

MARGATE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

REGULAR MEETING April 13, 2022

MINUTES

Present:

Joanne Simone
Antonio V. Arserio
Arlene Schwartz (via Zoom)
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 7:05 p.m., on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, 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 - (3/9/2022 Regular)

After David Tolces, 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.

2. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Nina Culver, resident and member of AMVETS (American Veterans) Ladies Auxiliary, Post 1939 in Margate, said she was at the meeting to advocate on behalf of her husband and the other American veterans in Margate. She gave a brief explanation of AMVETS history, its role, benefits and services, and its contributions to veterans and their communities. She advised that the local AMVETS post 1939 was in jeopardy because their current location had become unaffordable, and the next closest AMVETS post was 70 miles away in Hope Sound. She said it would be devastating for the veterans and the community to lose its local support.

She said AMVETS had recently been offered a location on Margate Boulevard in Ace Plaza next to a bar, but it was not a suitable location for their veterans. She said there was a building located at 6030 N.W. 9th Street (Merrill Road) that would be available after a roof replacement was completed. She commented that she understood the MCRA also had funds for residential and commercial properties. She asked that an item be added to the next MCRA agenda for discussion on how to best help the veterans. She introduced Edward Moore, AMVETS Commander.

Edward Moore, Commander of AMVETS Post 1939, explained that AMVETS had lost a lot of its members since COVID-19 started, and they were faced with a rent increase. He said it was doubtful that they would make it through the end of the year, and they were looking for consideration at the property located at 6030 N.W. 9th Street. He said they could handle the maintenance costs.

Chair Ruzzano commented about a letter he received about AMVETS relocating to the former Mugshots location, but there was another prospective tenant interested in that space. He had invited AMVETS to come to the MCRA meeting to let the Board know what they were looking for. He said the building was about 5,000 square foot, it needed a new roof, and it did not have a kitchen which was something that AMVETS wanted. Mr. Moore said a kitchen was not necessary. Chair Ruzzano commented that it would be a great gesture for the MCRA to do something for AMVETS after the roof was done, and he asked the Board attorney if it were something the MCRA could do.

David Tolces, Board Attorney, said a public notice would be needed per Florida Statute to allow other individuals and/or entities to submit proposals as well.

Chir Ruzzano asked the Board members if they were open to doing something for AMVETS with the building.

Ms. Simone said she was willing to look into it.

Mr. Arserio said he too was willing to look into it. He asked if AMVETS had any posts south of Margate; Mr. Moore said they did not and that the Margate location served at least all of Broward County. Mr. Arserio suggested reaching out to the County and other organizations for consideration because veterans throughout all of South Florida would be affected.

Ms. Schwartz said she had spoken with Doris Stanczyk of AMVETS last year about relocating to a 3,000-square-foot space in the Ace Plaza, and she was curious why it fell through. She said she no had no problem looking into the building but she thought there had been discussion with Legacy Closet going there. Mr. Moore said he was not involved in the conversation, but he thought it was because they could not have a liquor license at that location – only beer and wine. Ms. Schwartz said that was not true and that she had spoken to Jim Nardi about it. A short back and forth discussion ensued about liquor license requirements. Mr. Moore said they had a full liquor license.

Vice Chair Caggiano commented that the former Mugshots location might work better if the 3,000-square-foot space was sufficient and only an address change was needed for their liquor license. The building at 6030 NW 9th Street could be used for something that needed 5,000 square feet. He said he had no problem with helping AMVETS.

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, advised that there was no available space at the Ace Plaza.

Chair Ruzzano said it would be nice to say that Margate was the home of the southernmost AMVET post. He said the Executive Director would provide an update on the roof and the item would come back at the next meeting for further discussion.

3A. **DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION:** MCRA BUDGET PRIORITIES IN FISCAL YEAR 2023

After David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the item, Chair Ruzzano commented that the purpose of the item was to discuss a preliminary wish list of projects or activities for the budget in the upcoming fiscal year and he asked the Board members for their ideas and suggestions.

