

MARGATE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

August 24, 2023

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
Jamie Alan Cole, Acting CRA Attorney, Weiss Serota
Helfman Cole & Bierman
Ronald Huffman, Kiwanis Club of Margate-Coconut Creek
Peter DePrimo, Esq. DePrimo Law Firm
Rob Reiner, Resident

The regular meeting of the Margate Community Redevelopment Agency having been properly noticed was called to order at 7:02 p.m., on Thursday, August 24, 2023, 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 - (7/06/2023 Regular)

After Jamie Alan Cole, Acting Board Attorney, read the item title, Ms. Schwartz made the following motion, seconded by Board Member Simone:

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

Haldane Cooper, resident, came before the Board to request their review of his application to take over the lease at the Valencia's Restaurant at 5801 Margate Boulevard. He said he was working side by side with the current lessee, Marcia Young, for the last two and half years but his application to take over the lease had been denied because of a bankruptcy on his credit report. He said he had been approved for a small business loan but before he could obtain the funding they required his name to be on the lease. That was why he was asking the Board to re-review his application.

Mr. Arserio said that Mr. Cooper had also been at the Commission meeting the night before and had spoken about the fact that Valencia's Restaurant name was missing from the newly erected monument sign. As a result, Mr. Arserio had investigated the issue and determined that the current lessee, Marcia Young, had been asked, in writing twice, if she wanted to be included on the monument sign and she had responded "no."

Richard Zucchini, resident, suggested that the MCRA purchase two advertising digital boards or marquees. One to be located at the Covered Sports Field and the other at one of the busy intersections around the City. They could be used to advertise ongoing or upcoming events taking place at the Sports Complex and could also be used by other departments when not in use. He suggested that the MCRA could use the City's portable road signs at the Sports Complex until the digital advertising boards were purchased. Lastly, he proposed that the Board should consider including the use of the advertising boards whenever the Covered Sports Field was rented out.

Nina Culver, resident, requested clarification on the current policy with regards to the rules and regulations of leasing properties in MCRA owned plazas. She said she would put a list of questions in writing and submit them to the Executive Director as the answers she received that evening were unclear.

Jonathan Kraljic, resident, requested the Board implement a policy to allow for public comment and discussion over Zoom in cases of adverse weather conditions. He also asked the Board to add a document center online so the public would have easy access to all the MCRA policy documents. Lastly, he expressed his concern that the Board had decided to table the SW 6th Street Improvements and asked the Board to reconsider some improvements to help alleviate drainage issues in the area as well as improve the sidewalks and add a bike path.

Chair Ruzzano said that if the City implemented a policy to allow for Zoom calls due to adverse weather conditions, the MCRA would replicate it.

Tracy Van Winkle, resident, asked when the improvements were planned to start on Southgate Boulevard and if it would be re-landscaped. Cale Curtis, Executive Director, responded that the improvements were due to start within the next year. He said there would not be a water fountain but there would be an entryway sign located on Southgate Boulevard at the intersection of US 441. He said that improvements also included re-landscaping.

3A. RESOLUTION 712: APPROVING CHANGE ORDER NO. 3 TO THE CONSTRUCTION AGREEMENT WITH MBR CONSTRUCTION, INC., FOR THE SERINO PARK RENOVATIONS PROJECT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,267.50; AUTHORIZING AN EXTENSION OF THE PROJECT COMPLETION CONTRACT TIME BY 60 DAYS; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO APPROVE FUTURE CHANGE ORDERS TO THE SERINO PARK RENOVATIONS PROJECT FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$15,000; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

After Jamie Alan Cole, Acting CRA Attorney, read the resolution title, Ms. Schwartz made the following motion, seconded by Mr. Arserio for discussion:

MOTION: SO MOVE TO APPROVE

Mr. Arserio said he had received some concerns from residents about the drainage ditch at the park and he explained that part of it was that the County had required that water should be stored on the site. Therefore, the change order was necessary to provide native wetland plants and grasses around the retention area.

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, explained that in addition to the fakahatchee plants, there was also an addition of an oak tree and a fence extension for a total of \$6,267.50. The additional funding that he was looking for would allow for planting in the interior of the retention area once the rainy season stopped and the water table had lowered enough to allow for the additional planting.

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

4A. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVING A TEMPORARY USE AGREEMENT WITH THE MARGATE –COCONUT CREEK KIWANIS CLUB FOR THE SALE OF CHRISTMAS TREES AND RELATED ITEMS ON MCRA OWNED PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 1491 N STATE ROAD 7 AND 5750 NW 15 STREET

Ms. Schwartz made the following motion, seconded by Vice Chair Caggiano:

MOTION: SO MOVE TO APPROVE

Ronald Huffman, resident and President of the Margate-Coconut Creek Kiwanis Club, requested approval for use of the properties as well as a waiver of the rental fee. He said the Kiwanis Club had partnered with Hart-T-Tree for 25 years and, through fundraising, had supported 24 families in the Margate/Coconut Creek area for several years. He thanked the MCRA Board for its continued support.

