.

Keith O'Donnell, Chairman of the Downtown Visions Committee, gave an overview as to the history and membership of the Downtown Visions Committee, stating that they review any issues the CRA would like to see studied. Historically, the Committee has worked in an advisory capacity on issues related to infrastructure and beautification; details were provided. The last unfinished project is the pedestrian spine, which has been discussed for at least 15 years; all other projects associated with the Committee have been completed. Mr. O'Donnell voiced support for 1) a formal plan for Palmetto Park Road to make it more pedestrian-friendly, advising that this would complement Mizner Park, 2) the Cartoon Museum building and the Centre for the Arts with more emphasis placed on events occurring in the downtown, and 3) creation of an independent group to assist with coordination of marketing dollars and events in the downtown. He then advocated a deadline for completion of the spine.

Chairman Baronoff stated that the CRA would take a proactive position in moving the downtown forward. He advised that Agency members would like to be informed, on a regular basis, where the Committee stands on the various downtown issues, as reviewed at the last CRA meeting; he suggested that Committee members could provide input during the Public Request portion of the CRA meetings, as these issues arise. Commissioner Whelchel referred to the Boca Raton Historical Society's May meeting and suggested that Committee members attend same. Chairman Baronoff added that a presentation is forthcoming for a signature downtown event and the CRA would appreciate hearing the Committee's thoughts and opinions.

Committee Member Clem Storch tendered questions to the CRA including, but not limited to, the leadership role in assigning jobs and tasks, funding of the spine, who's going to use the spine, whether transportation would be needed to get from Mizner Park to Royal Palm with intermediate stops in between, and whether security issues exist, particularly at night. Chairman Baronoff stated that the CRA is taking lead on the spine and the possibility of implementing an RFI or RFP is being researched at this time. He spoke to funding and eminent domain, advising that not one commissioner here is hesitant with respect to eminent domain; the spine is going to move forward. He then reiterated the need for input from the Visions Committee.

Committee Member Lenore Wachtel explained that the Committee worked on the development and beautification of Palmetto Park Road; details were provided. She advised that the spine was supposed to be main thoroughfare for Mizner Park to Royal Palm but this has turned out to be impossible because DOT has said the roadway cannot go through Palmetto Park Road at that point. That's where the Committee got stuck. Mr. Camejo clarified that the original idea was to have the spine run along First Avenue. The traffic engineers discovered that, if constructed, the spine would infringe on traffic westbound on Palmetto, stacked at the intersection. That's why other alternatives were considered, specifically, the extension of Plaza Real at the mid-block between Federal Highway and Mizner Boulevard; details were provided as to how this version of the spine would work with regard to traffic. Mr. Camejo provided additional information to the CRA as requested.

Ms. Wachtel added that having more activity in the downtown is desirable to attract people; consequently, the Committee tried to get merchants to stay open one Friday night per month; they couldn't get them to do it. She stated that if the merchants won't stay open at night, that's a problem and it's out of their hands.

Committee Member Derek Vander Ploeg advised that the spine must be of significance to the City and geographically placed so people can easily access Mizner Park and Royal Palm and everything in between; only then can discussion take place about how to grow and in what direction. He mentioned upcoming developments, including 200 East and Via Mizner, that would help Palmetto Park Road in the endeavor to become more pedestrian-friendly, stating that people living in these developments would use the spine and support the downtown. He mentioned the amendment to the DDRI is critical as are modifications to the Development Order to help these things happen. He concluded by noting that once a public policy exists, the private sector can then respond in kind.

Committee Member Albert Nelson concurred with Clem Storch's comments. He then advised that a need exists for a leader to move the spine forward; a need also exists for a development corporation to coordinate efforts. He also added that, unless the Development Order is straightened out, no one would be able to move forward as there is no framework in which to build.

Committee Member Bruce Retzch explained that an opportunity exists now to deal with traffic and revisit code issues in the downtown ordinance. He advocated a more comprehensive overview and clarification as to how issues will be resolved.

Cartoon Museum Building

Al Travassos, a member of the Mizner Park Cultural Arts Association (MPCAA), provided an update on the Cartoon Museum building, which has continued to suffer from a lack of development. He advised that he was party to a conference call to Bill Moston, of General Growth Properties (GGP), in Chicago. Mr. Moston assured all parties that there were no problems associated with the project, and progress was being made; Mr. Moston was advised that he would probably be asked to give a presentation to the CRA. Mr. Travassos added they were told that a bookstore lease would be signed in the near future; however, no restaurant leases have been signed, which is part of the construction problem. He then reported that there appears to be a revised construction schedule, containing approximately the same completion dates as in the original schedule.

In regard to the meeting with the County, Mr. Travassos explained that it was very productive. Consensus was reached as to final wording in the agreement, which would tender \$3 million from the County to build the non-profit area; the agreement should be completed in a week to ten days and forthcoming for review and signature. Mr. Travassos voiced frustration at GGP's slow rate of progress but advised that his goal is to make the project work and to get GGP to communicate with their partners. He concluded his comments and then answered questions from the CRA.

Chairman Baronoff advised that accountability milestones would be created to assist in moving this project forward. The City Manager stated that Mr. Camejo had extensive conversations with GGP about their timelines; they are aware of when this project should be completed. Unfortunately, ING Clarion (a GGP partner responsible for operating the residential element of Mizner Park) has not been informed by GGP that there's a contract and a timeline; the City actually provided this information to ING Clarion. Also, the contract was entered into by GGP and they knew what they signed for; the Rouse Company

was out of the picture at that point. Consequently, if GGP doesn't commence construction by January 23, 2007, there's

no extension in the contract, because they were awarded that contract in a negotiated process. Mr. Ahnell indicated that the City has done everything possible to move forward with this project. Unfortunately, GGP is not communicating; he cited Mr. Camejo's invitation to GGP to make a presentation to the CRA. They said they would not meet with the CRA; they'd meet with the elected officials behind closed doors. After Mr. Camejo followed up with a letter and, possibly after the Chicago phone call to Mr. Moston, GGP then decided to come in to speak with the CRA. Chairman Baronoff stated that if GGP is not part of the solution, then they are part of the problem.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

The City Attorney had nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:

The Commissioners had no reports at this time.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Commissioner Whelchel, seconded by Chairman Baronoff, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously on a voice vote; Chairman Baronoff, Vice Chairman Arts, Commissioners Abrams, Hager and Whelchel voting yes.

The regular meeting of the Boca Raton Community Redevelopment Agency adjourned at approximately 4:28 p.m., Monday, April 24, 2006.

Peter R. Baronoff, Chairman

ATTEST:

Sharma Carannante, City Clerk