

**APPROVED MINUTES  
VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING  
CENTRAL CITY REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (CCRAB)  
CITY HALL  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021 – 3:30 PM**

September 2020 – August 2021

<b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>		<u>Regular Meetings</u>		<u>Special Meetings</u>	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Luis Castillo-Olivera, Chair	P	5	0	0	0
Laxmi Lalwani, Vice Chair	P	2	3	0	0
Robert Ayen	P	5	0	0	0
Pieter Coetzee	P	3	2	0	0
Adam Gellar	P	5	0	0	0
Charlene Gunn	P	3	2	0	0
Peter Kosinski	A	3	2	0	0
Theodore Spiliotes	P	4	1	0	0
Zachary Talbot (arrived at 3:39 p.m.)	P	3	2	0	0
Ray Thrower	P	1	0	0	0
Dennis Ulmer	P	1	0	0	0

At this time, there are 11 appointed members to the Board; therefore, 6 constitute a quorum.

**Staff:**

Clarence Woods, CRA Manager  
Cija Omengebar, CRA Planner/Liaison  
Lorraine Tappen, Principal Urban Planner – Department of Sustainability  
Lizeth DeTorres, Senior Administrative Assistant  
Ed Ng, Corradino Group – Public Realm/Presenter  
Jamie Opperlee, Prototype Inc.

**Presenters:**

Mark Alvarez, The Corradino Group

**Others:**

Abby Laughlin  
Mariano Gomez  
Joel Myers  
Edward Catalano

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Castillo-Olivera called the Zoom meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Roll was called, and it was noted that a quorum was present.

Ms. Omengebar introduced new members, Dennis Ulmer and Ray Thrower.

### **Communication to the City Commission**

Chair Castillo-Olivera advised that the concern was about the situation on NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Nothing has been done to improve the area, which is believed to be blighted and trouble to surrounding communities. The area is nine square blocks that are part of the CRA bordered on the north by NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street, south by NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, east by NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and west by Powerline Road or NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The area described needs more zoning than RD15 and the Board would like a reconsideration of the zoning to be upgraded so there could be more density and the possibility of attracting commercial development.

There was a consensus by the Board to approve language discussed regarding the Communication, which was to revisit the circumstances on the block north of NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, east of Powerline Road, south of NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, west of NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and south of NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **II. Approval of CCRAB Meeting Minutes**

- **February 3, 2021**

**Motion** made by Ms. Gunn, seconded by Mr. Gellar, to approve the February 3, 2021 regular meeting minutes. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. (10-0)

## **III. Rezoning Project Update**

Mark Alvarez, Project Director of the Corradino Group, stated that a Zoom meeting was scheduled with Mr. Hetzel and Ms. Tappan to review some of their questions. He provided a brief update as follows:

There was a lot of discussion about the RD15 and why it was along NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. There was a strong issue about displacement of residents currently in the area versus redevelopment. There were also issues with Comprehensive Plan language, which was amended last year, and the location of the Unified Flex Zone, which is no longer in the area west of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. After discussion with staff, the overall idea was to concentrate on the Mixed-Use area first. During redevelopment it is often best to start with a focused area that has the best market for redevelopment and then build upon spreading it out geographically to other areas. Except for NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the neighborhoods are mostly stable, and would do much better if they were left alone for now. As the real estate market starts to catch up, they could concentrate from the Mixed-Use area, which would be in the range of five to ten years. That would be good timing because every seven years the City must review the Comprehensive Plan, which requires infrastructure and traffic analysis. The second issue was if they should try to do a Comprehensive Plan Update in the Flex Zone that requires them to go to the County, which could be done concurrently with the Rezoning. Based on the concept of trying to concentrate on the Mixed-Use area first, they would be all right to start there without having to update the Flex Zone or Comprehensive Plan. As far as the Phase 1 task, they will write a summary for the Board and the Planning Board to explain while looking at other areas. He noted that a tunnel or a Brightline Station would be done on NW

13<sup>th</sup> Street, so they would make sure zoning of the CRA area to the east of the FEC tracks accommodates either concept as it moves forward. The last issue was how to schedule an extra meeting, referred to as the Gap meeting, to make sure they begin where the last consultant left off.