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said he and staff were looking for direction from the Board on programs or projects they may want the MCRA to pursue in the new fiscal year. He referenced the meeting back-up that identified current capital projects that were underway in various stages as well as a list of some potential projects. He spoke about the following potential projects:

- **Design of a Community Center/Gymnasium** – The Redevelopment Plan currently allowed for a Community Center to be built in the City Center development. He recommended moving the Community Center, a government facility, out of the City Center and having it designed and built at David Park where Parks and Recreation's offices, the Community Center and Senior Center were currently located. He said the Redevelopment Plan would need to be updated to allow for it. If the Board agreed, he would budget funds for feasibility/design in fiscal year 2023. Vice Chair Caggiano said it was a phenomenal idea. Mr. Arserio said he was also in favor of it, and he asked about parking needs. Mr. Curtis said the intent would be to look at the entire area which encompassed the Senior Center, the library, Community Center, etc., and redesign it with sufficient parking. Vice Chair Caggiano commented that other cities had incorporated libraries into their community centers.
- **Southgate Boulevard Improvements** – There was an MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) project that had been stalled due to coordination between Margate and North Lauderdale. He explained that FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation) was no longer managing the MPO projects and the responsibility for managing the projects and obtaining LAP (Local Agency Program) certification had fallen to the cities. He suggested designing some improvements to the Southgate Boulevard corridor as were being done to Margate Boulevard and S.W. 6th Street.
- **Canal connectivity** – This would include clearing and dredging of some canalways located in the MCRA. He mentioned a canal that ran south of C-14 along East River Drive behind Margate Middle School that used to be navigable by boat years ago but was now in need of significant land clearing. He said it was located within the MCRA and would have a positive impact on the area. He said he would like to look into it and he acknowledged that it might require an amendment to the MCRA Redevelopment Plan.

Vice Chair Caggiano asked how long an area would remain clear after it were dredged before having to do it again. Chair Ruzzano said it would depend on the pitch of the dredging and the embankment preservation method and, if done correctly, the dredging could last for 20 years. Mr. Arserio said he was in favor of improving the waterways and he commented about the need for Code Enforcement to enforce maintenance and overgrowth.

- **Resident Property Improvement/Curb Appeal Grant** – A local CRA spoke about this program which provided assistance to residences for landscaping, painting, etc, at a recent CRA class he attended. He said there were not many residences located in the MCRA but it would be a good program to offer. Mr. Arserio said he was glad to hear it was something the MCRA could do because he was of the understanding that public monies could not be spent on private property. He said the program needed to be promoted because the MCRA had low response to the commercial grants offered in the past.

In reference to the earlier discussion about the Community Center, Ms. Schwartz recommended that the Board members visit the City of Sunrise Civic Center to see how well it was designed and how it included plenty of parking. She commented that parking would continue to be an issue in Margate and she recommended putting up a two-story building and designing something with the future in mind. Chair Ruzzano mentioned that the MCRA owned the property to the east (911 North State Road 7) and a Church located near it might be for sale.

Ms. Schwartz asked whether the residential grants would be matching grants. Chair Ruzzano said there were a number of ways the program could be done. David Tolces, Board Attorney, said he had experience working with other CRA's on such programs, and the grants could be offered as either matching grants or forgivable loans.

Vice Chair Caggiano spoke about a tour he had taken with Ms. Schwartz and Mayor Kaplan of a two-story facility on U.S. 441 north of Sunrise that included a library. He suggested the other Board members visit the facility as having something similar in Margate would be a community asset. Mr. Arserio commented about the facility in Coral Springs being older but still well used by the community.

Mr. Curtis suggested doing more research, bringing in a consultant to meet with the Board to identify what they wanted to incorporate in a community center and then do a feasibility analysis. He said the area at David Park was currently about 250,000 square feet as compared to the community center in Coconut Creek which was 265,000 square feet.

Mr. Arserio suggested an outreach to the residents at the appropriate time to find out what they would like to see in a community center.

