

# MARGATE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

## REGULAR MEETING July 11, 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  
Alan Gabriel, Acting CRA Attorney, Weiss Serota Helfman  
Cole & Bierman

The regular meeting of the Margate Community Redevelopment Agency having been properly noticed was called to order at 7:00 p.m., on Wednesday, July 11, 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.

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**1A. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL - (6/12/2024 Regular)**

After Alan Gabriel, Acting CRA Attorney, read the item title, Ms. Schwartz made the following motion, seconded by Mr. Arserio:

**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.

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**2. PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Margi Brezina, resident, asked the Board to sponsor an event The Legacy Closet was organizing, in collaboration with the Police Department (PD), on August 10<sup>th</sup> at the Covered Sports Field. She said they had received donations of over 40,000 toys from Toys for Tots, 50,000 packs of diapers and wipes and a large donation from Petsmart. They wanted to combine the donations with a backpack giveaway in time for the start of school which was on August 12<sup>th</sup>. She asked the Board to sponsor use of the Covered Sports Field on August 10<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 3 pm for this specific use. Although the Board were in general agreement that it was a good cause, it was determined that the MCRA would not be authorized to sponsor an event such as this under the MCRA plan. Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said he would speak with the PD and see how the City could offer assistance. Chair Ruzzano said she should appear before the City Commission, however, their next meeting was not scheduled to take place until after the event. Ms. Brezina suggested The Legacy Closet go ahead with their event as planned on August 10<sup>th</sup> and come back in front of the City Commission at their next meeting to request a refund for the event. Mr. Curtis said the City Commission would consider her request.

Donna Fellows, resident, reiterated that this event would take place just before school started on August 12<sup>th</sup> and hoped it would be supported by the City. She said The Legacy Closet had resources to assist the homeless community in Margate and it was important to assist them.

Jonathan Kraljic, resident, said the current MCRA Event Policy stated users of MCRA property were restricted to sponsors who had a business, a non-profit organization or religious institution in the City of Margate. He suggested the MCRA should sponsor any future carnivals on MCRA property as they generate thousands of dollars in profits and the money could be put towards the future downtown development.

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**3A. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: MCRA BUDGET PRIORITIES IN FY 2025**

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said the staff would be preparing the draft budget to be presented to the Board for the coming year. He recommended focusing on and completing the current projects that included Margate Boulevard Improvements, Southgate Boulevard Improvements and Wayfinding Signage. He suggested the Board should provide additional funding to the Property Improvement Grant as it had proven to be a very successful program and to budget for possible future property acquisitions. He said some ongoing improvements should be made at the Chevy

Chase Plaza, and the Board should continue with the projects at Coral Gate Park, the Sports Complex turf conversions and undergrounding of utilities. He said he would not recommend taking on any new projects for design and construction as the Board would be very heavily involved with the City Center review and negotiations.

Mr. Arserio agreed with Mr. Curtis with regards to focusing on downtown development, property acquisition and not starting any new major projects. He did, however, want to coordinate through the MCRA and the City to improve the medians and landscaping. He also wanted to install a public address (PA) system at the Covered Sports Field as he did not consider that a major new project. He suggested the MCRA try to purchase additional properties adjacent to the impending development that would start in the coming months. Discussion ensued about properties in the vicinity of US 441 and Coconut Creek Parkway. Mr. Curtis said the MCRA had consulted a realtor and would actively pursue additional properties for purchase in the vicinity.

Ms. Schwartz asked Mr. Curtis to clarify where they were undergrounding the utilities. He replied it was from Atlantic Boulevard to Coconut Creek Parkway on US 441. She agreed with Mr. Arserio that a PA system at the Covered Sports Field would help when general announcements or speeches were made and said she was a firm believer in property acquisition as it would only bolster the City Center downtown development.

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**3B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL TO SUBMIT A FORMAL LETTER TO BROWARD COUNTY REGARDING THE SUNSET OF THE MCRA IN 2027**

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said he had met with the County Administrator as well as some follow up meetings at staff level and Attorney Tolces had several conversations with the County Attorney to discuss the sunset date of the MCRA. Mr. Curtis said an error in the MCRA plan had referenced a date that did not give the full 30 years allowed by State Statute. He said the County Attorney suggested the Board create an inter-local agreement (ILA) to recognize that error and send a letter to the County Administrator stating as much. He said the MCRA plan would also need to be updated as part of the process. He added that the County Attorney indicated the letter should include a cost estimate of remaining tax increment financing (TIF) funds as well as the intended use for those funds within a certain timeframe. He said it was his intention to state that the funds would be used towards the City Center downtown development project, either towards public amenities or infrastructure, to assist the plan and carry out the vision of the Board and City Commission. Discussion ensued and general agreement was given to send the letter to the County Administrator.

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**4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

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

**Wayfinding Signage** – Permitting was still underway with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for the gateway and entryway signs. The sign at Southgate Boulevard would be done under the general construction agreement with MBR Construction. Proposals would also be sought for two neighborhood identification signs at East and West Palm Drive.

**Margate Boulevard Improvements** – Staff were preparing bid documents following the meeting in June when the Board were presented with the final rendering from Chen Moore and Associates.

**Southgate Boulevard Improvements** – The contractor, MBR Construction, had done a lot of work for the MCRA and had been very successful in terms of time and budget. He expected the project would be completed before the end of the year that included the landscaping and hardscaping of the three medians on Southgate Boulevard as well as the installation of the entryway sign and electrical conduit for the holiday lighting.

**Underground of Utilities** – A consultant was hired to do a feasibility study and cost estimate for undergrounding the utility lines on US 441 from Atlantic Boulevard to Coconut Creek Parkway. The cost estimate came back at around \$2.7 million plus a contingency of 30%, which totaled approximately \$3.1 million. He suggested the Board move forward with the project in anticipation of the upcoming downtown development. Some discussion ensued and it was agreed to have the consultant come back before the Board at the next meeting to present their findings.

Mr. Curtis advised of a budget transfer of \$8,000 from the Contingency account to the Travel & Per Diem account.

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**4A. TENANT UPDATES**

Vice Chair Caggiano asked if there was any update on the two tenants that had not yet paid their rent. James Nardi, Advanced Asset Management, said the two tenants had advised that rent was coming soon.

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**5. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

**Ms. Simone:** None

**Mr. Arserio:** None

**Ms. Schwartz:** She reminded everyone about the upcoming sandbag distribution on Saturday, July 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Vice Chair Caggiano:** He wished everyone a safe end to the summer and advised them to start preparations for hurricane season, if they had not already done so.

**Chair Ruzzano:** He said he wanted to see the lock systems open up in the South Florida water system that would allow residents in the City of Margate to have ocean access. He said there were only two locks between the City of Margate and the ocean – one at Palm Aire and the other at Dixie Highway and McNab Road. He said if those systems could be opened, it would allow for ocean access for several cities along the C-14 canal and values of homes would skyrocket. It would bring a lot more revenue into the County as well as the City and make the homes here in Margate very special indeed.

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by Fiona Christmas, CRA Coordinator

Tommy Ruzzano, Chair