

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

WORKSHOP MEETING

Tuesday, January 31, 2017

MINUTES

Present:

Tommy Ruzzano, Chair
Anthony Caggiano, Vice Chair
Lesa Peerman
Arlene Schwartz
Joanne Simone

Also Present:

David Tolces, Board Attorney
Diane Colonna, Executive Director
Cotter Christian, Project Engineer/Manager
Kim Vazquez, Project Manager
Sarah Blake, Marketing Coordinator
Ben Ziskal, Economic Development Director

The workshop meeting of the Margate Community Redevelopment Agency having been properly noticed was called to order at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 31, 2017 by Chair Tommy Ruzzano. There was a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, Roll call was taken.

1A. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION – PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO CITY CENTER SITE PLAN

Diane Colonna, Executive Director, said at a prior meeting the Board expressed interest in the relocation of the amphitheater and community center from the east side of 441(former Swap Shop) site to the 911 State Road 7 property. The developer would like to present a revised site plan and get direction from the Board, if relocation of these facilities is option they would like to move forward on. Time is of the essence as the site plan must be submitted by March 16, 2017.

Tim Hernandez, New Urban Communities, provided an overview of the City Center site plan with the mix of uses including retail/restaurant, multi-family residential and public amenities. Mr. Hernandez provided statistics on up and coming trends in homeownership and how cities are recreating themselves to stay ahead of the current trends and explained that Margate has an advantage over other suburban areas in Broward with the area to redevelop into mixed-use city center core. He reviewed the conceptual plan revision including relocation of the amphitheater, community center, the addition of more commercial fronting US 441, a focal point feature just north of the curve on the new entranceway road on the east side of US 441 and the elimination of the parking structure.

Kevin Rickard, New Urban Communities, said we heard from you that you wanted changes made by relocating some of the public uses to the other side of US 441, and as designed can be successful. We are looking for direction from the Board if these changes are acceptable to submit a site plan and move forward with Phase I of the project. Mr. Rickard continued, we all want what is best for the City and by working together we are trying to end some of the discord in the community that we are trying to work against you all. It is hard to market to commercial uses when we are not pulling in the same direction and believe that this is going to be a fun and exciting project.

Mr. Ruzzano stated he represents the taxpayers and most are not in favor of this project with the amount of the residential units proposed. He recommended construction begin on Phase II and Phase III of the project and the developer give back the eastside of US 441 to the CRA with no planned residential on the east side. The residents want a downtown, a destination point, not apartments.

Ms. Schwartz said that the residential density is a big issue. In her opinion, the idea of mixed-use is stores on the ground floor with residential living above those stores. In Margate we only have two main north/south travel corridors, US 441 and Rock Island Road. Margate has very little retail and most of the resident's travel outside Margate to shop. She said in the market studies, the average age of the residents of is 42.7 years and the downtown should be reflective of that. Ms. Schwartz referred to Robert Gibbs Town Center Master Plan from 2008 and said that it contained 400+ dwelling units for

this site. The Plan addressed the connectivity between the east and west side of US 441 and stated people are more likely to drive from one side to the other and not walk across US 441. Margate needs a destination point and not continue to be a pass through to get to somewhere else. Ms. Schwartz expressed concerns that building 968 residential units will not create a destination point and will create more traffic in the area. She said tonight they are presenting a plan to relocate the community center and amphitheater to the west side and not a plan with less residential units.

Mr. Rickard responded studies will show building all of one use will create more traffic such as the Promenade and a combination of uses creates less traffic. The plan tonight is a less costly option by utilizing the existing parking on the west side with the relocation the public uses as expressed at a prior meeting.

Mr. Caggiano said the addition of 968 residential units will have people who will commute back and forth in vehicles adding more traffic to the area. He continued he did not believe people will use the downtown as a walkable community or use mass transit to get around as the weather in south Florida can be unpredictable.

Mr. Rickard responded the City Center will not resolve the mass transit issues. He went on that the trend of homeownership is going down and there is a demand for multi-family. He said banks who provide the financing and retailers look at the shift in the trends and the trend is people want to live where there is activity.

Ms. Peerman said this has been going on for years and that the prior Board did not just jump into this agreement as it took several months to negotiate the terms. She said we wanted to partner with a developer who would be invested in the area and not just build something and walk away. She said the property is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it. Both developers who responded to the RFP were about the same in what they were willing to pay for the property. The Board choose to partner with New Urban because they were willing to work with us and the other developer was not open to changes to what they proposed. The current median income in Margate will not draw in the higher end retail/restaurant to the area and new rooftops are needed to bring in those types of uses. She said the downtown is not just for the millennials but also for the residents currently living in the area. She asked if construction could begin on the west side as a mixed-use. Mr. Rickard responded it would not be in the spirit of comradery by saying no we cannot. The reason for tonight is there was a desire to make changes to relocate the public amenities and we have made those changes.

