

# MARGATE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

## REGULAR MEETING

June 8, 2022

### 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  
David Tolces, Weiss Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman  
Steven Fett, Steven Fett Architecture, Inc. (via Zoom)

The regular meeting of the Margate Community Redevelopment Agency having been properly noticed was called to order at 7:07 p.m., on Wednesday, June 8, 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.

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#### 1A. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL - (5/11/2022 Regular)

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

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#### 1B. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL - (5/26/2022 Special)

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

Tracy Van Winkle, resident, asked if the golf cart she had seen driving around was in response to comments she made at last month's MCRA meeting. Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said it was a contractor from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) that drove around weekly or so and picked up trash along the swales on the U.S. 441 corridor. Chair Ruzzano said a golf cart would be included in budget discussions for the next fiscal year.

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#### 3A. PRESENTATION: UPDATE ON PROPOSED CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN IN THE MCRA

Chair Ruzzano introduced the item and commented that Steven Fett had been hired to develop preliminary drawings for the downtown area based on input he had received from the Board members.

Steven Fett, Steven Fett Architecture, explained that he worked on a preliminary, conceptual plan that focused on an expanded Central Business District (CBD) for the MCRA area centered around Margate Boulevard and State Road 7. He proceeded with a presentation via Zoom that included a map of the City's CBD that overlaid the MCRA boundaries, the current CBD, and an expanded CBD with additional properties to the north and south. He showed an aerial view of the CBD that was followed by a variety of images and drawings that reflected preliminary conceptual ideas for the various areas within the CBD.

Following are some of the highlights of his narrative given during the presentation:

- Proposed ideas for the expanded boundaries to the north and south of how those private parcels might expand and develop using the set of guiding principles that had been outlined in the Building Design Regulations document previously approved by the Board.
- Spoke about how the Lemon Tree Lake could be developed as an amenity some day and could expand out to the western parcels and possibly down south of the canal.
- Proposed a concept for the focus area along U.S. 441 and Margate Boulevard that showed infrastructure on Margate Boulevard that would allow for a walkable pedestrian-friendly zone on the west side
- Commented on the need to push for inter-connectivity between parcels and the possible formation of new networks of streets to relieve pressure on the arterial roads such as Atlantic Boulevard and U.S. 441.
- Proposed that some streets could form and circle around public spaces
- Spoke about opportunities to amenitize water from the canal on the existing property to the east
- Recommended scattering of public green spaces when considering private development or redevelopment in the public sector and finding the right balance
- Spoke about having wider and more pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and opportunities to break down the scale of streets such as State Road 7 and Margate Boulevard to make them easier to cross by having frontage roads that connected with side parking areas
- Spoke about the need for cross access parking agreements between parcels
- Spoke about the opportunity to develop a memorable district and create a "sense of place" for residents and business attraction.
- Spoke about a unique area on State Road 7 where there was a wiggle in the road that created an interesting place architecturally and urbanistically. A conceptual drawing of it included a bridge connection over the waterway that created a sense of arrival and connected to other areas including public space and a possible location for a food hall-Margate Marketplace that could include a built-in parking structure.
- Reiterated that what he was showing was just a framework of ideas and it was not a finalized plan. His expectation was that the MCRA would look for further direction from other professionals for market studies and would consult regional experts to determine the best mix of commercial, residential, and office space.
- Spoke about the street and block network and the formation of public space as a basis for good urbanism
- Favored a mix of uses especially in the entertainment district noting that the marketplace could be an anchor that provided activity in the daytime as well as into the evening.
- Spoke about taking advantage of Lemon Tree Lake and introducing a water feature into the downtown that could include such things as a boat launch, and kayak and paddleboard rental facilities.
- Proposed a covered bridge way across the canal that would provide screening of the parking garage and apartment buildings but could also serve as a walkway and a "stage" for special occasions. Commented that amphitheaters often went unused while a terraced outdoor promenade would be a flexible space.
- Commented that the west side of U.S. 441 would be favored for smaller residential buildings and mixed-use buildings to the east of City Hall, and public spaces could create a gateway feature that would be financially supported by increased densities and the adjacent development. Increased population would provide further support to the entertainment areas and civic facilities, creating a walkable, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use environment.
- Noted that the south area had semi-industrial uses that might develop over time, and the backs of those buildings could be hidden to define the nice urban area
- Suggested a municipal garage or shared public/private venture in place of parking lot at City Hall

