

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

REGULAR MEETING OCTOBER 7, 2019

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Jeffrey L. Oris, Executive Director
David Tolces, Goren, Cherof, Doody & Ezrol, P.A.
James Nardi, Advanced Asset Management

The regular meeting of the Margate Community Redevelopment Agency having been properly noticed was called to order at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, October 7, 2019, by Chair Tommy Ruzzano. Roll call was taken. There was a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1A. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL - (8/20/19 Regular)

After David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the item title, Mr. Caggiano 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.

2. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Richard Zucchini, 380 Lakewood Circle East, spoke about a discussion at a recent Planning and Zoning Board meeting about triggers for upgrading to current Code at commercial properties. He said he had suggested three possibilities: percentage of square footage; change of occupancy with an increased parking requirement; or, time aging. He said Development Service Department found the suggestions cumbersome and instead recommended the elimination of minimum parking at plazas and that aging should be the only trigger. He said it was imperative that there be a concentration on code enforcement at the plazas along U.S. 441 to improve the look of the City.

3A. RESOLUTION 611: APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH CHRISTMAS DESIGNERS/FLORIDA CDI, LLC FOR HOLIDAY LIGHTING ALONG MARGATE BOULEVARD

After David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the resolution title, Ms. Schwartz made the following motion, seconded by Mr. Caggiano:

MOTION: SO MOVE TO APPROVE

There was no discussion.

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

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jeffrey L. Oris, Executive Director, provided the following updates:

-Conferences-notified the Board that he would be out of the office the following week attending two conferences: International Economic Development Conference; and the Florida Redevelopment Association conference, and that he would be accessible by phone or computer.

-Budget Transfer-transferred \$1,515 from Contingency to the Sports Complex Covered Field to cover the cost of a survey to identify exact boundaries and a small strip of land owned by Minto.

-Property Insurance-MCRA paid the first installment payment of \$36,870.51 to Florida Municipal Insurance Trust for property insurance

Mr. Arserio commented that the property across the street from Wawa was purportedly under contract for an auto repair business. He asked about the status of the Farm Bureau property noting that he had heard an auto related use was interested. Mr. Oris said he had planned to contact Mr. Siegel very soon to discuss it. He said he was working on a property acquisition program in support of the recently approved budget.

Mr. Arserio said he agreed with Mr. Zucchini's comments on code enforcement. He asked about the status of the plan to enforce code enforcement within the MCRA. Mr. Oris said he would speak with the City Manager about it. He said he would also work to formulate a relationship with Code Enforcement.

Ms. Schwartz commented about the lack of follow through on the possible purchase of three properties on the west side of Royal Palm Boulevard and U.S. 441. She suggested looking at available properties that made sense.

Ms. Simone asked about the status of the former Alzheimer Center property. Mr. Oris said Mr. Nardi would be getting aerial photos and increase marketing of the property. He said there were also some repairs in the works and the intent was to sell the property as soon as possible.

Chair Ruzzano said the parcel two properties east of the former Alzheimer's Center was being cleared but no one in the City knew what was going on there. Mr. Oris said he did not know but he had planned to start meeting with Robert Massarelli on a regular basis so that he would be more knowledgeable about Development Services' activities. A short discussion ensued about whether a permit would have been required or if it went before the Development Review Committee. Ms. Schwartz commented that communication was a big problem. Mr. Oris said he had not had the chance to meet with all the departments to establish necessary relationships between them and the MCRA. She suggested a template for weekly project updates by the department that could be shared. Mr. Oris said he would try to facilitate such a report.

David Tolces, Board Attorney, requested a shade session pursuant to Chapter 286, Florida Statutes, in the case of New Urban Communities, LLC versus the Margate Community Redevelopment Agency, case number CACE 18-004869(13) pending in the Circuit Court for the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit in and for Broward County, Florida. He said the request was required to be made at a public meeting, and that he would work with the Executive Director and the Board member's schedules to set a special shade session meeting to discuss the case.

4A. TENANT UPDATES

James Nardi, Advanced Asset Management, reported the following:

-Pop's Chicken and Waffles owed rent for the months of September and October. Ms. Simone asked what was being done. Mr. Nardi said he had extensive conversations with them and they still planned to open. He said a three-day notice had been issued per MCRA's policy and if the tenant did not follow through in time, it would be turned over to the MCRA's attorney to pursue eviction. He said the tenant had been running two months behind routinely.

-In addition to Pop's Chicken and Waffles, Sweet Spot, Octagon Financial and Brain Builders also owed rent. He said Octagon Financial was in the process of getting their Local Business Tax Receipt and they had been through four of their five inspections.

-There was someone interested in opening a dental office at the former Chamber of Commerce space at 6209 Margate Boulevard, and they were in the process of speaking with the Building Department and an architect.

5. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Simone: No comments.

Mr. Arserio: Asked for an update on the Atlantic Boulevard wall. Jeffrey Loris, Executive Director, explained that the project would begin moving forward in the near future. Mr. Arserio commented about a restaurant week promotion being done in a neighboring city. He asked that Mr. Oris coordinate with Business Development about doing something similar.

Ms. Schwartz: Asked about the possibility of a having a pre-application process for businesses that were considering coming to Margate. Mr. Oris said it would be an additional step to put a business through that they would not find useful. He said the issue was more of about the sharing of information internally with Planning and Zoning.

Mr. Caggiano: Referenced the clearing of the property near the Alzheimer's Center that he said no one seemed to be aware of and he questioned Code's role in it.

Mr. Ruzzano: Said he asked residents what they wanted to see in a recent Facebook post, and the majority of the comments had to do with the businesses in Margate and that the plazas do not look good. He said they were more City versus MCRA related issues He suggested the Board send a complaint letter to the City about the appearance of the plazas.

He asked the status of the Sounds at Sundown events. Mr. Oris said that Mike Jones, Parks and Recreation, was in the process of putting together a plan for the winter months that would be funded from their budget.

He asked about the holiday lights, July 4th, and Winter Festival in the future. Mr. Oris said it would be the City's responsibility after the current year. He said he would prepare a formal letter to the City to officially notify them of the MCRA's decision to not fund certain expenditures in the future. Chair Ruzzano commented that the additional expenses to the City's budget would be burdensome and it was something that should be thought about further. Mr. Oris said the reason the MCRA would no longer be funding the events was because they no longer met the mission of the MCRA.

Ms. Schwartz asked if "No Trespassing" signs could be put up the property on the east side of U.S. 441 to deter trucks from parking there. David Tolces, Board Attorney, said signs needed to be posted in order for the MCRA to take further action. Mr. Oris said he would also look into ways to eliminate access to the site.

There was a short back and forth discussion about the amount of money the City would take on by the MCRA not doing the events as well as other additional expenses that the City would incur when the MCRA ended in six years. Chair Ruzzano asked if the burden should be placed on the City at the current time. Mr. Arserio said he was fine with it if it allowed the MCRA to purchase an important piece of property. He mentioned that the recent millage rate increase should help the City fund the additional expenses. Several Board members commented on the need to obtain sponsorships to help pay for the events.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Tommy Ruzzano, Chair

Transcribed by Rita Rodi, CRA Coordinator

