



**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
FINAL OFFICIAL MINUTES
Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment
Agency (CRA)**

Board of County Commissioners

South Dade Government Center

Room 203

10710 S.W. 211 Street

Miami, Florida

May 21, 2007

As Advertised

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Board of County Commissioners

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**CLERK'S SUMMARY AND OFFICIAL MINUTES
NARANJA LAKES
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA)
MAY 21, 2007**

The Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board met in the South Dade Government Center, Room 203, 10710 S.W. 211 Street, Miami, Florida, at 6:00 p.m., May 21, 2007; there being present upon roll call: Mr. Rene Infante, Mr. Moe Hakssa, Mr. Stuart Archer and Mr. Kenneth Forbes; (Mr. Parsuram Ramkissoon was late; Chairperson Nina Betancourt, Ms. Marlene Volkert and Mr. Daniel Lipe were absent); Mr. Mike Iturrey, CRA Coordinator, Office of Strategic Business Management; Mr. Alberto Gonzalez, CRA Analyst, Office of Strategic Business Management; and Deputy Clerk Jill Thornton.

I. Start of Regular Meeting Call to Order

Mr. Forbes called the CRA Board meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Mr. Forbes noted as a quorum was not yet present, informational items would be heard first.

There being no objection, the following agenda items were considered out of order.

V. Open Forum for Public Comments

Mr. Forbes opened the floor for public input and called for persons wishing to speak on matters unrelated to the Villages of Naranja and Hidden Grove Apartments. He advised that the Villages of Naranja and the Hidden Grove Apartment issues would be addressed later, during tonight's meeting. Hearing no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed and the Board proceeded with the next agenda item.

VI. Old Business

Community Policing

Sergeant Ozzie Hernandez, Miami-Dade Police Department, Cutler Ridge District, introduced Major Carlos Garcia as the newly assigned Police Major for the Miami-Dade Police Cutler Ridge District.

Major Carlos Garcia appeared before the CRA and stated it was his privilege to serve the CRA District's community in an effort to improve the quality of life and noted he was available to hear their concerns.

Sergeant Hernandez provided an overview of the monthly community policing report entitled "Naranja Lakes CRA Initiative Monthly Progress Report," dated May 11, 2007 which, he noted

was based on three weeks of information rather than four due to time constraints. He further noted the Cutler Ridge Police Department combined its forces with the “We Count” program and the “American Friends Committee” to prepare the Sea Pines Community for the “Neighborhood Resource Fair” event held on May 12, 2007, which was a success. Sergeant Hernandez then provided a video presentation of this event.

Mr. Archer commended Sergeant Hernandez, the Cutler Ridge Police Department and all agencies involved in this event for a great job.

Heritage Village

Mr. Iturrey, CRA Coordinator, Office of Strategic Business Management, advised the CRA Board that Mr. Patrick Brown, Director, Public Housing Division, apologized for not being able to prepare his report in time for tonight’s meeting and that he would prepare a report by the next NLCRA workshop.

Update on General Old Business

Current re-zoning applications in the CRA

Mr. Iturrey advised that currently, no re-zoning applications had been submitted for properties located within the NLCRA district; however, one zoning application requesting an unusual use for a Day Care Center at 15101 SW 289th Terrace was submitted for a property immediately south of the CRA District.

Mandarin Lakes

Mr. Forbes read into the record, the monthly update report on the sales of the Mandarin Lakes Homes submitted by Mr. Paul Herman, DR Horton Builders. He noted a total of 486 units were sold to date, which included 246 townhomes, 144 forty-foot single-family homes and 96 fifty-foot single-family homes. Mr. Forbes further noted buyers had closed on 101 townhomes, 178 forty-foot single-family homes and 68 fifty-foot single family homes for a total of 347 closings. Mr. Forbes also provided the following information:

- Florida Power and Light (FPL) had begun the installation process for the remaining street lights for blocks 100 through 177 in DR Horton’s home construction site, and the balance of lights needed in front of the townhouses. The only area missing lights in phase one of the project was due to be installed in 4 to 5 weeks, pursuant to FPL.
- D.R. Horton Recreation Center has been permitted and the area was being prepared for vertical construction, with the pad formed and the construction of the foundation to begin in 2 to 3 weeks.
- All of the mail kiosks have been fully constructed; are in operating condition and the keys have been given to the property management company who would distribute them to the home owners.

Infrastructure Construction

Mr. Scott Hedge, Vice-President, Architecture and Planning, DeGuardiola Properties, appeared before the CRA and provided an update on the progress of the Infrastructure Construction project. He noted temporary striping had been placed on SW 140th Avenue and 275th Street roadways. These roadways, he noted, were opened as promised, but still needed permanent striping. Mr. Hedge also noted they were working with the Public Works Department to obtain a punch list for completing all the roadways so they could get a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for these streets. Regarding irrigation, Mr. Hedge stated he expected the District Water Use Permit to arrive today, which would allow them to proceed with initiating the irrigation permit process with the County. Mr. Hedge noted they had some issues with obtaining the building permit for the Civic Center Plaza in the Zoning process, but he anticipated they would be able obtain the permit very soon.