Chair Ruzzano thanked Mr. Fett at the conclusion of his presentation. A summary of the Board member's comments was as follows:

Mr. Arserio commented on the challenge of crossing U.S. 441 and he asked how visitors would cross it. Mr. Fett said they looked at an overhead bridge as a possibility but the six-lane road was a long span and would require a large financial investment to do and likely need to meet ADA (American Disabilities Act) requirements and have an elevator which would also be costly. It was not impossible, but he proposed taming U.S. 441 through the addition of slip roads that would narrow that section of the road and provide an opportunity for people crossing to be able to stop mid-way.

Mr. Arserio asked if the residential on the west side would be mixed-use and whether there would be other opportunities for restaurants and entertainment other than the food hall. Mr. Fett said the largest concentration would be on the ground floor of all the buildings on the east side, but mixed-used on the west side was also suggested. He said the residential units off Margate Boulevard would likely have daily need services on the ground floor, including such things as coffee and lunchtime shops with residential above. He recommended having a study done by a retail expert.

Mr. Arserio asked the location of the parking garages. Mr. Fett said, hypothetically, there would be one located on the second floor of the food hall with residential or office above, another at City Hall, and others would be determined based on density and the height of the buildings that were planned.

Mr. Arserio showed several digital images of local parking garages which included one in the recently redeveloped area on Pompano Beach; it featured retail and restaurants on the lower level and the parking garage on the floors above were wrapped with big sails and heavy landscaping to conceal it. He showed a parking garage in Ft. Lauderdale where artwork was used to wrap the parking garage to make it more aesthetically pleasing. He also mentioned the Promenade in Coconut Creek as another example of ways to conceal parking garages. He recommended that efforts also be made to wrap or conceal any parking garages in the CBD plan.

Vice Chair Caggiano agreed and mentioned a parking garage in Henrico, Virginia that had the appearance of an apartment building with faux windows, beautiful awnings and canopies. He asked whether FDOT could extend the amount of time needed for people to cross U.S. 441 so people would not be required to stop mid-way. Cale Curtis, Executive Director, explained that any development that got approved would include a traffic study, etc., and signalization would change to accommodate the future use for the area.

Ms. Simone referenced the image of the Margate Marketplace and commented that the design was very sterile and lacked warmth and charm. The courtyard area was not welcoming and she suggested it have a different shape with some curves and maybe a sidewalk running through it. She said she would prefer a smaller water feature between the buildings instead of the two larger ones, and different seating arrangements. She said she liked the mixed use concept but was not a fan of the design. Mr. Fett explained that urban designers tried to make the architecture look neutral and to focus more on the spatial aspects of the design. His approach was for there to be more conversations about the spaces rather than the architecture specifically. He explained that the important thing was to have a plan and what he presented was just a vision. Once the MCRA adopted a plan and moved forward with private public partnerships or bid solicitations for the various parcels, architects from those entities would work on it.

Ms. Schwartz said she had always envisioned the buildings in a semi-circle. She said she would never vote for any kind of overpass over U.S. 441 because they were ugly and uninviting. She agreed with interconnectivity between parcels using perimeter roads.