Mr. Coetzee questioned the timeline.

Mr. Alvarez indicated that they anticipated starting in January, which they did, but there were some questions. They are still working towards having the Second Reading of the Ordinance of the Rezoning to be at the end of the year in December, so they are working backwards, which means they would be done with the work around July.

Mr. Gellar questioned if any idea to include Rezoning along NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue has been abandoned.

Mr. Alvarez stated it is not being abandoned, it is being put off. They are going to start with larger issues and work with staff to make sure that is documented in some way; perhaps by a Resolution that goes as a companion to make sure the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue changes carry forward into the future.

In response to Mr. Gellar, Mr. Alvarez thought work would take about six years. He stated the City does an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) based Amendment in which they review and amend the entire Comprehensive Plan that is based on an Evaluation and Appraisal Report. The cycle is done every seven years, so it is better to work into that process, so it is not a standalone process, which is very costly.

Mr. Gellar questioned if there was any reason that was not done during this part of the process. He also questioned if this plan includes Rezoning in that area and if it has been completely foreclosed upon at this point.

Mr. Alvarez did not know; it seems like Rezoning with the prior consultant was happening at the same time as the Evaluation and Appraisal Report. He is seeking final direction from the CRA and City.

Ms. Tappen mentioned the area around NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and stated if the density were to increase, a portion of the Comprehensive Plan would have to be amended, which is called the Future Land Use Map. That process takes a Traffic Study and a report, which takes about six months to a year. It is something to consider, but the timing and cost of the application must be considered.

Mr. Coetzee questioned if the previous consultants executed those types of studies.

Mr. Alvarez could not tell exactly.

Chair Castillo-Olivera advised it was done that way because that is one of the most blighted areas in this community. The mission of this Board is to reduce blight and the worst part is being left intact for whatever reason. He expressed frustration as this was part of the Board's mission, but the consultant keeps saying it is not.

Discussion ensued regarding the area in question. Board members mentioned the properties, foreclosures and/or running fines from the City, Section 8 properties rented at market value, problems in North Andrews Gardens two years ago, and how expensive everything is east of I-95.

Chair Castillo-Olivera encouraged Board members to contact their Representatives regarding this matter.

Ms. Omengebar reminded everyone that this project started in 2018 with the last consultant doing the work. Many meetings brought thoughts together to create this map; she noted this is just a proposal. Her understanding is that this Board does not like the fact that this area does not have any meaningful changes around NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Alvarez has talked to staff and they have decided to do a phased approach and focus on the areas that make sense at this time. There may have to be more discussion regarding that section. All input needs to be considered and perhaps it is such an area that needs to be improved, but it is not as simple as making it a Mixed-Use development area just to see immediate changes in the future.

Mr. Thrower mentioned NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and stated that sidewalks and streetlights were installed as part of a CRA grant in 2017, which helped. He recalled the City did not want to amend the Land Use Plan because that would add three years to the estimate. If this were implemented today, he questioned if it would have to go before the Planning and Zoning Board and the City Commission. If so, it would be important to have another local meeting prior to a public hearing because many people voiced opposition.

Mr. Alvarez advised they would have to go before five meetings.

Edward Catalano indicated his concern is that the major portion of the area is South Middle River, but people in that area are not being questioned as to what they want. It appears that some of the areas being changed are fine. He questioned if residents on Middle River Terrace agree with the changes. There is a concern that the area above NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street needs to be changed; about 99% of the people in the area to the right of the RD15 would like to see a change in those three blocks. The longer the City waits, the worse the area will become. He noted that the area to the right changed drastically since 2015 and it has turned into a beautiful place.

Abby Laughlin commented that there should be a stakeholder's meeting as mentioned during the previous meeting.