Chair Ruzzano said he would also like to have something put in for traffic calming on Winfield Boulevard. He suggested possibly narrowing the streets and adding paver crosswalks at the three four-way intersections. Mr. Arserio said he received a lot of complaints about speeding on that road.

Mr. Arserio said he was concerned about the MCRA sunseting and he commented that the MCRA owned a lot of property and it needed to start to do something with it now. He suggested finding a developer or having the MCRA start to develop it. Vice Chair Caggiano commented that the County did not have an issue with renewing CRA's but it would not provide the same type of funding.

Ms. Schwartz commented that without the County funding, it was unlikely the MCRA would receive funding from the other entities. Vice Chair Caggiano agreed and said extending the MCRA gave the MCRA more opportunities to get things done than it would have through the City Commission. Mr. Arserio commented that the MCRA should have a professional study done to support the reasons for extending the MCRA and have a plan in place beforehand.

Ms. Schwartz suggested having the sidewalks cleaned along Atlantic Boulevard as well as areas of the wall. She also asked for a list of the properties owned by the MCRA.

3B. **DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION:** MCRA SPONSORSHIP OF THE BROWARD COUNTY TEACHER'S END OF YEAR EVENT

Chair Ruzzano said the School Board contacted the City about using Covered Sports Field property to hold its end of year party which had been held at the Hard Rock in the past. He said they were very complimentary of Margate and said they would be honored to come to Margate. He said the School Board had funding and they were looking for a turnkey operation, but they needed guidance. He said he would like the MCRA to do what it could to help make the event very special for the teachers including the use of the red carpet, pictures, music, etc. He asked the Board to

consider budgeting up to \$25,000 and providing in-kind services for the event, noting that it would be a great way to showcase the MCRA.

Mr. Arserio said he was excited that they chose Margate for their extravaganza. He commented about the versatility of the facility and noted that the MCRA needed to take full advantage of it because it was one-of-a-kind in South Florida. He supported the MCRA contributing monetarily and with in-kind assistance as it would be a great way to promote the MCRA, and said he was open for suggestions on the amount.

Cale Curtis, Executive Director, spoke about wanting to make it a personalized experience like had been done for the grand opening with the step-and-repeat, the red carpet, photographs with MCRA logo background, etc., that gave it an intimate, VIP feel. He said that a lot of the in-kind services were provided by staff. He said the School Board was looking for guidance from the City/MCRA on what had worked successfully in the past. He said the MCRA would be a sponsor and he thought \$15,000 would be sufficient to provide the necessary marketing support.

Mr. Arserio said he approved the Executive Director having the administrative authority to spend up to \$15,000 monetarily without further Board approval, in addition to in-kind. Vice Chair Caggiano commented that Margate was now experiencing the payoff of having had the foresight to invite residents as well as elected officials from the School Board and other cities to the grand opening because the feedback had been that the facility was amazing and other cities were looking to build one. He said he was in agreement with spending the money to support the teachers. Arserio commented that it was especially important to recognize the teachers after all they had been through in the past two years of the pandemic. Vice Chair Caggiano thanked City and MCRA staff for all they had done to promote the new facility as it had turned out to be a huge win for Margate.

Chair Ruzzano said the teachers had not held their event in two years and they really deserved something nice. He asked the Board to provide the Executive Director with any suggestions/ideas they had that would make that day special for the teachers.

Ms. Schwartz said it was too early to give a dollar amount. She commented that the School Board was interested in the in-kind services such as the use of the stage and police detail. She commented that the School Board had funding that it had been sitting on and she wanted to make sure that those discretionary funds would go to the teachers since the event was to be about the teachers. She suggested coming up with something that could be given to each teacher. Chair Ruzzano agreed and said that it would be part of the MCRA's monetary contribution. Mr. Arserio suggested a swag bag with supplies but Ms. Schwartz disagreed and suggested a Margate t-shirt with the year printed on it.

Chair Ruzzano said the event was scheduled for Friday, June 10, 2022.

