

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

June 10, 2020

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Cale Curtis, Interim Executive Director
David Tolces, Weiss Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman

The regular meeting of the Margate Community Redevelopment Agency having been properly noticed was called to order at 7:04 p.m., on Wednesday, June 10, 2020, by Chair Tommy Ruzzano. Roll call was taken. There was a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

This was a virtual public meeting held via Zoom. Board Attorney David Tolces read the Findings and Procedure for a Virtual Public Meeting. Those physically present in the Commission Chambers were: Chair Tommy Ruzzano; Cale Curtis, Interim Executive Director; David Tolces, Board Attorney; Joseph Kavanagh, City Clerk; and Rita Rodi, CRA Coordinator.

1. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

No one from the public requested to speak.

2. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: RANKING OF TOP FIVE APPLICANTS FOR MCRA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION

Chair Ruzzano explained that the application review process had started before the onset of the virus. Initially there were 18 applicants and currently there were 13 confirmed as still being interested in the position.

He said during the seven years he had been on the Board, he had worked with different Executive Directors and having the City Manager as the Executive Director worked most efficiently and effectively. He said he had a brief conversation with Mr. Curtis about it. Ideally, he said he would like to have Mr. Curtis as the Executive Director with someone directly under him to handle the day-to-day operations.

Cale Curtis, Interim Executive Director, said he would consider the position but he would need an assistant. He said he was in favor of following the former structure which had the City Manager as Executive Director, an Assistant Executive Director, and a project coordinator. He commented that having Elizabeth Taschereau, Development Services Director, to handle the economic development side would be a good combination for their consideration. He encouraged the Board to consider all options including the current applicants as well as further recruitment.

Discussion ensued and Board members provided their ideas and feedback.

Mr. Arserio said he preferred having the City Manager serve as the Executive Director versus an independent Executive Director, with an Assistant Executive Director being responsible for the management of day-to-day operations and a project manager. He saw how the Development Services Director could work closely with the MCRA. He said this structure would probably save money in the long run, noting that it was difficult to project the City's financial future due to the impacts of COVID-19. He said he had not finished reviewing all the applications but he was not in favor of hiring an outside Executive Director.

Mr. Curtis clarified that the intention of the item was to follow-up on a discussion that had started a few months earlier about the Executive Director position to see how they wanted to proceed with either ranking the applicants or considering other options.

Mr. Arserio asked whether the structure he preferred would cost less than hiring a full time Executive Director from the outside. Mr. Curtis said he thought having him as the part-time Executive Director, Ms. Taschereau as the part-time Assistant Executive Director, and a full-time project coordinator would likely be the same cost or less.

Vice Chair Caggiano said he had reviewed and ranked the applicants. He said was not aware that another possible option had been discussed. He said Mr. Curtis had a hard enough job as City Manager. Chair Ruzzano commented that there was a lot going on in the City and having Mr. Curtis as the "go to" person eliminated one step in the process and expedited projects. Mr. Caggiano asked if Mr. Curtis would be able to separate the two roles and whether it could be done legally.

David Tolces, Board Attorney, advised that legally there were no issues with one individual serving in both capacities, however, monetarily the City and MCRA needed to be accounted for separately to ensure that MCRA funds were spent for MCRA activities.

Ms. Simone said she would prefer having a separate Executive Director because it was difficult for the City Manager to switch hats and act in the best interests of either the City or the MCRA. She said she was not in favor of keeping Mr. Curtis as Executive Director or hiring the Development Services Director as the Assistant as she was new in her position and had enough responsibilities. She said she reviewed the applications but would prefer to get a headhunter to do a search and to advertise with the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) magazine and professional development publications. She commented that the questions asked on the job application were inadequate. Mr. Arserio asked if the headhunter would be hired to also find an Assistant Executive Director. Ms. Simone responded that she would like to see how the Executive Director worked out first and that an Assistant might not be needed. She said she wanted the person to have marketing skills. Mr. Arserio commented that he agreed a headhunter would help get the most qualified person but he was concerned about hiring someone during these uncertain times. He suggested reconvening on the matter in six months.

