

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
BOCA RATON COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2009
2:30 P.M.

The Regular Meeting of the Boca Raton Community Redevelopment Agency was called to order by Chairman Scott at approximately 2:33 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 May 26, 2009

Motion was made by Commissioner Whelchel, seconded by Commissioner Haynie, 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:

No one came forward to speak.

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

1. Resolution No. 2009-08-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

Mr. Ahnell explained that this resolution proposed to change the start time of the CRA meetings to 1:30 p.m., beginning with the second June meeting; the Workshop meeting would then convene upon the adjournment of the CRA meeting. Essentially, the start times for the Workshop and CRA meetings would be “flip-flopped.”

Motion was made by Commissioner Mullaugh, seconded by Commissioner Whelchel, to adopt Resolution No. 2009-08-CRA. Motion carried unanimously on a voice vote; Chairman Scott, Vice Chairman Majhess, Commissioners Haynie, Mullaugh, and Whelchel voting yes.

OTHER BUSINESS:

There were no items for consideration.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

2. Urban Design Associates (UDA) Presentation

Eric Osth, a principal with Urban Design Associates (UDA), gave a lengthy PowerPoint presentation, noting that the information he would be covering today could be found in the Downtown Master Plan Update and the Downtown Boca Raton Interim Design Guidelines, copies of which were provided to Agency members. Mr. Osth then covered, generally, the same information that UDA had previously presented at the CRA meetings of November 10, 2008, and July 21, 2008, and the Workshop meeting of August 27, 2007. Upon conclusion of the presentation, the public was invited to comment on same.

Arlene Owens voiced opposition to moving the library from NW 2nd Avenue to any other location in the downtown, stating that the library should be built next to the Library Commons project. She also advised that the Governor had just signed legislation wherein no parking is required in downtown areas and indicated that the CRA might wish to consider same. Ms. Owens then advocated slowing down traffic in the downtown, buying the Wildflower property for boat ramp access, and putting an artists' gallery on the ground floor of the former Cartoon Museum.

Clem Storch suggested moving the location of the downtown library to the former Cartoon Museum site.

Diane Gold agreed with Mr. Storch and then advocated LED lighting and recycling for all retail establishments.

Krista Maki spoke to locations for the downtown library, urging the CRA to "get it done," and provide safe parking and easy access to same for children and seniors.

Glenn Gromann agreed with putting the library in the former Cartoon Museum, opining that this would be the best fiscal route for the City to take and then advised that the Downtown Boca Raton Advisory Committee, of which he is a member, agreed with UDA and the downtown design guidelines.

Michelle Bellisari, Chairman of the Downtown Boca Raton Advisory Committee, cited other shopping centers she had visited and indicated it was desirable to be able to park in one place and walk to all the stores. She also supported locating a restaurant on the Wildflower property and moving the library to the Cartoon Museum building and then concluded her remarks by encouraging the CRA to move forward with something.

Lynne Novick, another member of the Downtown Boca Raton Advisory Committee, spoke to other locations for the library and noted that the Committee felt the Cartoon Museum building was a good choice. She then commented on LED lighting (220 poles) for her subdivision before referring to the Wildflower property, opining that the price was excessive. Ms. Novick concluded her comments by suggesting that everyone tour the museum building to see whether it might work for the library, suggesting that portions of the building could also be rented out.

Patty Dervishi, Vice President of the Golden Triangle Homeowners Association, questioned whether this meeting would be on video. Then, acknowledging that parking was needed in the downtown, she requested a buffer zone for her neighborhood. Chairman Scott advised that this meeting was being taped and televised; it would be shown again the following Saturday and Sunday mornings on Channel 20.

Esther Dance requested assurance that these plans or improvements would no longer be the burden of the downtown property owners (both retail and residential), stating that these property owners had

already paid their share of special assessments over the years, and questioned where the money would come from. The City Manager advised that plans were not yet finalized; therefore, there was no budget at this time. Ms. Dance then voiced objections to reducing the width or the number of lanes on Palmetto Park Road, noting that this road is the evacuation route for the barrier islands. In addition, when the Palmetto Park Road Bridge goes up, traffic currently stacks up back to Federal Highway. On the topic of the Wildflower, Ms. Dance stated that the property is not part of the downtown development district and, therefore, not part of the downtown. She also opined that it was not necessary to have a park there, citing the many parks near by and suggested that it would be more beneficial for the city, taxwise, should the land be owned by an individual. In conclusion, Ms. Dance urged the CRA not to take away buildable rights from the land owners in the downtown, stating that they have paid for them.

Lois Arken (phonetic) voiced support for the reservoir parking concept, reducing automobile dependency, and making Mizner Park, itself, a pedestrian street extending south into Plaza Real with free shuttles going up and down the street; another option the Agency could consider is an artistic tunnel crossing to connect Mizner Park and Plaza Real. Last of all, Ms. Arken suggested that the City create "real," safe bicycle infrastructure.

Armand Batmasian voiced concern over special assessments paid by property owners in the downtown, in addition to property taxes, and advised that he wished to see a future accounting of where and how those monies would be appropriated. Referring to the UDA proposals, he also wished to see an exact program as to how traffic would be slowed down and how pedestrian traffic could be generated on Palmetto Park Road and Federal Highway. He then commented on the loss of tenants and the difficulty in finding new tenants. Referring to past discussions by the CRA about promoting business in the downtown, Mr. Batmasian advocated implementation of a City liaison or marketing person that his tenants and local property owners could talk to, which might help them to generate business. Last of all, Mr. Batmasian indicated that the library was a great idea but a complicated issue; meanwhile, night life was lagging in the downtown with many restaurants hurting, as the only existing night life was in Mizner Park.

Lenore Wachtel advocated looking at priorities.

Chris Wolford (phonetic) stated that the suggestions made today were commendable but rather than do what everyone else is doing, the City could do something innovative, such as eliminating vehicles in the downtown completely with parking on the perimeter. He also suggested providing energy efficient transportation for those who don't want to walk or can't walk.

Mr. Osth responded to comments and suggestions made by the public and provided closing remarks, stating that the library and the crosswalks could be handled right away. He then answered questions from Agency members. Chairman Scott asked whether it would be more viable to keep the library in its current location or move it into the downtown. Mr. Osth advised that using the resources the City has today would provide the best return. Responding to Chairman Scott, Mr. Ahnell provided information on the square footage of the current library, the Spanish River Library, and the former Cartoon Museum space. Chairman Scott also queried Mr. Osth about constructing the pedestrian spine along NE 1st Avenue through Palmetto Park Road. Mr. Osth advised that UDA would need to study that proposal; regardless, good dialogue with the property owners would be needed as to how it could help the district grow.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

The City Attorney had nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:

The Commissioners had nothing to report at this time.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Commissioner Whelchel, seconded by Commissioner Haynie 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 4:37 p.m., Monday, June 8, 2009.

Constance Scott, Chairman

ATTEST:

Sharma Hagerty, City Clerk