Mr. Curtis said he would work with Mike Jones and the School Board to discuss the event in more detail. He mentioned that the City could sponsor the red carpet and step-and-repeat that featured a shared logo with the City/MCRA/School Board. A short discussion ensued about various ideas for the event. Chair Ruzzano said he would like to see something more than a t-shirt from the City of Margate. He also mentioned having a photo booth and laser show. Ms. Schwartz suggested framing the photos with the date and location. Chair Ruzzano said the School Board would work with local restaurants for the food and that they were expecting 3,000-4,000 teachers. Ms. Simone suggested adding an imprint, "Margate Thanks You" to whatever gift got decided. Chair Ruzzano suggested reaching out to other cities to see if they could assist with police detail. Ms. Schwartz said the School Board had a police department.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Atlantic Boulevard Improvements: The final report from consultant Keith & Associates was expected at month's end and he would report back to the Board at the next meeting about the the next steps. Proposals from two piggyback contracts were currently being evaluated; the proposals from LSP and Brightview for resodding the median varied greatly in pricing.

Sports Covered Field: Reported that the backlit "Margate Welcomes You" sign had been installed and looked good.

Wayfinding Signage: A proposal for entryway signage at Atlantic Boulevard/U.S. 441 was being reviewed by staff.

Serino Park Renovations: The architectural drawings were about 90 percent complete and the next step would be civil engineering drawings and then it would move on to the permitting process.

Margate Boulevard Improvements: The project scope changed several months ago based on Board direction; an updated project scope had been received and was currently under review.

S.W. 6th Street Improvements: This project also had some scope changes as a result of input from the community and the Board at a community meeting, and it was currently going through project re-design.

6030 N.W. 9th Street: Significant improvements to the building, including a new roof, were needed. He said the roof was a major issue because of the long lead time and he did not know how it might fit with AMVETS schedule. He would provide more details about the needed improvements at the next meeting.

4A. TENANT UPDATES

Ms. Schwartz asked Jim Nardi about the varying rent amounts shown on the rent roll for Sweet Spots for the January-March period. James Nardi, Advanced Asset Management, explained that the tenant sometimes paid odd amounts.

She asked about three empty bays at Chevy Chase and whether they could be split up. Chair Ruzzano said he would respond to her under Board Member Comments.

5. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Simone: She wished Ms. Schwartz a speedy recovery.

Mr. Arserio: He also wished Ms. Schwartz a speedy recovery.

Ms. Schwartz: She suggested providing residents with a "Welcome to Margate" package at the time they have their water account established that would include information about trash pick-up schedules, the noise ordinance, important phone numbers to call, parking restrictions, etc. Providing such information might help reduce unnecessary Special Magistrate appearances she said.

Vice Chair Caggiano: He said he and the residents were thrilled that Sounds at Sundown would be extended through June. He mentioned that a band member from the "Relentless Band" that had played at the March Sounds at Sundown had been scouted by the Hard Rock for a future performance. Mr. Arserio commented that one of the band members was a Margate resident and had contacted him awhile back, and he put him in touch with Mike Jones, Parks and Recreation. He was happy to hear the outcome.

Vice Chair Caggiano wished everyone a safe and Happy Easter, Happy Passover and good Ramadan wishes.

Ms. Schwartz commented that the quality of the bands for Sounds at Sundown had improved greatly. She also wished everyone a Happy Easter and Happy Passover.

Mr. Arserio mentioned that the Mayor would be hosting a Community Clean-up on Saturday, April 16, 2022 to clean up the U.S. 441 corridor.

Chair Ruzzano: He said he been approached by an investor that owned the Holy Hog in Coral Springs who expressed a strong interest in coming to Margate and he put him in touch with Jim Nardi. He said the investor was thinking about leasing two of the available spaces at Chevy Chase Plaza to open an ice cream store, similar to Jeremiah's, and he would likely be coming before the Board to present his ideas. He wished everyone a Happy Easter, Happy Passover and Ramadan.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by Rita Rodi, CRA Coordinator



Tommy Ruzzano, Chair