Chair Ruzzano suggested that everyone visit Uptown Boca, a beautiful, new mixed-use project at Lyons and Glades Road that was built on about 37 acres. He mentioned a train station that had been converted to a popular food hall that he visited on a recent trip to Orlando. He agreed with Mr. Arsenio's comments about parking garages, and he suggested renting out space in parking garages because of their high costs. He asked for a business plan to see what would be most economically feasible for 200,000 square feet of retail space. Once the lawsuit was over, he said he wanted to move ahead with solicitation of public private partnerships, noting that he wanted to retain ownership and control of the property. Vice Chair Caggiano agreed that it would be a good negotiating tool. Chair Ruzzano commented about South Florida having the hottest real estate market in the country and the MCRA's property on U.S. 441 was a goldmine.

Tracy Van Winkle, resident, said she hoped the plan was not to put apartment buildings anywhere across the street. She asked whether the MCRA could clean up the area around City Hall rather than spend more money, including fixing the roof on Chevy Chase. Mr. Curtis responded that the redevelopment would not happen overnight and the MCRA would continue to have tenants in the plaza and would need to take care of them. The plan to replace the roof was underway and an update would be provided under Executive Director Comments later in the meeting.

Nina Culver, resident, asked for an update on the lawsuit. Attorney Tolces stated that the legal matter with New Urban Communities was set for trial to begin on Monday, June 13, 2022, but it was not clear which judge might be hearing the case; however, he would keep the Board informed. He said two counts were previously dropped and there was one count for specific performance that remained.

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**4A. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: POSTCARD MAILER TO PROMOTE JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> AND OTHER SUMMER FESTIVITIES**

David Tolces, Board Attorney, read the item title. Cale Curtis, Executive Director, explained the request was to obtain support from the Board to do a mailer to residents to promote the MCRA's sponsorship of the July 4<sup>th</sup> activities.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Arserio pointed out that the postcard mailing had been done last year and he wished to have it done again to promote the July 4<sup>th</sup> extravaganza and the beautiful City and its patriotism. Vice Chair Caggiano suggested that the National Night Out event also be included on the same postcard. Mr. Arserio made the following motion, seconded by Vice Chair Caggiano:

**MOTION:** SO MOVE TO APPROVE TO DO THE MAILER AND TO INCLUDE NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$8,500  
[Amount was revised from \$7,050-see below]

Ms. Schwartz suggested that all upcoming events be put on one page in every quarterly Our Margate magazine so it could be torn out and kept for reference. She also suggested advertising on Channel 78 and taking advantage of free public service announcements (PSA) on other channels.

Ms. Simone commented that both events were very well known and that the money would be better spent on other more important things such as improvements to roads and making repairs and enhancements. She said the event was being promoted in numerous other ways, and there were greater needs in the MCRA such as flooding on Southgate Boulevard and Winfield Boulevard. She said the \$7,000 could be used to buy a golf cart to clean up the streets.

Mr. Arserio commented that although the events were included in the quarterly magazine, a postcard a week or so ahead of time was a nice refresher, and they could also be used as handouts. He agreed there were other needs and the MCRA should be able to address those as well. He also noted that the attendance was down the last two years because of the pandemic and the postcard would be a good reminder.

Larry Vignola, Assistant Executive Director, said one of the reasons for the postcard was because there was some uncertainty about the exact timing of when Our Margate magazine would be delivered, noting that July 1<sup>st</sup> fell on a Friday. He also expressed a concern about showcasing both events on the same postcard due to space constraints as the July 4<sup>th</sup> event included a lot of different activities throughout the day. His preference was to highlight National Night Out in the magazine. Mr. Vignola spoke about the coverage of events in the magazine. Mr. Schwartz suggested that a message "Coming Soon" and the date be included on the postcard for National Night Out.

Ms. Simone reiterated her position on spending money on postcards to promote July 4<sup>th</sup> and National Night Out because both events were well known and were being advertised in other mediums, and the money could be better spent towards addressing greater needs in the MCRA.

Mr. Curtis clarified that the estimate of \$7,050 was for the postage services and the printing was an additional \$1,100 which brought the total closer to \$8,300.