Ms. Simone stated she thinks this project can be great for the city. She went on that we need something for the residents of today and for the future residents. The trends are going to urban areas where there is activity. A public official from another city said that if Margate does not go forward with the creation of an urban core city center we will be committing

suicide. People like the convenience of shopping online and not getting in their cars and driving from store to store. If you do not have the people living in and around the downtown to support it, it will not succeed.

Mr. Ruzzano, said we will not get the quality restaurants if the rent is too high. This is suburban Margate not urban Margate and more density cannot change what we have. He asked Mr. Rickard how they are marketing to the commercial uses. Mr. Rickard responded they are offering ground lease or build to suit to potential commercial users.

Mr. Ruzzano asked Mr. Rickard if the consensus of the Board tonight is not to allow 968 residential units would they be willing to change the plan. Mr. Rickard responded there are currently not 968 units available in the Transit Oriented Corridor (TOC) as the City Commission did not approve amending the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Mr. Ruzzano questioned why is a site plan being presented with all the residential units if they are not available

Mr. Ben Ziskal, Director of Economic Development responded there are currently 503 TOC dwelling units available which can be allocated administratively. In addition, there is a pool of approximately 850 reserve and flex units available citywide which would have to applied for by the developer.

Ms. Schwartz asked who would approve the allocation of the flex and reserve dwelling units if applied for by the developer. Mr. Ziskal responded the City Commission would have to approve the allocation of those additional units.

Mr. Rickard said in the dialogue tonight with the Board, he thinks they can collectively work together but time is critical as there is a commitment in the agreement to have a site plan submitted by March 16th. He said if the consensus of the Board is to extend that timeframe then we can work collaboratively with the Board time to redo a site plan.

Ms. Colonna said the site plan submittal date can be extended by amending the agreement. Mr. Ruzzano responded this has been ongoing for over a year and said he would not be in favor of site plan submittal extension.

Mr. Ruzzano asked if it is the consensus of the Board is to have an amphitheater. Further discussion ensued by the Board, but a consensus was not reached. Mr. Rickard asked if there is a way for the Board to sit around a table with New Urban and draw out what is preferred for the site. He stated direction is needed so they can move forward on finalizing the site plan especially if an extension of time is not granted.

Ms. Schwartz asked about the ratio of residential to commercial on the east side. Mr. Rickard responded they are proposing approximately 46,000 sq. feet of commercial and 416 residential units. Ms. Schwartz asked what is process for the site plan approval and what happens if it is not approved.

Mr. Tolces responded the site plan would not come back before the Board as it is a City process. Mr. Ziskal responded it would go before the Development Review Committee which is administrative process and only if there was a variance required it would have to go before the Planning and Zoning and then potentially the City Commission dependent upon the outcome.

Ms. Schwartz asked what would it take to reduce the amount of residential units, and if the community center is moved to the west side will the developers increase the residential units on the east side of US 441.

Mr. Rickard responded if there is a decrease in residential units it would be a significant impact on the economics of the deal and would require a negotiation of fees in the agreement. Mr. Hernandez responded there would not be additional residential units on the east side with the relocation of the community center.

Mr. Ruzzano asked the developer, since there is only 503 units available in the TOC, will there be a reduction in the number of residential units. Mr. Hernandez responded no, if consensus cannot be reached on a revised plan then they will submit the plan as approved as part of the agreement. He asked the Board if they wanted to provide a number of units that is reasonable and agreed upon then they will redo the site plan with that number of units and extend the submittal date as new plan will take time to redraw.

Mr. Tolces explained to the Board that there is currently a development agreement and a site plan is included as part of that agreement. He said any amendments to the current agreement would have be worked out between the two parties and brought back to the Board for final approval.

Ms. Simone stated she feels this not the right venue with the Board to discuss revisions to a site plan. She proposed sitting at the table to work on a plan that is agreeable and if necessary, provide an extension on the submittal date to allow opportunity for the revisions to be completed.

Mr. Caggiano stated this agreement was rushed through and prior to the elections and feels they are now stuck with a development that the residents are not in favor of.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Joyce Bryan, said when she sat as a commissioner and board member she took every opportunity she could to learn more about public/private partnerships, urban communities and the development process. She stated that she takes offense to the statement this agreement was rushed through as it was not. She commented to the Board, that they now have an opportunity to renegotiate what was originally proposed but the developers need direction, so give it to them and provide an extension on the site plan submittal date. She commented if you want something different then fine, but she wants to see something done.