Vice Chair Caggiano was not in favor in spending a lot of money for a headhunter. He said he was fine with extending Mr. Curtis and looking at other options over the next six months.

Mr. Arserio clarified that position was to keep Mr. Curtis as Executive Director and not change in six months, unless it was not working out.

Vice Chair Caggiano agreed and expressed a concern about overloading Mr. Curtis and discussion turned to additional staffing and providing him with the tools he needed. Mr. Arserio said he recommended a project manager and that he also agreed with Ms. Simone about the need for marketing, and that he was in favor of hiring a media person for the MCRA. Vice Chair Caggiano agreed.

Chair Ruzzano said someone like Mr. Curtis was needed as the Executive Director, with a project manager under him the Board could contact when there were situations involving businesses or projects, as well as a media person. He recommended a restructured flowchart for the MCRA.

Ms. Schwartz suggested looking at the entire structure of the MCRA including those individuals that were partially paid by the MCRA and the City. She commented about how poor the City's job application was and suggested there be separate applications for different jobs. Mr. Curtis noted that the former Executive Director had worked with Human Resources on the application for the Executive Director position.

There was a short back and forth discussion about the need for a full-time project manager to manage MCRA projects.

Ms. Schwartz commented that Ms. Taschereau had previously worked in Coral Springs and would have knowledge of Chapter 163. Mr. Curtis said she was a CRA coordinator for the City of Coral Springs and she was well versed in economic development. Under the proposed structure, as the Assistant Executive Director, Ms. Taschereau would focus on economic development, and he would provide overarching oversight and guidance to the Board and have a project manager to handle construction related projects and special projects as well as the marketing.

Ms. Schwartz asked about the costs and Mr. Curtis said he had not that conversation with Ms. Taschereau yet and could not provide a dollar amount. He commented that the previous pay arrangement was \$12,000 for the Executive Director and \$18,000 for the Assistant Executive Director. Chair Ruzzano said he was not in favor of a shared Assistant Executive Director position with the City. He said his preference would be having Mr. Curtis as Executive Director, a project manager, maybe someone from the list of applicants, support from Ms. Taschereau for economic

development, and possibly a marketing person. He expressed concern about was having to go through multiple people to get answers to problems related to projects. Mr. Curtis said he recommended Ms. Taschereau because her role in economic development with the City would be a good fit with the MCRA. He said he was not opposed to looking outside but it would be unlikely to find someone part-time; the cost savings of sharing someone internally would be lost by hiring a full-time Assistant Executive Director.

Ms. Schwartz commented that if the decision were to hire from the outside, it would be for someone to run the MCRA. Discussion ensued about the roles and skills of the project manager and Assistant Executive Director. Mr. Curtis explained that the project manager/coordinator would be responsible for the day-to-day work of moving projects forward which included working with vendors and contractors, soliciting bids and quotes, etc. He said the Assistant Executive Director would focus solely on economic development. Ms. Schwartz asked why economic development was not part of Development Services. Mr. Curtis commented that the MCRA provided a separate set of tools to work with.

Ms. Simone agreed with Ms. Schwartz. She commented about Ms. Taschereau's experience working with the City of Coral Springs CRA noting that it was new and run by a board of residents at that time.

Chair Ruzzano asked the Board members if they wished to move forward with Mr. Curtis as the Executive Director, and, if so, the length of time and the salary. He recommended a salary of \$15,000. He said the Board members could meet individually with him about an organization chart.

Vice Chair Caggiano asked whether the time spent on City work would be reduced to take on MCRA work, or if it would be additional time spent. Chair Ruzzano said Mr. Curtis had made himself available around the clock. Mr. Arserio agreed and said the details of the other positions needed to be worked out, and he suggested moving ahead with selecting Mr. Curtis as the Executive Director and determining the length of time and compensation in the future. He suggested holding another meeting to work out the other details and having Mr. Curtis provide a flowchart.