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

4B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: THE FAIR AT MARGATE SPONSORED BY HILDEBRAND AMUSEMENT RIDES, INC.

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, told the Board that approval was being sought for use of the MCRA property to house the Fair. If approval was given, and they entered into a Temporary Use Agreement with the Fair, then it would still need to go through the City's full TUP process and review and go before the Commission for approval as well.

Mr. Arserio asked if the amount of rental had been set to which Mr. Curtis replied that the amount was \$50,000. Mr. Curtis then invited the representative of Hildebrand Amusement Rides, Mr. Peter DePrimo, Esquire, to come up to answer any questions that the Board might have.

Mr. Arserio said that he would like to see the Fair come back but he had a concern about security. He would want to make sure that the police reviewed the event plans to make sure there was adequate coverage.

Peter DePrimo, DePrimo Law Firm, said that Hildebrand would continue to yield to any police recommendations.

Ms. Simone asked Mr. DePrimo to clarify what was meant by special acts as noted on the application form that was submitted. Mr. DePrimo said that the previous year there was a hypnotist and some motorcycle riders in a dome as well as a magician but that no acts had been retained at that point in time. Ms. Simone also asked him about animal displays. Mr. DePrimo said that Hildebrand would try to partner with a 4-H club so they could have cows and goats, similar to what a County Fair would have required by charter under Florida Statutes, Chapter 616. Mr. Arserio said he would not have an issue with animals in an agricultural display for educational purposes but not animal acts, per se. Ms. Simone said that she would like to see no animals at all because in the past the animals that have been at the Fair have not been in the best condition.

Ms. Simone raised additional questions about the ability of Hildebrand's to meet the criteria to be able to rent MCRA property for its use and for the length of time requested.

Ms. Schwartz raised the same objection she said she had raised in the past, which was the closing time of the Fair. She said that she had an issue with the Fair closing after 10 pm on school nights. She also said that the noise level was unfair to the people that lived close by the Fair. Broward County schools would be back from Winter Break on Monday, November 27th. So the final week that the Fair wished to operate would be during normal school hours in Broward County. She said that Friday and Saturday nights could have a later closing time but she would like to see Sunday through Thursday have a 10 pm closing time.

Mr. Arserio said he had a different perspective. He said that Margate and the surrounding areas had a lot of transplanted people from all over the country who may have differing winter breaks. Ms. Schwartz said while she appreciated his comments, she represented the people who lived in Margate.

Donna Fellows, resident, said she was against the Fair and did not want it in her neighborhood.

Jonathan Kraljik, resident, said he was also opposed to the Fair and he did not understand how the event had met the requirements of the MCRA Event Policy.

Chair Ruzzano said that the Agenda was published before every meeting which gave ample opportunity for anyone to come before the Board to voice their opinions. As there was only a handful of residents at the meeting that night it was an indication that most of the residents wanted the Fair. Mr. Arserio agreed and also wanted to point out that the Board reserved the right to make any changes to the Event Policy. He respected other people's opinions but was not going to allow misinformation to be spread.

Tracy Van Winkle, resident, said she was at the Fair with her grandchildren, and they became afraid of the crowds. Some discussion ensued about whether or not there was gunfire at the Fair but Ms. Van Winkle reiterated she did not want the Fair to come back.

Nicole Collins, resident, said that her son was at the Fair and had gotten hurt. She said everybody at the Fair did what they were supposed to do and took care of the situation. She was in favor of the Fair.

Rich Zucchini, resident, said that he was not really in favor of the Fair. But he did have a strong opinion on the matter of the issue of claim against the property involved in the lawsuit with New Urban (developer) on which the Fair would be situated. He said in the past, the Board had to share the proceeds of the Fair with New Urban and, in effect, fund their legal opposition against the MCRA. He asked if that was still the case because then he would definitely be against the Fair.

Ms. Schwartz answered that the Board did not share the funds the last time the Fair took place and did not intend to share the funds if the Fair took place this time either.

Mr. Arserio made the following motion, seconded by Vice Chair Caggiano:

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE REQUEST AS SUBMITTED

Ms. Schwartz made the following amendment, seconded by Ms. Simone:

AMENDMENT: TO AMEND THE HOURS OF THE FAIR TO BE SHUT DOWN BY 10 PM SUNDAY TO THURSDAY AND MIDNIGHT (12AM) ON FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS.