Ms. Omengebar advised that meetings would be scheduled with the public and ample notification would be provided. This meeting with Mr. Alvarez is an update on the project, issues, and how to make this proposal happen.

Ms. Laughlin mentioned the RD15 area and to her, the issue is the Boulevard. Boulevards are important and NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue needs to be looked at in many ways regarding transportation going forward.

Ms. Omengebar indicated that any work they would have to focus on or spend any funding on would have to be inside the CRA.

Mariano Gomez commented that they are looking forward to better use of the land. They are ready to put money and resources into developing residential buildings in the area.

#### **IV. Project and Program Progress Reports**

- **NE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Project**

Ms. Omengebar reported that the Transportation and Mobility Department approved a Task Order for designers to start working. A rendering showing how NE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is going to look was not available. Reports will be provided monthly.

Mr. Thrower questioned if this project would match what Cumberland Farms did with their pedestrian lighting and sidewalks.

Ms. Omengebar was not sure but thought it would match because it would not look right if it did not. She will find out and provide an update at the next meeting.

Chair Castillo-Olivera stated that the light standard is so high that the ground and trees are illuminated; the area is dark. The lights are meant to illuminate the road; they are not pedestrian lighting.

Ms. Omengebar asked Mark Almy, Parks Superintendent, about the lighting; however, she could not recall his response; it was something like they were in compliance for the type of lights and what they were not meant to do. She advised she would note the concern of darkness for the project team managing the consultant doing the design specific for pedestrian lighting.

- **Emergency Business Investment Program**

Ms. Omengebar advised that 13 applications were previously reported and since October, six were paid. Between last month's report and today, they are in the process of paying three applications. This program is a loan opportunity for businesses. The money does not have to be paid back and businesses can get between \$10,000 and \$20,000 as long as all required documentation is provided. Businesses must be within the Central City area to qualify.

Mr. Thrower mentioned that businesses who have the PPE loan are not qualified.

Ms. Omengebar stated that requirements were relaxed in October. It was noted that funding does not come from the CARES Act, so businesses can apply for their funding as well.

- **Non-residential Incentive Program**

Ms. Omengebar indicated that the Non-Residential Incentive Program are funds for renovations and new businesses moving in. She is still working with one applicant that is not quite ready, so there was nothing new to report.

## **V. Visioning Discussion**

- **Central City CRA**

Clarence Woods, CRA Manager, introduced the idea of visioning and questioned what everyone would like to see once Rezoning takes place. Central City is somewhat organically being developed with what is happening on NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street and surrounding areas including NE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. At some point they should start visioning exactly what they want the area to be, such as a foodie destination, a destination for creative communities like creative arts, cultural arts, culinary arts, and different things that have helped transform and redevelop neighborhoods. They need to think about Rezoning and what it will accomplish to provide for more density, entertainment, offices, etc. He mentioned the area between NW 7<sup>th</sup> Street and NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue that have been left out. The CRA can provide programs such as beautification projects, and there are ways to ensure those who are living in the area would be held to guidelines that would be enforced if they were to paint and landscape the area. The CRA can provide a little care and dress up the area, but it would incumbent on those who own the properties to commit to certain things to get the help provided. The CRA would put mortgages on the properties. He again mentioned branding and marketing and wants everyone to think about the vision for the area.

Chair Castillo-Olivera questioned if a list of property owners could be obtained for NW 7<sup>th</sup> Terrace, NW 8<sup>th</sup> Terrace, and NW 9<sup>th</sup> Terrace and correlate with Code Enforcement cases and liens.

Mr. Woods advised that he could work with Code Enforcement to identify all the properties to determine code violations, which would also reveal ownership. He mentioned taking an aggressive campaign to make sure owners are being responsive and policing their tenants to make sure they are keeping up with the laws. While engaging in this aggressive Code Enforcement action, incentives could be provided for owners who want to mitigate any fines or liens. A survey could be conducted to see who the violators are.