Mr. Curtis commented that he would do what was needed to get the job done.

Ms. Simone commented that there was an Interlocal Agreement with the City for the provision of services based on a cost allocation study. In addition to the flowchart, she said she would like to see how much time City employees were spending on MCRA activities.

Chair Ruzzano asked Mr. Curtis and the Board if they were in agreement with \$15,000 compensation for Mr. Curtis. Mr. Curtis said he understood the uncertain times that existed and he was willing to consider and accept what the Board felt was fair. Mr. Arserio made the following motion, seconded by Vice Chair Caggiano:

MOTION: TO KEEP CALE CURTIS AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MCRA WITH AN ANNUAL SALARY OF \$15,000; FOR MR. CURTIS TO COME BACK WITH A FLOWCHART AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER POSITIONS WITHIN 30 DAYS.

In response to Vice Chair Caggiano's question about whether the compensation needed to be handled on a separate agenda, Board Attorney Tolces said he did not have a public notice concern as Mr. Curtis was currently the Interim Executive Director, and the motion was clarifying the compensation he would be paid and providing direction for him to come back with a flowchart.

Ms. Schwartz asked why the salary increased from \$12,000 to \$15,000, Chair Ruzzano said the salaries on the applications he reviewed were between \$100,000-\$125,000. He commented that the previous City Manager had been paid \$12,000 and the Assistant Executive Director was paid \$18,000 and he stayed in that range thinking that was what they wanted, but he felt the amount was too low. Ms. Schwartz said she wanted to see a flowchart first.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Simone, No; Mr. Arserio, Yes; Ms. Schwartz, No; Mr. Caggiano, Yes; Mr. Ruzzano, Yes. The motion passed 3-2.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

COVID19 Small Business Grants - He reported that 115 applications had been received during the application period that totaled \$211,503.96. He noted that the Board had previously allocated funding of \$200,000, and that as the applications were reviewed for eligibility, the amount paid out might decrease. 19 applications had been processed to date totaling \$32,465. He explained that the application review process had been very tedious and time consuming as there was often missing information that required follow-up. He recognized the staff members that had been working on the applications. He said a large dummy check had been created and was being used to promote the success of the program.

Chair Ruzzano asked for clarification on the number of outstanding applications. Elizabeth Taschereau, Development Services Director, explained that the applications received amounted to \$217,000 but there were a number of them that were not eligible and the amount was around \$190,000. She said there were about 40 applications that needed to be reviewed and a more accurate cost would be available in about two weeks. He asked about the number of businesses that had code violations and she said there were only about five at that time.

Ms. Simone expressed a concern about allowing businesses whose Local Business Tax Receipt (LBTR) had lapsed to participate in the grant. She said their renewal was due by October 1, 2019, and they should not be allowed if they paid the fee because they heard about the grant. She said she spoke with Mr. Curtis but he interpreted the requirement differently. She said she was not in favor of awarding grant money to a business that was out of compliance. Attorney Tolces agreed with Ms. Simone that the application required that the LBTR be paid, but it did not specify when it had to be paid, just that the business had a current LBTR. He said if the business submitted a grant application and their LBTR had not been paid, then the application would not be processed. The business could pay for the LBTR, but they would need to re-submit their application and it would go to the bottom of the pile.

Mr. Arserio agreed with Ms. Simone's point but he said we should honor the businesses if they had become current and address the issue in the future. He asked what could be done to speed up the process and suggested those applications that were not complete should be moved to the bottom. Ms. Taschereau explained that she had changed the entire processing procedure that week whereby one staff member was reviewing the new applications, one was making all outgoing calls requesting information, and another person processing the information and completing the files for the next level of review. She said the new procedure has enabled them to process the applications faster.

Ms. Schwartz agreed with Ms. Simone. She suggested that anyone with a code violation or LBTR issue should be moved to the bottom and the other applications that had no issues processed ahead of them.

Vice Chair Caggiano also agreed with Ms. Simone that the MCRA should not be giving businesses grant funds for them to pay their delinquent fines.