Chair Ruzzano called for the Roll Call on the amendment:

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

Chair Ruzzano called for the Roll Call on the original motion:

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

4C. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 ANNUAL MCRA BUDGET

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, advised the Board that he had incorporated the improvements at the Sports Complex as directed at the last meeting. They included renovations of the baseball fields into artificial turf as well as associated landscaping and parking lot improvements with a budget of \$2.5 million. Ms. Simone had some general questions about differences between the actual budget in 2021 versus 2022 and those were explained.

Chair Ruzzano asked how many personnel were in the MCRA. Mr. Curtis said that there were four dedicated positions plus the MCRA funded City positions. Chair Ruzzano asked the Executive Director to take the salary of the Project Specialist, a position that had remained unfilled since last year, and disseminate that salary among the four dedicated positions of the MCRA staff members. He said he was very happy with how the MCRA had been run in the last few years and said that the staff had done an excellent job. He asked the Executive Director to come back to the Board with a recommendation for approval. Mr. Arserio said that when he was at the last Florida League of City meeting there was a lot of talk about losing key employees to other municipalities and he would not like to see that happen. He did not think anyone was leaving but he would like to see the MCRA stay competitive and so he absolutely supported the recommendation.

4D. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: KOMIM KARES VETERAN'S DAY EVENT ON NOVEMBER 11, 2023 AT MARGATE SPORTS COMPLEX

Chair Ruzzano said that KOMIM KARES (KOMIM) planned to hold an event at the Margate Sports Complex on November 11, 2023. The Chair said he understood that the event was fully paid in advance and that Mr. Reiner had asked for some time in front of the Board to explain further the events that would take place on the day. He invited Mr. Reiner to come up to the podium and address the Board.

Rob Reiner, resident, commended the Board on the Covered Sports Field and said that it was a wonderful venue. He said that the event would take place from 3 pm until 10 pm on Saturday, November, 11th. They planned to have food trucks, live music, vendors and veteran services. He also said he had thousands of tags made up which had been imprinted with QR codes. These QR codes provided access to a directory of businesses in Margate that had already offered services and discounts for veterans, and they would be adding more. He was there that night to ask the Board to help advertise the event on its social media platform as well as through signage around the City.

Mr. Arserio said that he would not have a problem with a sponsorship or endorsement of this kind so long as it was non-monetary, especially as the event had already been paid for in full.

Mr. Arserio made the following motion, seconded by Chair Ruzzano:

MOTION: TO MAKE AN ENDORSEMENT FOR THE EVENT AND ALLOW FOR ANY TYPE OF PRESS RELEASE OR PUBLICATION EITHER THROUGH KOMIM OR THROUGH THE CITY

Ms. Schwartz asked for clarification from the MCRA Attorney as to whether the MCRA should sponsor a for-profit or private corporation. Jamie Alan Cole, Acting MCRA Attorney, replied that the MCRA could promote economic development and redevelopment and advertise on social media, for example, a grand opening of a private business so long as they were not giving money to that event. Ms. Schwartz asked him if the advertisement had any value associated with it and Board Attorney Cole said it did not as that it was not costing the MCRA any money.

Rich Zucchini, resident, said much needed services would be offered to veterans at the event such as resume writing and transportation to job interviews, etc., He hoped the MCRA would provide support as this was a good cause.

Nicole Collins & Rosie Goldman, residents, said they had the idea for the tags and the keychains to which Mr. Reiner had previously referred. The whole purpose was to provide resources for veterans.

Nina Culver, resident, said she volunteered for KOMIM with their outreach programs. She asked the Board to consider allowing KOMIM to use the advertising signage boards located around the City that were used to advertise other events such as upcoming Sounds at Sundown, etc., at KOMIM's expense. Mr. Arserio agreed that, as part of his motion, he would be fine with KOMIM using those locations to advertise so long as it was at their expense. The MCRA would not be adding new sign locations but that they could use the existing sign locations.

Donna Fellows, resident, said that she also volunteered for KOMIM. The assistance that they were giving the veterans was much needed. She asked the Board to please help advertise the upcoming event.

Jonathan Kraljik, resident, said that he was not aware that KOMIM was a for-profit organization. He said he was a little concerned about setting a precedent of sponsoring for-profit organizations.

Chris Culver, resident, said that he was a veteran. He said that the event organizer was not asking for money. He was merely asking for support in advertising the event, something that would not cost the MCRA any money. He said the organizer was not asking for the Board to set a new policy but to support an event which had been paid for in full by the event organizer.

Robert Cangelosi said the MCRA was for the betterment of Margate and the event had two purposes: to bring more business into Margate; and, to help veterans. It was a win for both sides.

