

# MARGATE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

## REGULAR MEETING

June 14, 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  
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 7:02 p.m., on Wednesday, June 14, 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.

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#### 1A. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL - (5/10/2023 Regular)

After Alan Gabriel, Acting 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.

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#### 2. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Jonathan Kraljic, resident, referenced several recent events that he said had been given waivers to use the Covered Sports Field without submitting the proper MCRA documentation. He said that as this was a property owned by the MCRA, the use of the Covered Sports Field should follow the same policies as any other MCRA property. He further stated that the MCRA Event Policy and the application for special events should be updated and revised to include the Covered Sports Field. He went on to suggest that the MCRA look into the possibility of taking up the offer of donated Sylvester Palms to be used for the Southgate Median Improvement and the SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street Improvement projects in order to alleviate costs. He also asked to be notified when it was determined how the public would be notified when, in the case of adverse weather conditions, the option to allow public comment virtually becomes available.

Rob Reiner, resident, said that he hosted a Keep Our Money in Margate (KOMIM) Home Improvement and Business Expo on the previous weekend and it was a major success. He thanked Chair Ruzzano and Board Member Arserio for attending the event. He said the next event was scheduled for November 11, 2023, which would be Veteran's Day. He also thanked Michael Jones, the Parks and Recreational Director, and his team and department for their assistance in making the event a greater success. He confirmed that he had \$2 million worth of insurance for the event as was required of him in order to host the event at the Covered Sports Field.

Rich Zucchini, resident, complimented the KOMIM event and said it was incredible. As a result of his attendance at that event, he wanted to share some suggestions that he said would improve the Covered Sports Field. They included the addition of a better Public Address (PA) sound system, the addition of large post-mounted electric fans blowing from east to west, upgraded wi-fi capacity in the arena plus the installation of an electronic digital event board facing Banks Road on the east side of the Covered Sports Field in order to announce and advertise upcoming events. He also suggested the addition of an emergency automated external defibrillator (AED) station, holding CPR classes for residents inside the arena and installing an emergency call system. Lastly, he suggested adding portable screens for either side of the stage so that anyone speaking would be seen and heard from the opposite end of the arena.

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**3A. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: MCRA Budget priorities in FY 2024**

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said that staff would be preparing the draft budget to be presented to the Board for the coming year. He wanted to discuss adding other projects to the budget as well as receive feedback from the Board on any other priorities that they would like to see added. He said that the artificial turf fields that had been added to Vinson Park had received very positive feedback and so he would like to add artificial turf to Fields 1 and 2 at the Sports Complex as well as associated site improvements to give that park a fresh facelift. The improvements would also include re-sodding and re-grading the outfields, as they had not been re-sodded since they were originally put in, as well as expanding the existing fence outward and adding a portable fence for when the younger children play.

He said that other projects would be carried over from the prior year. The Southgate Boulevard Median Improvements project would move from design to construction. With regards to the Margate Boulevard Street Improvements, based on Board feedback, the project had reverted to the original scope of improving the crosswalks, adding lighting and redoing the landscape in the roundabout. The design would be completed and construction would begin in 2024.

A new roof had just been installed at 1041 N. State Road 7 and further improvements at the Chevy Chase Plaza would include completion of the remainder of the roof. Other improvements would include completion of the parking lot and painting and column upgrades. With regards to the Atlantic Boulevard Median Improvements project, the design for the up lighting of the trees along the median would be finished and put out to bid. The project to add Gateway Entryway Signs throughout the city would continue. Lastly, he would continue to gather estimates from the utility providers for undergrounding the utilities along State Road 7 from Atlantic Boulevard to Coconut Creek Parkway. He said that having an actual cost would be helpful whether the MCRA moved forward with the construction or negotiated with a City Center developer to do the work.

He asked the Board for any feedback on those items or any other priorities that they would like to consider for the upcoming budget.

Mr. Arserio said he was very much in favor of making additional improvements to the Sports Complex in order to upgrade the entire park. Showcasing the Covered Sports Field highlighted the need to upgrade the parking lot area and the landscaping. He suggested adding the cost to transplant donated Sylvester Palms to the budget for this park. He said grants previously received by the City and the MCRA for the purchase of trees such as those stipulated that they must be bought at a nursery and therefore the grant could not be used for this purpose. He also suggested upgrading the irrigation system at the same time.

