

MARGATE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

REGULAR MEETING September 9, 2021

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Cale Curtis, Executive Director
Larry Vignola, Assistant 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 5:10 p.m., on Thursday, September 9, 2021, 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 also accessible virtually through Zoom technology.

1A. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL - (8/9/2021 Special)

After David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the item title, Ms. Simone made the following motion, seconded by Ms. Schwartz:

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.

1B. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL - (8/17/2021 Regular)

After David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the item title, Ms. Simone 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

Steve Strouse, Pete's Barbershop, 5833 Margate Boulevard, commented that several tenants of Ace Plaza had looked into getting accordion shutters for their windows and after Noor Vallyani (Margate Hardware) had been told no, he emailed Cale Curtis who responded that the addition of storm shutters was not desired because they would permanently alter the appearance of the plaza. Mr. Strouse acknowledged that the MCRA had renovated the plaza and the holes where shutters were previously screwed in had been repaired. In his case, he said accordions were the only option because he had no place to store panels due to their size. He asked the Board what other options tenants had to protect their businesses from storms. He mentioned that the owners at his condominium could not be refused storm shutters on their windows; however, they could be told what type of shutters were permitted.

Chair Ruzzano asked if the shutters were for window security or window protection. Mr. Strouse said they were for window protection; he mentioned that another tenant wanted to close theirs daily. Chair Ruzzano said he supported having the Executive Director obtain cost estimates on installing impact windows and doors and possibly assessing the tenants over a period of years. He said the impact windows would provide a consistent look, harden the plaza, and increase its value. He mentioned wanting to avoid putting more holes in the window frames.

Vice Chair Caggiano suggested having removable aluminum panels with tracks. Mr. Strouse pointed out the issue with storing them and Mr. Caggiano responded that something could be figured out for storage.

Chair Ruzzano said the MCRA would look into impact glass and possibly sharing the cost with the MCRA.

Mr. Arserio agreed with looking into impact windows as the best option, and mentioned their energy efficiency in addition to their other benefits. He said if they were too expensive, then another option should be considered and a policy established so there would be uniformity.

Vice Chair Caggiano commented that aluminum shutters were more affordable than impact glass which could cost over \$100,000.

Ms. Simone said she had no issue with the tenants putting up storm shutters. She disagreed that accordion shutters would deter from the plaza and she supported having them closed up at night for protection, and having uniformity.

Chair Ruzzano asked whether adding window protection would save on the cost of insurance. He commented about not wanting to have the tenants screwing plywood into the newly repaired window frames. He said impact glass was being put in all new construction and putting up accordion shutters was taking a step backwards. He pointed out that a role of the MCRA was to improve slum and blight. Mr. Arserio mentioned the cost savings on electricity due to the windows energy efficiency.

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said he would work with the property manager to obtain cost estimates on impact windows, shutters, and panels.

Ron Silberberg, said he was a manufacturer of accordion shutters and impact windows and that he had been in the business for 25 years. He said he met with several tenants and looked at several options that would work for them as well as the MCRA and he met with the property manager [Jim Nardi] in May and he was in agreement with his ideas. He said he proceeded with building shutters for three tenants, had started the permitting and he was now at a standstill because the process suddenly stopped. Chair Ruzzano asked Mr. Silberberg who had given him approval to build the shutters and he said it was Mr. Nardi. Ms. Schwartz explained to Mr. Silberberg that the MCRA was the property owner and it was not aware of the matter and had not given approval for the shutters.

James Nardi, Advanced Asset Management, disagreed with Mr. Silberberg's comments. He said that he told him that the property owner's approval was needed and that he had not authorized him to build anything. Mr. Silberberg stated that there had been a misunderstanding.

Chair Ruzzano asked Attorney Tolces whether a tenant could purchase and install shutters. Attorney Tolces referenced the tenant's lease noting that any alterations to the property would need to be authorized through the property manager and, depending on the extent of them, might require an amendment to the lease.

Ms. Schwarz commented that anything done needed to be uniform to maintain the aesthetics of the recently renovated plaza. She said she understood the need to have hurricane protection but having windows shuttered every night gave the false appearance that the plaza was not safe. Vice Chair reiterated his preference for panels over accordions.

Mr. Curtis said he had consensus from the Board to come up with a solution that would allow property owners to protect their businesses. He mentioned two possible ideas: MCRA funding impact windows for all businesses and financing an assessment to the tenants over several years; or, establishing a standard for a specific type of shutter or panel allowed by the MCRA whereby individual business owners could decide to install them based on defined specifications. He said he would work with staff on a variety of solutions and report back to the Board.