Jill Cerchione, resident, said that she was also a volunteer for the event organizer, KOMIM and that the organization was made up completely of volunteers. She said that the Board Attorney had already said that it was not illegal to help promote this upcoming event, so she was not sure why there was still some hesitation to do so. She said she understood that there was a certain protocol to follow but the questions had been asked and answered. She thought it was very important for everybody to support the veterans and to try to do something that was much needed.

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, asked to clarify the motion. He said that he understood the motion was to approve the sharing of any advertising that was created for the event on the MCRA social media and also on the MCRA event posting boards (signs) throughout the City. Vice Chair Caggiano asked if the advertisements were going to name the event organizer. Mr. Arserio said that he meant to address that issue in his motion. He wanted to be sure that any advertising would only say KOMIM and not an individual person and so avoid any perception of political bias. Mr. Reiner said he would have no issue with that at all. Some further discussion ensued whereby it was decided that a draft of the advertising sign would have to be brought back before the Board for approval.

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

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Atlantic Boulevard Median Improvements – He said that unfortunately no bids came back for the up-lighting of the trees in the median. He said there would be an attempt to identify a contractor or vendor directly that could bring back a proposal to the Board for the up-lighting.

Chevy Chase Plaza Improvements – He said that they were looking at proposals to replace the north section of the roof and that a surveyor had started work on the underground locators and geo technical services for the parking lot in order to get working on the parking lot improvements. Additionally, he was reviewing and negotiating a proposal from an architect for drawings for final improvements for columns, stucco work and stone accents.

Vice Chair Caggiano said that he was at a Mayor's meeting and every Mayor was talking about how projects and overruns were making everything so expensive. Cities are offering incentives to contractors to finish jobs early to avoid delays and job overruns. He suggested that Margate city contracts should be written to include language in some capacity, either as an enticement or as a penalty.

S.W. 6th Street Improvements – DEES and Public Works would look at the worst flooding areas and come up with a plan to address some sort of drainage structure to alleviate the worst areas.

Southgate Boulevard Median Improvements –Design should be completed within the next month or two and then permitting and construction bidding would commence over the next ten months.

Chair Ruzzano asked about the up-lighting on Atlantic Boulevard and confirmed that the conduits had already been laid and sprinklers replaced. He asked Mr. Curtis about the possibility of a local contractor being found to bid the job and Mr. Curtis said that the formal process had been exhausted and that would be the next step.

5A TENANT UPDATES

Jim Nardi, Advanced Asset Management, confirmed that all tenants were current on rent.

Chair Ruzzano asked Mr. Nardi about current leasing requirements. Mr. Nardi said it depended on the type of business that the lessee was going to operate as to whether a business plan would be required or not.

Ms. Schwartz asked if there was any vacant spaces and Mr. Nardi said that there was no space currently available to lease. He said one space, 1023 N State Road 7, was vacant but would require splitting the utilities and a full buildout, therefore it was not available.

Vice Chair Caggiano said that he was delighted to see some of the businesses that have started in the plazas that have blossomed. Mr. Nardi agreed and said that the Board's actions on restructuring the Common Area Maintenance (CAM) and the leases as well as the remodeling of the plazas, had led to many of the businesses being financially stronger. The CAM would not apply to the tenants who signed the three year leases at that time but would to any new tenants such as TBT Athletics.

Mr. Curtis notified the Board of two Budget Transfers that occurred in the last month. \$1,895 from Capital Improvement Projects-Contingency Fund to Ace Hardware Plaza to cover the cost of raising the monument sign and \$6,000 from Contingency to Travel and Per Diem to cover the cost of travel to the ICSC Conference in August.

6. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Simone: None

Mr. Arserio: He said that the Field family had donated 29 Sylvester palms who also found a tree company to transplant and install them for \$750 per tree. Some discussion ensued as to where they would be planted and it was decided that the Margate Sports Complex would be the ideal location.

Ms. Schwartz: She asked if it was possible to go back to doing IN THE BIZ or something similar to promote small and new businesses in Margate. She said it was important for the Board to do this or another organization would step in and do it to which Chair Ruzzano agreed.

Vice Chair Caggiano: He said that National Night Out was a great night and he was looking forward to the Fall and Winter Festivals. The Sounds at Sundown was restarting and the bands were fantastic and that the Covered Sports Field had made a huge difference.

Chair Ruzzano: He reminded everyone that the opening of Serino Park would take place in the morning of September 2nd and the Sounds at Sundown would be held in the evening at 5 pm to 10 pm. He also said that he had run into Paul Robinson at the Development Services Department and Paul said he was working on an IN THE BIZ type event and possibly starting it at the Chevy Chase plaza. He also asked about having an entryway sign being budgeted for East and West Palm Drives, and said he was excited to finally see the wayfinding and gateway signs being installed.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by Fiona Christmas, CRA Coordinator



Tommy Ruzzano, Chair