Chair Ruzzano said that the Sports Complex was used a lot and therefore would require a lot of upkeep. By upgrading the facilities now, it would alleviate many maintenance issues in the coming years. He also said that a line item could be added to the project in order to transplant the donated Sylvester Palms and he would be in favor of adding the improvements to this park to the upcoming budget, as put forward by the Executive Director.

Mr. Arserio further stated that as well as the addition of fans, as suggested by a resident previously, it was more important, in his opinion, that the public address (PA) system be upgraded at the Covered Sports Field. He said that while most bands would have their own PA system, other types of private events, could benefit from having a good sound system for speeches or award ceremonies, etc. Mr. Curtis said that he would explore some options and bring them back to the Board.

Ms. Schwartz agreed that a better PA system was a good idea. She said that most bands usually had their own PA system and that the sound under the Covered Sports Field was excellent, if amplified. Mr. Arserio concurred but said that the facility was being used for other events other than concerts and sports and a sound system and electric fans would further enhance the space.

Mr. Curtis added that he would also like to budget funds for property acquisitions should the opportunity arise as well as continue to budget funds for property improvement grants. He noted that there was a lot of interest in the upcoming property improvement grant as evidenced by the amount of inquiries the CRA had received in anticipation of the start date of June 26. Once the applications started to come in they would have a better idea how many were from commercial properties. Mr. Arserio asked if any effort was being made to encourage the bigger shopping centers to apply and Mr. Curtis said that besides sending out mailers, he would also have some staff make direct contact with owners and property managers of the centers.

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**3B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:** Updates to the SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street Improvement Project

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said that Calvin Giordano and Associates (CGA) was hired to do a streetscape beautification project along SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Part of their scope involved holding a town hall meeting with the public to get their input. The main issue, according to the community at large, had to do with drainage and flooding in that area. The neighborhood was developed over 50 years ago and was designed so that the water ran off into the road, gathered in the swale and dissipated in a timely manner. However, due to the buildup of sediment in the swale over time, the water was gathering in the apron of the driveways instead and was creating a flooding issue. As a result, CGA was directed by the board to focus its design on reconstructing the swales and providing an improved drainage system. This would be a curb and gutter type structure that would direct the flow of water, not into the swales, but down into storm drains and towards the canals and alleviate pooling of water in the driveways. The opinion of probable cost for this project would be \$7 million. Without the new drainage system, the project was anticipated to cost \$5 million which included reconstructing the swales by regrading them and getting them back to the level they were intended to be which was lower than the driveways. He reminded the Board that this was only an engineer's opinion of cost and not a bid number and the cost could be higher. He asked the Board for their direction.

Ms. Schwartz asked for clarification as to whether the cars parking in the swales impacted the function of the swales and Mr. Curtis replied that it was not solely the reason but that it had contributed to the issue. He said that as far as the City was concerned the drainage worked fine because the water did not pool in the road. The water ran off the road and rather than pooling in the swales, as it was designed, it collected in the driveways and sometimes took up to 48 hours to dissipate.

Mr. Arserio said that he remembered that particular town hall meeting and not all the residents were in favor of the project. He said he wanted to be fair to all the residents of Margate and therefore could not vote to spend \$7 million or even \$5 million for this project.

Mr. Curtis said that landscape improvements could be done to the median on that street that would not cost nearly as much. He said it was a worthwhile project to do as it was the entranceway to one of the busiest parks in the City. He suggested shelving the design plans and exploring other funding opportunities such as the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Mr. Arserio agreed and said that the City could do a better job in applying for grants through the MPO.

Ms. Simone said that the flooding issue needed to be addressed. She said that it was not acceptable for a resident to wait 48 hours for the flooding at the end of their driveway to subside before they could get to their mailboxes. Mr. Curtis clarified that 48 hours was not the standard and that that maximum timeframe would only be as a result of very heavy rainfall over a long period of time, which was not a normal occurrence. He said a flood analysis was done for that neighborhood and there were a couple of bad areas but that it did not warrant the cost put forward by CGA for an area that small. Ms. Simone asked what could be done to help the residents that had flooding issues. Discussion ensued about the specific locations of intermittent flooding and the possibility that the badly affected areas were south of the CRA boundaries. The Board also discussed other alternatives available to the City and the Board to improve the drainage including MPO grants and financial assistance from State Representatives. The general consensus was to put this project on hold at the present time while investigating other options to address the flooding in the area.