Mitch Pellecchia, 6890 N.W. 9th Street, handed distributed a handout, "Little New York – Margate, Florida," developed by his company, the Cassius Group, which provided a future concept for the future development of the City Center. He said over the years he had witnessed the MCRA's struggle to define a general concept for the downtown area and he proceeded to read through the two-page Executive Summary he provided. The Summary provided an overview, a list of challenges and solutions, highlights of the Little New York concept, keys to success, and financial highlights.

3A. **RESOLUTION 670:** APPROVING FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 ANNUAL BUDGET AND AUTHORIZING THAT ANY FUNDS REMAINING FROM FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 BUDGET WHICH ARE UNENCUMBERED AND UNEXPENDED AS OF THE LAST DAY OF THE FISCAL YEAR SHALL BE RE-APPROPRIATED FOR THE SAME PURPOSE OR PROJECT OR REALLOCATED PURSUANT TO EXHIBIT "A."

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

MOTION: SO MOVE TO APPROVE

Ms. Schwartz asked about the budget line for Stormwater Improvements. Cale Curtis, Executive Director, explained that the MCRA had agreed to several public infrastructure improvements as part of the Development Agreement for the City Center project, one of which was stormwater improvements. The MCRA had not moved forward on the infrastructure improvements due to the pending litigation but it has budgeted design fees for the projects for the past several years. A short discussion ensued between Ms. Schwartz and Mr. Curtis about stormwater work that had been done five or so years ago and he said it might have been done for stormwater runoff at that time.

She referenced the \$555,000 that had been budgeted for improvements at Chevy Chase Plaza and she asked what improvements had been made for that amount. Mr. Curtis explained the amended budget amount as compared to what had been spent thus far noting that one of the biggest improvements would be for replacement of the roof and that quotes ranging from \$400,000 to over \$600,000 had been received. He said \$39,000 had been spent on Chevy Chase improvements in the current fiscal year. He explained that actual expenditures would be reported on at the end of the fiscal year.

She asked about the differences between property maintenance accounts and the professional services accounts and the services associated with those budget line items. Mr. Curtis explained.

Chair Ruzzano commented about the projects for Atlantic Boulevard Improvements, S.W. 6th Street, and Serino Park and he suggested showcasing them with "coming soon" signage. He commented that the \$2.5 million being budgeted for underground utilities was put in to balance the budget. He said that he wanted to see a lot more going on and to showcase the MCRA projects. Mr. Curtis thanked him for his feedback and he spoke about a community meeting that was being planned for S.W. 6th Street streetscape project next month. He said there were many projects moving along and they would see a lot of activity taking off in the next year. Chair Ruzzano spoke about the importance of community buy-in.

Mitch Pellecchia, 6890 N.W. 9th Street, commented about the lack of accountability in the budget and the practice of carrying funds over from one year to the next.

There was a short discussion about whether the Broward County needed to approve improvements on Atlantic Boulevard and Mr. Curtis said the activities would be coordinated with the appropriate agencies.

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

3B. **RESOLUTION 671:** AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF A FITNESS COURT AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT FROM NATIONAL FITNESS CAMPAIGN, LLC, FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED ONE HUNDRED FOURTEEN THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE AND NO/100 DOLLARS (\$114,265.00); APPROVING THE SOLE SOURCE PURCHASE FROM NATIONAL FITNESS CAMPAIGN, LLC

After David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the resolution title, Vice Chair Caggiano made the following motion, second by Mr. Arserio:

MOTION: SO MOVE TO APPROVE

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, introduced the item and explained that staff was in the process of evaluating a piggyback contract with MBR Construction for Serino Park and, in the meantime, an opportunity had presented itself with National Fitness Campaign to bring a one-of-a-kind fitness structure to the park for which they were offering a \$30,000 grant from the National Fitness Campaign (NFC). He said the MCRA wanted to seize the opportunity to purchase the equipment through the grant and then once the MCRA had a contractor in place for the project, it would be turned over to them for installation.

Ms. Simone asked whether the residents wanted that particular type of equipment. Mr. Curtis mentioned there had been a big call for a similar type cross fitness/ninja style course under the FPL easement. He said he thought there would be a big draw for it at Serino Park because of the high visibility in its location on U.S. 441 and the current active use of the park. He also mentioned the frequent use of the fitness equipment next to Station 58.

