

MARGATE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

REGULAR MEETING May 8, 2024

MINUTES

Present:

Joanne Simone
Antonio V. Arserio
Arlene R. Schwartz
Anthony N. Caggiano, Vice Chair
Tommy Ruzzano, Chair

Also Present:

Cale Curtis, Executive Director
Larry Vignola, Assistant Executive Director
David Tolces, Weiss Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman
Hudson C. Gill, Esquire, Johnson Anselmo, Murdoch, Burke,
Piper, Hochman, P.A.

The regular meeting of the Margate Community Redevelopment Agency having been properly noticed was called to order at 7:01 p.m., on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, by Chair Tommy Ruzzano. Roll call was taken. There was a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was held in the City Commission Chambers and was also accessible virtually through Zoom technology.

1A. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL - (4/10/2024 Regular)

After David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the item title, Ms. Simone made the following motion, seconded by Vice Chair Caggiano:

MOTION: SO MOVE TO APPROVE

ROLL CALL: Ms. Simone, Yes; Mr. Arserio, Yes; Ms. Schwartz, Yes; Mr. Caggiano, Yes; Mr. Ruzzano, Yes. The motion passed 5-0.

1B. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL - (4/30/2024 Special)

After David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the item title, Ms. Simone made the following motion, seconded by Ms. Schwartz:

MOTION: SO MOVE TO APPROVE

ROLL CALL: Ms. Simone, Yes; Mr. Arserio, Yes; Ms. Schwartz, Yes; Mr. Caggiano, Yes; Mr. Ruzzano, Yes. The motion passed 5-0.

2. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

No comments were made by the public.

3A. RESOLUTION 726: APPROVING THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT IN THE CASE OF NEW URBAN COMMUNITIES, LLC V. THE MCRA, CASE NO. CACE 18-004869 (13) PENDING IN THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

After David Tolces, Broward Attorney, read item title, Vice Chair Caggiano made the following motion, followed by Mr. Arserio for discussion:

MOTION: SO MOVE TO APPROVE

Mr. Arserio said he was delighted to be at this point after many years of litigation and the City and MCRA had won at every level during this process, including on appeals. He said wanted to make sure that the public understood that the \$150,000 deposit in escrow was not the City's money and would be going back directly to the Florida League of Cities. He noted it was his understanding that not only did it not cost the MCRA anything to litigate this matter, but it was now totally free and clear to move ahead with the downtown development project. He asked the Board Attorney to confirm if those facts were correct.

David Tolces, Board Attorney, agreed with Mr. Arserio's assessment and said he had nothing further to add other than to thank Mr. Hudson Gill from Johnson, Anselmo, Murdoch, Burke, Piper, Hochman, P.A., who was present that evening. He thanked the firm, on a personal and professional level, for handling the case on behalf of the City and the MCRA.

Ms. Schwartz said this outcome had resulted from the 2016 election. She said the land was worth more now than it was seven and a half years ago and the MCRA had accumulated more land during that time. She added the Board could finally fulfill a promise made over 20 years ago to the people of Margate by giving them a reason to stop in Margate rather than drive through it on their way to somewhere else. Finally, she said if there was such a thing as a good position to come from the time spent on the lawsuit, the Board could learn from the mistakes made by surrounding cities and avoid repeating errors made in their developments.

Vice Chair Caggiano said it was an opportunity to move forward and was delighted to have a hand in carving out Margate's future. Both Vice Chair Caggiano and Ms. Schwartz thanked Mr. Gill for his help in this matter.

Chair Ruzzano congratulated everyone involved. He said it had been a long process and it had worked out in the end without costing the City any money. He said it was a long wait, but the residents would have what was promised to them. He thanked Mr. Gill for a job well done.

Rich Zucchini, resident, thanked the Board for the political courage and vision it took to stand up to New Urban. He especially thanked Mayor Ruzzano for his leadership and hoped the defeat against the developer would stain New Urban's reputation with other cities. He advised residents who had urged other candidates to negotiate with New Urban in support of this development to pay attention to the issues at hand rather than just their friendships with the candidates. He said this was a great victory for the City.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Simone, Yes; Mr. Arserio, Yes; Ms. Schwartz, Yes; Mr. Caggiano, Yes; Mr. Ruzzano, Yes. The motion passed 5-0.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, provided the following capital project updates:

Margate Boulevard Improvements – He said they had a 100% design package and an opinion of probable cost from the engineering firm, Chen Moore and Associates (CMA). He said due to a scheduling conflict CMA were unable to be at the meeting that evening to provide an update but were scheduled to come to the next meeting in June.