Ms. Gunn indicated that property owners can be found on the Broward County Property Appraiser's website (BCPA). Public records also show the fines and how many Code violations are outstanding. She was not in favor of paying for painting or for a roof when landlords are collecting good rent. She noted many of the properties are Section 8.

Mr. Gellar commented that Rezoning the area would incentivize redevelopment, but there is no collective incentive to sell or buy because the area is not zoned for the type of development that would make a difference.

Chair Castillo-Olivera stated that was why the RD25 would have made sense because it allowed for more profit. He is a member of the South Middle River Civic Association and noted there was practically

a revolution between people who live from NW 16<sup>th</sup> Terrace and NW 17<sup>th</sup> Terrace because they are constantly bothered by parties, shootings, fights, cars parked everywhere, and break-ins. He has also observed this on NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NW 17<sup>th</sup> Street, completely out of the zone, north of NW 16<sup>th</sup> Terrace.

Mr. Woods advised that his only thought was how they could begin to vision the area and if they want to create a brand, so they could begin to build and capitalize on what would be the next great area in Fort Lauderdale.

## **VI. Old and/or New Business**

- Member Suggestions for next meeting agenda

Ms. Omengebar stated that the next meeting would be in April at which time she would report on all projects. She is going to work closely with Mr. Alvarez, and they will determine and plan the community meetings with the public.

Chair Castillo-Olivera mentioned a City project changing the force main that is transforming NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street from Andrews Avenue to Powerline Road, which has many people upset. FDOT Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) has been considering closing some of the streets and doing diversions through residential streets. Somehow there is a miscommunication between the contractors, Transportation and Mobility, and whoever created those street closures and detours.

Ms. Omengebar stated she would research and if there is a main City page for updates on FDOT MOT on that road or on that specific project, she would email the Board before them.

Chair Castillo-Olivera questioned if there was enough curiosity about the problem on NW 7<sup>th</sup> Terrace and NW 8<sup>th</sup> Terrace residential zoning to inform the City Commission.

## **VII. Communication to City Commission**

Mr. Gellar and Mr. Thrower suggested revisiting circumstances on the block north of NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, east of Powerline Road, south of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, west of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and south of 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

Ms. Omengebar indicated that focusing on that specifically is tied to timing and funding.

Chair Castillo-Olivera explained that the concern was about the situation on NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Nothing has been done to improve the area, which is believed to be blighted and trouble to surrounding communities.

Ms. Omengebar questioned if the Communication was that the proposal is not acceptable as is, the street needs to be rezoned more than what the current proposal, RD15.



All Board members concurred.

Ms. Lalwani expressed concern that if a Communication were sent it might slow down improvements for other areas and she did not want any improvements in the South Middle River area to be delayed.

Ms. Omengebar advised if a Communication were sent, the Commission would want someone from the Board to provide an explanation. She noted the minutes would also be part of the Communication.

Chair Castillo-Olivera noticed that Board member, Zachary Talbot, was present.

Ms. Omengebar reviewed the map and referenced Sunrise Boulevard, NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, the northern most border of Central City, NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and stated that the specific street is NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, north of NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street. She mentioned that the area is all residential, but within the Central City areas is from Powerline Road to NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Board wants the entire area to be up zoned to something other than the current residential. All Board members stated that was accurate.

Chair Castillo-Olivera clarified the area was from the corner of NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Powerline Road, three blocks east to NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, three blocks south to NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and three blocks back to Powerline Road. That is the whole area included in the CRA; they cannot do anything about what is happening north of NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street because it is not included.

Chair Castillo-Olivera reiterated that the Communication to the Commission should read as follows:

The area is nine square blocks that are part of the CRA bordered on the north by NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street, south by NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, east by NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and west by Powerline Road or NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The area described needs more zoning than RD15 and the Board would like a reconsideration of the zoning to be upgraded so there could be more density and the possibility of attracting commercial development.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

The next regular CCRAB meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, April 7, 2021.

**Motion** to adjourn the meeting was duly made and seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

[Minutes written by C. Guifarro, Prototype, Inc.]