Mike Jones, Director, Parks and Recreation, commented that this amenity had been in the City's Master Plan and when the MCRA budgeted to make improvements at Serino Park, he reached out to National Fitness Campaign to discuss opportunities and determined that it would be a good match. He said it was an active park and requests from residents for fitness equipment have been received. He said it was better for the residents to have a variety of amenities and exercise equipment options and he mentioned what was available at various parks in the City. He commented that CrossFit was a growing national trend, the equipment was low maintenance and NFC was a high quality company, adding that it utilized QR codes that provided smart phones users with the ability to have instructors provide guided fitness training. He explained that it was a self-guided fitness court suitable for all levels with instructions throughout the course. He commented that Tamarac received rave reviews from its residents and staff about equipment installed at Tephford Park.

Mitch Pellecchia, 6890 N.W. 9th Street, commented that he worked out at Station 58 every day and it was one of the best things he had ever done. He spoke highly of the equipment and its ease of use. He said not enough people knew about the fitness facilities available in the City and more needed to be done to get the word out. Ms. Schwartz suggested he could help with promoting the parks.

Chair Ruzzano asked if the equipment was covered and the size. Mr. Jones said the current proposal called for it to have a fabric shade cover that rain could mist through which needed to come down for storms. He said it could be changed when it came back to them for project approval if that were their direction. Ms. Schwartz said the surface area was 32 foot by 32 foot.

Mr. Arserio commented that that when he had passed by Station 58 in the evening and it was very busy. He agreed that the parks needed additional promotion.

Steve Strouse, Pete's Barbershop, asked if consideration had been given to installing solar powered lights and fans. Mr. Jones said there were lights at Station 58 for morning and evening workouts but no fans since it was an open air facility.

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

3C. **RESOLUTION 672: APPROVING THE SECOND AMENDMENT TO THE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MARGATE AND THE MARGATE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR FUNDING CONTRIBUTION, SERVICES, AND COMPENSATION FOR FY 2021-2022**

After David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the resolution title, Vice Chair Caggiano made the following motion, second by Ms. Schwartz:

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.

3D. **RESOLUTION 673: AUTHORIZING A "SECOND AMENDMENT" TO THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE MARGATE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND M & M LAWN CARE, LLC, FOR THE INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL MAINTENANCE SERVICES**

After David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the resolution title, Vice Chair Caggiano made the following motion, second by Ms. Schwartz with a question:

MOTION: SO MOVE TO APPROVE

Ms. Schwartz commented that the current contract was through February, 2022 and asked if it would come before them again for renewal in a few months. Cale Curtis, Executive Director, explained that the original agreement was through February, 2022, and it was being amended to include additional landscaping services for the Sports Covered Field. He said the contract would either be extended or put out to bid once it got closer to the end of its term in February.

Mitch Pellecchia, 6890 N.W. 9th Street, asked what the additional cost was for their "added" services. Mr. Curtis responded that two quotes were obtained and it went to the lowest bidder at it was \$11,000 and he explained the services they would be providing.

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

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

Atlantic Boulevard Streetscape Improvements: He said the irrigation work along Atlantic Boulevard should be completed by the end of September and the next phase would be implementing appropriate landscaping for the medians that would consist of single trees and grass.

Chevy Chase Plaza Improvements: The tenant signs should be completed within 30 days. Partial stucco work was underway to prepare the façade for the new signage, separate from the stucco work that was planned for the overall project. A contract had been issued and work was underway for the cleaning and lining of the stormwater system which will be followed by plans for the parking lot repairs. He said the biggest challenge at the plaza was the roof and the cost to replace it. He mentioned that a contract that had been brought before the Board previously had not been acceptable due to the cost, and another quote was obtained that came in higher. He said he would continue to work with property manager Jim Nardi to find another solution.

Covered Sports Field: He reported that the project had been completed and preparations were underway for a big grand opening. The entrance sign had been completed and installed and the electrical connection was to be done. He said there were some funds available in the budget for the grand opening but a budget transfer was anticipated which he would report on at the next meeting.

Serino Park: In addition to the fitness court approved in the meeting, he said a contract was being vetted with MBR Construction to ensure it met the procurement requirements and reflected the County's contract pricing.

S.W. 6th Street: He said design meetings had been held with the consultants and the next step was to hold a public meeting and invite the residents of that neighborhood. The meeting to be held in October would be advertised and signs posted about the meeting and the proposed improvements.

City Center Visioning: He commented that the MCRA had been working with Steven Fett Architecture on a conceptual City Center plan and it was at a point where a preliminary (30-50%) presentation of a concept would be made to the Board in the near future.

Ms. Schwartz suggested that a more proactive approach be taken to communicate with businesses by reaching out to them with information such as the grant programs. She also asked whether MBR Construction had an exclusive contract with our parks. Mr. Curtis said MBR did not have an exclusive contract; however, they had been one of the better contractors to work with on projects in terms of time, budget, experience, and quality of work. He said procurement procedures were followed and they either bid on the projects or had existing contracts in place that could be piggybacked.