Chair Ruzzano commented that the MCRA was flush with money and it could be used to address many problems, including residential improvements. He said he would rather do mailings every month. He suggested the MCRA start spending its money to address slum and blight. Mr. Arserio suggested mailing updates to localized areas of the MCRA about projects in their specific area.

Attorney Tolces clarified with the maker of the motion and the individual seconding it that they agreed the motion would be for an amount not to exceed \$8,500; both parties agreed.

Richard Zucchini, 380 Lakewood Circle East, suggested spending the money to put up a beautiful electronic billboard near the high traffic intersection of Atlantic Boulevard and U.S. 441 instead of the mailer; the billboard would last for years and the messages changed as needed.

Tracy Van Winkle, resident, asked about putting messages on the water bills ahead of time.

Donna Fellows, resident, said when she got her mail, she promptly disposed of all mailers in the trash without reading them; she suggested spending the money elsewhere.

**ROLL CALL:** Ms. Simone, No; Mr. Arserio, Yes; Ms. Schwartz, Yes; Mr. Caggiano, Yes; Mr. Ruzzano, Yes. The motion passed 4-1.

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## 5A. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

**Chevy Chase Plaza** – A pre-bid meeting has been held earlier in the week for the roof and bids were expected back in three weeks at which time staff would have a better idea of the estimated cost and the timeline for completing the roof repairs. He said four or five contractors were in attendance.

The cleaning and lining reports for the stormwater drainage for the parking lot were completed, and the cleaning and lining work was scheduled to begin within 30 days.

**Monument signs** – Staff was moving forward with a proposal for monument signs at Chevy Chase and Ace Plaza.

**Serino Park Renovations** – Contractor submitted 90% construction drawings that were currently being reviewed by City staff.

**S.W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street** – The revised assessment and conceptual plan that included the drainage improvements was expected to be received in July.

**Florida Redevelopment Association (FRA)** – The FRA had an annual award program for projects completed by CRA's. The MCRA had submitted three projects: Margate Delish; Building Design Guidelines; and, the Covered Field for award consideration.

Mr. Arserio mentioned that there was a City Commission scheduled to occur during the FRA Conference in mid-October. Mr. Curtis said the first City Commission meeting that month that might need to be rescheduled if the MCRA were to be awarded and the Board wished to attend.

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## 5B. TENANT UPDATES

Ms. Schwartz thanked Jim Nardi for standing up the tree that had fallen over on Melaleuca Drive.

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## 6. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

**Ms. Simone:** She asked how street flooding in various areas of the MCRA District was being addressed. Cale Curtis, Executive Director, said flooding in the MCRA would be addressed as it would be in any other area and that he was not aware of any areas where flooding was at a level that required extreme action. He said the neighborhoods in Winfield were designed to hold water in the swale areas and, as a rule, if the water dissipated within 72 hours, it was functioning as designed. He said no other plans were in the budget for drainage improvements in the MCRA other than those on S.W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Other areas could be addressed if the Board desired.

Ms. Simone commented that water had risen up to the bottom of the gas pumps at Wawa and that a dissipation allowance of 72-hours was unacceptable. Chair Ruzzano commented that a child could have drowned in the parking lot and it was a health and safety issue that the City needed to be aware of it and that Wawa needed to address it. Ms. Schwartz noted that Culver's had to work with Broward County to fix its drainage problem, and Mr. Arserio added that Culver's had to build an underground reservoir.

Vice Chair Caggiano asked Chair Ruzzano if he knew of a reasonable way to remove the water, Chair Ruzzano explained that the water flowed into the Cocomar District and was the same waterway that ran behind the baseball field [Sports Complex] and connected to Abundant Life Academy. He said the problem could be solved if Cocomar were asked to lower their water table when they knew it was going to rain. He said Broward County had approved their drainage plan and something needed to be done. Mr. Curtis said it was not a MCRA issue and the City Manager was aware of the flooding problem at Wawa. He said the County issued a permit for it, and he mentioned that the City had difficulty getting projects done many times because of drainage. He said the City's Director of D.E.E.S. would be speaking with the Broward County permitting agency to ask them about the conditions under which it was approved and the flooding that occurred there. Cocomar might have changed some of its policies whereas the water was being retained at a higher level; it would need to be considered and communicated with the appropriate authorities at the County.