Southgate Boulevard Improvements – He said this project was out to bid and due on April 24th, however, it had received multiple requests for information from potential bidders. Several addendums, therefore, had been added and the bid date was extended to May 15th.

Undergrounding of Overhead Wires – The surveying and feasibility planning work had commenced along US 441, and he should have more information by the end of the month.

Sports Complex Turf Fields – A feasibility study and planning process had begun for the conversion of the baseball fields from dirt and grass to turf fields at the Sports Complex. He said there was some drainage issues that needed to be worked through to ensure they could move forward without going through the rigorous process of County permitting for surface water.

Coral Gate Park Improvements – He said improvements for this park were in the early planning stages.

He congratulated the Board on the outcome of the Settlement Agreement and said he was looking forward to the next steps.

Larry Vignola, Assistant Executive Director, wished MCRA Coordinator Rita Rodi a happy birthday for the following day. Chair Ruzzano said she had been with the MCRA a long time, wished her many congratulations and thanked her for everything. Rita Rodi, MCRA Coordinator, thanked the Board and said she was also very happy with the outcome of the litigation.

4A. TENANT UPDATES

Ms. Schwartz said that she noted there were some vacated properties. Jim Nardi, Advanced Asset Management, said three businesses had sold in the last month so there were new businesses taking over their spaces. She asked about

the outparcel that was Margate Quickies, and he said the new tenant had completed all their City inspections and were waiting on their state inspections to be completed. Mr. Arserio asked about the type of restaurant that was opening there and Ms. Schwartz replied it was a Mexican restaurant. Mr. Nardi said he believed they were going to be ready to open shortly.

Mr. Arserio asked if there was a tenant yet for the space that Ivy's Furniture had vacated. Mr. Nardi responded that Flynn's Gaming was working out final terms to move the retail component of their store into the vacated space and he expected to have a signed lease very soon.

5. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Simone: None.

Mr. Arserio: He said he was very excited to finally move forward with the downtown development with a fresh slate and looked forward to the ICSC Conference the following week to fully market the property. He announced he was now a fully licensed real estate broker and said it was his wish to continue to bring value to the Board from that perspective.

Ms. Schwartz: She wished everybody a Happy Mother's Day for Sunday, May 12th. She asked if anything was being done to extend the MCRA's sunset until 2027. Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said that they were working on that.

Vice Chair Caggiano: He thanked Board Member Schwartz and said one of the main issues of their campaigns when they were elected in 2016 was to overturn the land deal. They had joined together with Chair Ruzzano and changed the vote to a 3-2 to get rid of it. He said without Board Member Schwartz and Chair Ruzzano steadfastly holding their resolve, it would have been difficult to get rid of the deal. He said he was delighted to still be on the Board to see what he hoped for from the day they all got elected and re-elected in 2016. He wished everybody a Happy Mother's Day.

Chair Ruzzano: He thanked Vice Chair Caggiano and noted that all five members of the Board were in favor of the settlement that evening. He said the Board knew what the residents wanted to see from a development standpoint and what would be best for the City. He said he was confident they had a great team in place to achieve the best possible outcome for the residents. He then spoke about the turf fields at the Sports Complex and the possibility of a drainage issue. He suggested using the existing canals as drainage to avoid putting aside a piece of property needed for surface water.

Lastly, he wanted to say that the baseball season was near an end and had been a huge success. He said the City had taken over running the League and he had not received a single complaint. He noted the parents had loved the season and they could not wait until next year. Vice Chair Caggiano shared that he was at the Basketball Tournament at the end of the season and noted that the Parks and Recreational staff in attendance that day were doing a great job. Chair Ruzzano agreed and said that he had also received an email that day from someone who was interested in bringing a football league to Margate. He shared that his key to success was to make the kids happy and that in turn made the parents happy. He said it was a very simple principle but true.

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Tommy Ruzzano, Chair

Transcribed by Fiona Christmas, CRA Coordinator