4A. TENANT UPDATES

Ms. Schwartz asked about a sign she saw at the building vacated by Angel's Latin Cafe. Chair Ruzzano said Margate Quickies would be coming soon. James Nardi, Advanced Asset Management, confirmed that they had a lease effective September 1, 2021, that they had three other locations, and that they planned to open within the next 30 days. Ms. Schwartz asked if the MCRA subsidized their first month's rent and Mr. Nardi said it had not. There was a short discussion about the tenant's relocation to the Ace Plaza in the tenant space formerly occupied by Alex's Sausage and it was mentioned that they had received two months' rent concession for flooring and other improvements. Ms. Schwartz questioned when the MCRA would see a return on that space being that the flooring had just been done for the previous tenant, Alex's Sausage. She asked the point at which the tenant would be told no, using the newly replaced flooring as an example.

Mr. Nardi explained that there was a need to negotiate in order to attract new tenants. He said Margate Quickies was amazed that the MCRA was not providing rent concessions. He explained that the quicker the spaces were filled, the sooner revenue came in. He said in order to entice tenants to come in and compete, it was necessary to help shoulder a reasonable level of the expenses. She said an enticement was not necessary for Angel to move as they were moving into a space that had already been refurbished and they were not a new tenant. He explained the various improvements that had been made to the space to make it a viable restaurant space. She said she understood the need for certain improvements, but not to change the color of the floor. He said different tenants had different standards. There was a short back and forth discussion about the negotiation process and the lack of concessions for Quickies. Mr. Nardi pointed out that the lease had a 12-month out clause which was a negative to overcome.

Mr. Arserio commented about the time factor involved in negotiations noting that when terms were not agreed to and the tenant decided to shop around, potential revenue was lost while the space sat vacant, even if the tenant came back in a month or so. Mr. Nardi agreed and he spoke about some past missed opportunities.

5. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Arserio: Commented that the Broward County Fair would be coming to Margate. He mentioned an email that had been received that ended the speculation about the legitimacy of the Fair. He said he was also looking forward to the grand opening of the Covered Sports Field.

Ms. Simone: Asked if it were possible to move the meetings back to 7:00 p.m. Discussion ensued among the Board members about the start time. Chair Ruzzano polled the Board members. Ms. Schwartz was fine with 7:00 p.m. or whatever the majority wanted; Vice Chair Caggiano preferred 5:00 p.m.; Mr. Arserio said he also liked 5:00 p.m., but 7:00 p.m. was fine too. Ms. Schwartz suggested 6:00 p.m. Chair Ruzzano said he could do either. Ms. Simone said she preferred a reasonable dinner hour and that she had other responsibilities as well. Mr. Arserio commented on the benefit of having access to all staff when the meetings were held at 5:00 p.m. Chair Ruzzano suggested the Executive Director and Ms. Simone discuss and agree on a meeting time.

Ms. Schwartz: Commented that there had been a nice turnout at the Sounds at Sundown. She said there had been a few requests to have more variety of food choices among the food trucks. She suggested having something put inside the Covered Sports Field (opposite side of the wall with City seal), prior to the grand opening, that identified it was in "Margate" such as the City seal or the initial "M." Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said it would take more than one week to have it done, but he agreed to look into some type of banners for the grand opening. She wished members of the Jewish faith a Happy New Year.

Vice Chair Caggiano: Commented that the Sounds at Sundown was a very nice event and he encouraged more people to come out to attend them the first Saturday of each month.

Chair Ruzzano: He suggested having some sort of picture spot at the Covered Sports Field that would serve as a backdrop for photos. He said he loved the Margate Sports Complex entry sign and he said envisioned something similar for the two tenant signs on the north and south entryway of Margate Boulevard. He mentioned the 20-year remembrance ceremony of 9/11 being held by the City at Firefighter's Park on Saturday, September 11th.

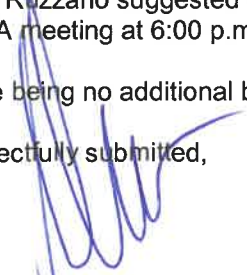
He suggested that people attending the grand opening for the Covered Sports Field be informed that they should bring blankets and chairs. He mentioned that there would be a Movie in The Park held there the following week.

Chair Ruzzano suggested the possibility of showcasing a different local restaurant each month prior to the start of the MCRA meeting at 6:00 p.m.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by Rita Rodi, CRA Coordinator



Tommy Ruzzano, Chair