In general, Board members agreed that when the program was initially adopted, the businesses would be qualified on a first come, first served basis. If a business did not have all its paperwork, they should be set aside and the businesses with complete applications should be processed first.

There was a back and forth discussion about the definition of being current at the time of application. Mr. Curtis clarified that applications were being reviewed simultaneously. He said the four businesses that Ms. Simone spoke about had become current with their LBTR's before they applied for the grant. He noted that the application did not state that the LBTR had to have been renewed before October 1, 2019, leaving it subject to interpretation.

Atlantic Boulevard Street Improvements - He reported that a purchase order had been issued to Legna Contracting for \$16,317 for painting of two walls on Atlantic Boulevard, one east of Rock Island, the other west of Rock Island. Legna was the lower of the two bids received. He said he would have one section of the wall painted first as an example of what the wall would look like. The selected paint color was an earthy beige for the wall panels and a lighter tone for the columns and caps. A purchase order would be processed soon for the installation of a 36-inch podocarpus hedge along the wall. Quotes were received and the existing MCRA vendor was the low bidder at approximately \$50,000. He said irrigation was already in place and working.

Mr. Arserio commented that landscaping in general was expensive and he suggested having some occasional breaks in the hedge; for example, every 50-feet as a cost saver rather than have a continuous hedge. He suggested getting pricing for both.

Chair Ruzzano asked if there would be any grass and Mr. Curtis stated that it would be mulch and the hedge. Chair Ruzzano said the hedge would look nice. He asked the Board if they would want to add the name of development,

Oriole Homes 4, on the wall on the east and west entrances. Board members Arserio and Schwartz agreed. Vice Chair Caggiano said he liked the name on the wall and he could go either way with the hedge.

David Park - He reported that construction was well underway with the new parking lot and that pavilion and drainage structures had been installed and the layout for paving of the sidewalks was in process. Substantial completion of the project would be some time in August. He said a change order and budget transfer of \$14,500 were done for the milling and resurfacing of the existing parking lot so that the entire parking lot would have a consistent look.

Chair Ruzzano asked Mr. Curtis to look into having pencil-shaped or book bollards.

Sports Complex Covered Field - He reported that construction drawings had been submitted for the Building permit on March 5, 2020 and a foundation only permit had been issued. He said there were some issues with drainage on the site and with Broward County Surface Water Management license requirements for the drainage. He said Cotter Christian had just provided him with an update that he needed to review closer. He said initial plans called for drainage of the site going into the Cocomar canal to the south; however, Surface Water Management had advised that it could not be done because certain discharge requirements were not met and the drainage needed to be redesigned. He said it posed a significant issue with the project with a potential redesign to move the drainage from the site into an existing area of the Sports Complex around the outside of the fields. He said he needed to evaluate the information from Mr. Christian and he would report back to them.

Chair Ruzzano explained that the County requires water be held on-premise rather than having it drain into its canals unless it is considered clean. He said the City already had water that went into catch basins that drained into the canals. He said the County did not want the water draining into the Cocomar canal unless it has been processed. He said he did not understand it, and the issue could be a potential problem for the project. He said the problem with Cocomar was that it kept its water levels higher than the other canals. He said if they would lower it one foot, the City would not have some of the problems it has had, such as with Wawa and Culver's where the water that was going into Cocomar was coming back through the canal and piping and up into Wawa's parking lot. He said it was a major problem and the County needed to be made aware of it and to take another look at some of those projects. He said the area at Culver's was supposed to be an on-premise water retention area, but Culver's had to spend several hundred thousand dollars for an elaborate, underground storage container. He said it made no sense because the County was struggling to find ways to contain water yet it refused to take water into its canals unless it was purely clean.

Mr. Arserio commented that the back parking lot at JM Lexus was floating and it had water underneath it. He questioned why the issue was not discovered when the project was first designed. Chair Ruzzano said the prior building had a surface water permit about where the water would go so the engineer probably used those assumptions. He told the Board to keep in mind that when downtown development occurred, the County would not let the City put water into the C-14 canal and it could be a major problem because there would need to be multiple retention areas. He said it made no sense because eventually the water all went to the same place.