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**4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

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

**Chevy Chase and Ace Plaza Signage** – The contractor had installed support columns for the tenant signs that were twice as tall as they needed to be. He said that the steel posts would be cut down to the size, once the signs were installed.

**Chevy Chase Plaza Improvements** – The roof at 1041 N. State Road 7 was completed and was awaiting final inspections. Proposals would be reviewed for the north section of the roof at Chevy Chase Plaza. Kimley Horn had been engaged for the parking lot improvements and that project was moving along.

**Gateway Signage** – A task order was in place to move forward with permitting through FDOT for the gateway signage concurrently with the wayfinding sign at Southgate Boulevard and State Road 7.

**Serino Park Renovations** – The project was about 75% complete and was on schedule to be completed by mid to end of July. A grand opening was being planned for the park shortly thereafter.

**Margate Boulevard Improvements** – At the last meeting, an engineer from Chen Moore & Associates (CMA) was instructed by the Board to go back to the original scope for this project. It would include milling and repaving of Margate Boulevard, fixing the crosswalks, landscaping of the roundabouts, fixing irrigation and adding up lighting throughout the median.

**Southgate Boulevard Median Improvements** – He said there was no update on this project other than the permitting of the sign through FDOT that he had referred to earlier.

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#### 4A. TENANT UPDATES

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said that he wanted to bring to the attention of the Board an issue with one of the tenants in Chevy Chase Plaza. He said that during the roof replacement that was done at 1041 North State Road 7, the Gem Eatery restaurant at 1043 North State Road 7, was inadvertently impacted and had to close down for 16 days. The restaurant's hood system was drawing in the smell of the tar during the hot mop process and they could not operate during that time. The restaurant owners said they lost upwards of \$30,000 and was asking the Board to abate two month's rent to reduce some of their losses. Chair Ruzzano said that this restaurant was run by Margate residents and had been in operation in the City for a long time. He said that the owners were only asking for two month's rent but, because of their unexpected losses, he wanted to give them at least six month's abatement. After some discussion the Board gave approval for six month's abatement of rent by majority approval.

Ms. Schwartz asked if the rent rolls provided to the Board were the most current. Jim Nardi, Advanced Asset Management, responded that the rent rolls were correct. Ms. Schwartz asked for clarification on the current policy if a tenant was late with the rent. Mr. Nardi responded that the rent was due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, it would be late after the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month and on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month a three-day notice would be issued. Eviction proceedings would then follow. Ms. Schwartz asked if that procedure had been followed with the two tenants that were in arrears. Mr. Nardi said that notices had been issued.

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#### 6. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

**Ms. Simone:** She was looking forward to seeing everybody on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Arserio:** He said he was proud of the improvements that the MCRA had done over the last several years and it was evident in so many events being held in and coming to Margate in the future. He was looking forward to the budget and excited to see the following year's projects.

**Ms. Schwartz:** She wished everyone a Happy Flag Day, Father's Day and July 4<sup>th</sup> coming up. She specifically wanted to thank Broward Meat and Fish because they had stepped in to sponsor a BBQ at the Senior Center at very short notice. They also donated a table for the Domino Tournament that was delivered that day. She commended them for being such good members of the community. She asked if there was any update on the repair of the wall at the Oriole Homes IV. Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said that it belonged to the City and that the contractor was scheduled to begin work on the repair in August.

**Vice Chair Caggiano:** He said he hoped to see everybody at the 4<sup>th</sup> July events. He asked everyone to remember the National Night Out on August 1<sup>st</sup> and reminded everyone to drive safely as children were out playing especially during the summer months.

**Chair Ruzzano:** He said he was very excited about the upcoming opening of Serino Park. He also said he met a Margate resident, Lee Tillman, at a recent event who had won a major award for his BBQ sauce. As a result, Mr. and Mrs. Tillman would be featured on the first episode of the Food Network's "BBQ USA" with Michael Symon in recognition of this award. He said the sauce could be bought locally at the Ace Hardware store in the Ace Plaza. He thanked the Acting MCRA Attorney for attending the meeting in Mr. Tolces' absence.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by Fiona Christmas, CRA Coordinator

Tommy Ruzzano, Chair