David Tolces, Board Attorney, advised that the flooding issue involving Broward County was not a MCRA matter; flooding as it related to slum and blight was a more appropriate topic for MCRA discussion.

Ms. Simone asked about flooding in some of the neighborhoods. Mr. Curtis said there were some streets that flooded when there were heavy rains, and monies could be budgeted for drainage studies to evaluate those areas to see what

improvements could be made. He said his earlier comments were not meant to say that the flooding was acceptable; rather, that the type of storm that caused the heavy flooding was not an everyday occurrence. She mentioned other flooding in a Winfield neighborhood and at N.W. 31<sup>st</sup> by Arborview that occurred at other times and should not happen. Vice Chair Caggiano commented that flooding was occurring all over the southern part of the State due to rising sea levels. Mr. Curtis said the MCRA would have to start with an assessment of the specific conditions to determine the cause of the flooding.

Vice Chair Caggiano commented that any new construction should be built in accordance with the most current 100-year flood map because rising sea levels were a problem that would only continue to get worse.

**Mr. Arserio:** He agreed with planning for the future with regards to more frequent rain events and investing in doing research and studies. He said that Margate ranked number two in the State for cumulative rainfall during the most recent tropical storm with 15 inches of rain. Such occurrences were rare and he did not want the public to think there was a huge flood problem in the City. He said there was flooding in some isolated areas and was surprised that the flooding was not more widespread. Vice Chair Caggiano commended Cale Curtis for being out and driving around the City assessing any flooding issues.

Mr. Arserio commented that he would be attending another Florida Redevelopment Association (FRA) Academy course that week to further build his education and obtain the FRA designation.

**Ms. Schwartz:** She invited a teacher from Rise Academy to sing the national anthem at the City's July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration because she heard him sing and he had an amazing voice. She commented that she witnessed people crossing Atlantic Boulevard midway instead of walking ten feet to cross at the traffic light at 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She suggested removing the grass to make it easier for people to walk to the light. Vice Chair Caggiano agreed and he suggested giving out more jaywalking tickets. Ms. Schwartz commented on the high number of cars that went through the four-way intersection on Margate Boulevard and West River Drive without stopping and that better enforcement was needed. She also suggested polling residents to ask whether they received their postcard to help determine whether doing postcards was money well spent.

**Vice Chair Caggiano:** Happily announced that his first grandson, Miles John Caggiano, was born that day.

**Chair Ruzzano:** Commented that the world headquarters for EL AL Airlines would be relocating to Margate. He congratulated Larry Vignola for his work on the Telly Awards. He said he drove around after the storm and his observation was that the canals functioned very well. He said there were some problem areas and he supported further evaluation of them. He thanked the City Manager and Curt Keyser, Director, D.E.E.S., for effectively addressing an issue that involved FPL polluting the canal at Atlantic Boulevard and East Palm Drive.

Mr. Arserio commented about the need to stay on top of FPL to ensure that they removed the old power poles after the lines have been transferred to the new poles which they had been installing.

Chair Ruzzano said several neighbors had asked about entryway signs for the Hammond Heights neighborhood, and he asked to have it looked into since they were in the MCRA. He commented that the area on Atlantic Boulevard across from Walmart was too heavily landscaped and he suggested have less landscaping. Mr. Curtis said landscaping had been a subject of discussion internally and the plan moving forward was to install sod and a few trees when replacing damaged landscaping.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tommy Ruzzano, Chair

Transcribed by Rita Rodi, CRA Coordinator