Ms. Schwartz said she had previously met with John Krause, director of water management for the Cocomar Water District and though he had retired, she would give Mr. Curtis a phone number to reach his replacement. She said the water in C-14 was certainly not clean. She suggested speaking with the County Commissioners.

Winfield Boulevard Sign - He commented that the Board had previously approved funds for widening of the median to accommodate the sign and a change order had been done for \$22,665. He said drawings were being resubmitted for the widening and permit issuance and construction would commence soon.

July CRA Meeting Date - He discussed on a conflict on the July 7th meeting date. All Board members were in agreement with moving the meeting to Thursday, July 9, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

July 4th Fireworks - The cost for a fireworks show of 11-minutes had been reduced to \$25,000 which would take place at the Sports Complex with viewing from vehicles parked along Banks Road and in the parking lot. He said there be drone footage but he was not sure about being able to do a live feed from it.

4. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

David Tolces, Board Attorney, said he had the opportunity to speak in a podcast with the Florida Redevelopment Association on the subject of disposal of property within a CRA, and he would forward them a link to the podcast.

Ms. Simone: Advised that the Federal Reserve Board had expanded the Main Street lending program to provide support to more small and mid-size businesses. She said the minimum loan amount had been reduced from \$500,000 to \$250,000, loan limits increased, the principal repayment schedule adjusted to begin after two years instead of one, and the repayment term extended from four to five years. She said the Flexibility Act passed the House and Senate and it was pending the President's signature. She said it included significant updates for both lenders and borrowers participating in the program which she identified.

Mr. Arserio: Said he liked the banners that were hung behind the dais. He also thanked the party responsible for getting the camera that had pan and zoom capabilities. He also suggested the possibility of having sponsorships for the meetings and displaying their graphics or logo on the screen.

Ms. Schwartz: Thanked Ms. Taschereau and staff for their efforts in processing the emergency business grants. She also mentioned there would be a soft opening of the dog park the following Saturday. She also congratulated the new Executive Director.

Mr. Caggiano: Requested that people continue to maintain social distancing and to remember the importance of keeping our neighbors safe.

Mr. Ruzzano: Commented about the need to look into a plan that showed what the Board wanted to see for the downtown area and to promote it. He said he was always a fan of keeping the property and developing it and possibly leasing the parcels to businesses to help create a beautiful environment for shopping, dining and entertainment.

He asked Board Attorney Tolces if the MCRA could provide any type of assistance to the Northwest Focal Point Senior Center. Attorney Tolces said would discuss it with the Executive Director. Board members gave general consensus to have the Executive Director look into what, if anything, could be done.

He commented that the median on Royal Palm Boulevard was looking much better but he noted that it was missing color. He also suggested looking into adding some colorful landscaping on the western end that was currently a strip of grass. Mr. Arserio commented that some of the bushes were overgrown and needed attention.


Mr. Arserio said she agreed with having a plan for the downtown area. Chair Ruzzano spoke about a plan that involved leasing the property that would net the MCRA \$4 million a year, and when the MCRA sunset, the property would go to the City and take a big burden off the taxpayers.

Ms. Schwartz agreed that the only way to get what was wanted would be to build it themselves. She said it was time to collectively share their visions and create a conceptual plan.

Chair Ruzzano asked the Board if they were in agreement with him working with the Executive Director to work with one of the service contractors to develop a preliminary drawing for review. He said he had always envisioned water being part of the project with it linking neighboring cities, but he was not sure it could be done but there was no connectivity to the lake. He said maybe a request could be made to the County through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to put in a small bridge at Atlantic Boulevard and Banks Road. Ms. Schwartz suggested working with a few architectural intern students who might be out of school right now.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tommy Ruzzano, Chair

Transcribed by Rita Rodi, CRA Coordinator