Rich Popovich, 6066 Winfield Boulevard, the prior Board sold us out and he is not in favor of extending the timeframe for the developer and give the residents what they want.

Bob Agramanti, said a low rise mixed-use is not always a bad thing but 968 residential units is too dense for this area. He said he is not in favor of building a downtown based on the wants and needs of the millennials and if selling, make sure there are deed restrictions. Why not lease the property instead of selling the property. He stated he is not in favor of the development as proposed.

Rick Zugini 380 B Lakewood Circle East, said he there should be deed restrictions to not allow for Section 8 housing and criminal background checks should be completed.

Manny Lugo, 1129 E River Drive, said the property is not being sold at fair market value. The developer just cares about making money and they are not going to change their plan. He said the Board needs to stop this development now.

Teresa DeCristofaro, 6600 Brandywine Drive 8, said certain members of the current Board, think they have been backed into an agreement they are not in favor of and a developer who wants an extension of time to sit down and work out the details of a plan that is give and take scenario. With the dysfunctional reputation of this city no other developer or business will want to come here and work with this Board.

Rick Riccardi, 4829 South Hemmingway Circle, said he is representing his neighborhood and businesses in the community. He said the whole idea of losing \$30 million dollars on the sale of the property is ridiculous as it is vacant and unusable as is. He said the property was assimilated to build a downtown. He stated apartments are being constructed in and around Margate and the density is needed to support the businesses.

John Brodie, City News Magazine, said the developer has shown tremendous patience with this Board and the businesses are in favor of this downtown plan and it offers Margate a huge opportunity. There is a tremendous amount of people and businesses that are in favor of this project and if they felt it was in jeopardy they would have been here tonight to voice their concerns.

Todd Angier, 1913 NW 79th Street, said the decisions previously made were based on what was in the best interest of the City of Margate. The developer is willing to work with you, but you must be flexible as well or they can go ahead and build Phase I and you will lose this opportunity. He gave the example of the Fort Lauderdale Riverwalk project and how it failed because there was no residential component to support the businesses. He stressed to the Board to work together and come to terms and move forward.

Susan Riccardi, 4289 South Hemmingway Circle, said she has worked with developers, contractors and businesses and they go by demographics when constructing or opening a business. She stated she is very disappointed that our city is not looking to the future.

Steve Smith, 6030 NW 18th street, stated he is a long-time resident and he is not in favor of the site plan as presented and it needs to be revisited.

Eddie DeCristofaro, 6600 Brandywine Drive 8, said the consensus of the residents is they want a downtown without the residential on the east side and they want a cross walk over US 441. He said the Board needs to work with the developers to see if they are willing to put the residential on the west side only.

Commissioner Peerman read a text message from Tim Atkins, Coconut Key, said he supports the project and he was unable to attend the meeting in person tonight.

Charlie Artner, 6631 NW 22nd Court, said he researched the average income for millennials which averages \$20,000-\$22,000 a year and he does not know how they can afford an apartment that rents for \$1,500 a month. The developer has submitted a plan with 968 dwelling units but there are only 503 units available how are they allowed to move forward on their site plan as presented. Mr. Tolces responded they can move forward on building Phase I of the project as submitted as part of the development agreement.

Joey Perez, 619 Banks Road, expressed concern and displeasure with some of the aspects of Phase I of the project. He recommended the Board sit at the table and work with the developer to come up with a plan that works for the city and provide them with an extension of time to make revisions to their plan.

Mike Leboworth, 3315 Chickee Lane, said he was formerly a contractor. He said the developer has come before you and said they are willing to work with you. You have a signed contract that was voted on so move forward on what was submitted as part of the agreement.

Frank Tropepe, Ace Hardware said he thinks that a 10-day extension is fair to come to terms with the number of the apartment units. He said residential above commercial will not work as the residents will take up the parking in front of the businesses.

Ms. Schwartz said to Mr. Rickard and Mr. Hernandez that she understands they can build on the east side now, but it will not make them very popular. She proposed lowering the number of dwelling units from 968 to 675-725 dwelling units with a codicil that at least 100 of those units be lowered from the east side. She recommended getting rid of the parking garage, negotiate on the price if warranted and offered a 30-day extension on their site plan submittal.

Ms. Peerman asked the Board if they would consider an extension of 90 days for the site plan submittal.

Ms. Schwartz said before a consensus is made, she asked the Board if they would consider coming together at another workshop meeting and sitting at the table to see if we can come up with a compromise and then consider an extension of the site plan submittal date if needed.

The consensus of the Board was to call a workshop meeting for Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 3:00p.m.

Having no other business, the meeting ended at 9:46 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

Transcribed by Kimberly Vazquez

Tommy Ruzzano, Chair