

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
BOCA RATON COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2007  
\*1:30 P.M.

\*The Regular Meeting of the Boca Raton Community Redevelopment Agency was called to order by Chairman Baronoff at approximately 2:04 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 indicated that he wished to reorder the agenda to provide for "Commissioners' Reports" first, then the DOT presentation and finally, the presentation by Crocker Partners. There were no objections.

**MINUTES:**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 22, 2007

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

**PUBLIC REQUESTS:**

No one came forward to speak.

**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:**

2. DOT Transportation Design for Livable Communities Program

Executive Director Jorge Camejo gave a PowerPoint presentation, explaining that a need exists to establish a different level of traffic standard for the downtown; details were provided. He advised that Transportation Design for Livable Communities (TDLC) considers the balancing of mobility, livability, and community values, specifically, the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transit users; balancing community values and mobility needs; efficient use of energy resources; protection of the

natural and manmade environment; coordinated land use and transportation planning; and local and State economic development goals. He explained how decisions are typically made regarding roadway construction and then spoke to the City's goal of decreasing the number of traffic trips in the downtown. Key issues that must be addressed in order to accomplish same and provide a more pedestrian-friendly downtown were reviewed. Those issues include lane widths, medians, horizontal clearance, and landscaping; details and pictures were provided. Mr. Camejo advocated placing landscaping within barriers that separate sidewalks from the edge of through lanes, which would promote pedestrian safety and enhance outdoor areas and walkways, but acknowledged the difficulty in doing so. The City Manager interjected that the current width of sidewalks in the downtown is a significant problem since they are very narrow; details followed. Mr. Camejo added that DOT created this very new TDLC process, recognizing that certain areas or neighborhoods merit this type of landscaping/safe design standard. He suggested that the new downtown advisory board be tasked with following up on this effort. Mr. Ahnell also advised that the City planned to hire a consultant for the downtown, who should be under contract by the end of the month. It was agreed that the advisory board and the new downtown consultant should review the long-term appearance of the downtown as part of their visioning process. Mr. Camejo then answered questions from Agency members regarding new criteria necessary to create a safe pedestrian environment, safe vs. unsafe pedestrian walkways, the high pedestrian death rate in Florida, and whether DOT would allow cities to reduce lane widths.

#### **ATTORNEY'S REPORT:**

The City Attorney had nothing to report at this time.

#### **COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:**

Chairman Baronoff asked Mr. Camejo to provide an update on the schedule for the north/south pedestrian plaza at the next CRA meeting. He also indicated that he wished to address the new downtown advisory committee at their first meeting and then asked the Director of the Festival of the Arts Boca, who was in attendance today, to provide an update on that event.

##### Downtown Business Owners

Chairman Baronoff stated that he met with many downtown business owners regarding the pedestrian plaza and branding of the City. Although they evinced interest in these endeavors, downtown business owners wanted to know what the City planned to do for them in the short term. Consequently, Chairman Baronoff asked the City Manager and the CRA Executive Director to bring back suggestions/information as to possible promotions targeting restaurants and retail.

The Agency questioned how the CRA was to partner with the business community in organizing promotional efforts since there is no downtown merchants association. Chairman Baronoff indicated that a public/private partnership was suggested wherein landlords collecting rent from restaurants and retailers would be asked to participate in a plan, along with the CRA, to assist in promoting activities. Additional comments from Agency members focused on what the downtown business owners are doing to help themselves. Mr. Ahnell was asked to follow up on this last item; he was also queried as to whether the City is currently providing promotional assistance to restaurants and retailers outside of the downtown.

##### Festival of the Arts Boca

Charles Siemon, the director for the event, provided an update, advising that everything was going well and there were still plenty of tickets available. He noted the cooperation demonstrated by all parties involved in the event and then advised that the tent had been moved into the amphitheater. Many people had volunteered to assist with this event but more would be welcomed. Mr. Siemon also advised that people were needed to provide host activities for the principal artists; those interested should call the Centre for the Arts. He then provided details related to the artists and events and their respective scheduled performance dates.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT (cont'd):**

### 1. Presentation by Crocker Partners, LLC

Charles Siemon, the attorney representing Crocker Partners, provided an overview of what his client desired to create in the downtown, specifically, development of the downtown pedestrian spine and comprehensive redevelopment of three blocks between Mizner Park and Palmetto Park Road. Aerial views and artist's renderings were used to explain the proposal in more detail. Essentially, a line of lowscale buildings would be constructed in the center of two pedestrian walkways. Sanborn Square and Old Town Hall would be made into anchors for the area. Behind facades fronting on Sanborn Square, four major buildings would be constructed to accommodate office and retail, hotel and restaurant uses. Mr. Siemon indicated that through negotiation with downtown property owners, his client wished to assemble sufficient land to build the spine and also have enough land to come before the CRA for review and approval of the development concept. Crocker Partners also asked for commitment of any additional tax increment dollars generated by the new development to help pay for the spine and parking, as well as creation of a special assessment district (or community development district), which would be self-taxing, to help repay significant public improvements. Mr. Siemon provided additional details related to the proposed comprehensive development, indicating that constructing only the spine would not be appropriate.

Tom Crocker, of Crocker Partners LLC, then addressed the CRA and promoted the idea of comprehensive development, together with the CRA's assistance in the form of a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) and/or CDD (Community Development District). He opined that if individual downtown property owners came forward with individual plans, the development would not result in creation of a "city center" with real cohesion; numerous references were made throughout his presentation regarding the inception of Mizner Park. He advocated creating a place where people are comfortable walking. They could park in an underground garage to be located throughout the entire comprehensive development and walk everywhere. The retail shops would also be closer to one another; by compressing the area, he suggested that it would look more active and populated and, therefore, more interesting. It was noted that Crocker Partners created a development team and retained an architect to initiate drawings, copies of which would be left with the CRA today.

Mr. Crocker stated that he would actively negotiate with all the downtown property owners; however, he indicated that it was not necessary for 100% of the property owners to come on board. He advised that plans for a sensible development would be prepared and brought back to the CRA with specific requests regarding the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) and CDD (Community Development District). He concluded his comments and then provided additional information to Agency members as requested. He advised that Sanborn Square would stay as it is and confirmed with the CRA that his company was not seeking any City financing or City-backed bonds – just pledge of a TIF created by the subject development and assistance in creating a CDD. Mr. Crocker also had no problem working with staff, the new downtown committee, or the City's consultant in a collaborative process, stating that his only reluctance was in proceeding down a path that would lead to no conclusion. In his view, significant support should be forthcoming quickly; otherwise, all parties should simply move on. Responding to Agency members, Mr. Crocker named the land plan as the most important element; details were provided. He advocated strategically-placed restaurants in the redevelopment area and explained that buildings that would be constructed vertically around Sanborn Square to take advantage of the view. Mr. Crocker then named private financing as the next most important component.

It was determined that the City Manager and the City Attorney would research the tax increment aspect, and the special assessment district, and report back to the Agency.

Mr. Crocker and Mr. Siemon answered several additional queries from Agency members. Responding to Chairman Baronoff, Mr. Crocker indicated that he was willing to meet with the new downtown committee; Chairman Baronoff then asked Mr. Camejo to include a presentation by Mr. Crocker on a forthcoming committee agenda.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*Motion was made by Commissioner Hager, seconded by Commissioner Whelchel, 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 3:15 p.m., Monday, February 12, 2007.

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Peter R. Baronoff, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Sharma Carannante, City Clerk