Mr. Hedge noted that LC Construction's Contract and Schedule of Values had been approved and he would be working with County staff to provide them with all relevant information so they could present it before the CRA Board before construction begins. He also noted he was working with SRS Engineering, Incorporated in an effort to resolve the payment request issues and provide the consultants with the information needed to complete their report to be presented to the CRA Board. Mr. Hedge stated the builders had not yet received payment, but he was optimistic they would be reimbursed soon.

In response to Mr. Archer's question regarding the items already approved for payment by staff, Mr. Hedge noted some were approved by the applicable departments but still needed to go through the process.

Responding to Mr. Hakssa's question regarding whether the last lift of Asphalt had been placed on the roadways, Mr. Hedge noted all asphalt had been placed on all the roadways initiated in Phase I of the project, and the date scheduled for placing permanent striping and signage was June 4, 2007.

Mr. Steven Zerkowitz, Legal Counsel for the CRA, questioned whether the CRA Board had reviewed and approved the plans for the vertical improvements to the Civic Center.

Mr. Iturrey noted the Redevelopment Agreement was general in terms of scope of work relating to the verticals. He recommended that DR Horton Builders be required to present these plans before the CRA Board.

Mr. Hedge stated he could provide CRA members and staff with the renderings, in Portable Document Format (PDF) via -email, on what was to be constructed at the Civic Center Plaza and how the building and entry features would look.

Mr. Iturrey stated he would circulate the e-mail file to all CRA members as soon as he received it.

Mr. Forbes requested that CRA members address any issues concerning the renderings with staff prior to the next CRA meeting.

VII. New Business

a. Villages of Naranja – Update from Workshop

Mr. Forbes opened the floor for public comment from the Villages of Naranja and the Hidden Grove Apartment residents whose concerns were not addressed at the last Special NLCRA Workshop, and the following persons appeared to voice their concerns:

1. Ms. Gloria Johnson (address not provided), appeared before the CRA and expressed concern that the main gate (SW 268th Street) was locked at the Villages of Naranja, posing a safety issue for kids forced to walk further or try to squeeze through the gate to catch the school bus early in the morning. She also noted the closed gate prevented access by the Fire and Police Department to respond to emergencies.
2. Mr. Phillip Murray, 13248 SW 256th Terrace, appeared before the CRA and noted several newspaper articles he read that referred to the Naranja area as substandard living and spoke about the re-emergence of this area following Hurricane Andrew. He expressed concern that the Villages of Naranja and the Hidden Grove Apartments were being overlooked in terms of redevelopment. He questioned if the policies of Miami-Dade Housing Authority-Section 8 required an annual inspection, why were the conditions so bad and suggested the inspections be more frequent.
3. Ms. Cindy Williams, 13850 SW 268th Street, Building #15, appeared before the CRA and noted the parking lot pavement was in need of repair. She also expressed concern with increased rent; mildew in the apartments; a filthy laundry room; and the new maintenance staff entering her apartment without approval.
4. Ms. Maria Hernandez, 13810 SW 268th Street, appeared before the CRA and noted as the single parent of an autistic child, she could not afford an increase in her rent; her kids had no place to play; and she did not feel safe in this complex for herself or her family.
5. Ms. Ramona Lawson, 13860 SW 268th Street, Building #16, appeared before the CRA and expressed concern with poor lighting in the neighborhood; her son was robbed; her door was kicked in and that she did not feel safe. She noted she received an eviction notice from the landlord who stated her lease would not be renewed.
6. Ms. Talasha Lee, 13720 SW 268th Street, Apt. #106, appeared before the CRA and noted she had reported to the management that many repairs were needed in her apartment but was handed a 3-day eviction notice instead for not paying her rent, and was told she needed to make her own repairs. She also noted that subsequently, she received a 7-day eviction notice, which contained a different landlord's name.

Mr. Forbes requested that Ms. Martinez, from Miami-Dade Housing, address questions from the CRA members rather than present her report.

Ms. Sheila Martinez, Development and Loan Administration Division, Miami-Dade Housing Agency (MDHA), appeared before the CRA and requested those residents who expressed their concerns tonight, to meet with her following tonight's meeting and provide her with their apartment numbers.

Mr. Forbes noted that after researching MDHA records, he could not find a document verifying that ownership of the Villages of Naranja had changed hands, only a document relating to an inspection report, dated April 14, 2004, that addressed Ms. Nancy Cogen, President of Caribe Management Incorporated (the former management company). Mr. Forbes referred to an annual Uniformed Business Report from the State of Florida, dated 2001, that showed Greater Miami Neighborhoods acquired Caribe Management in 2001 and noted Ms. Cogen was no longer involved with these apartments as of 2001. He asked if MDHA was ever notified of this change and expressed concern that the Agency might be sending annual inspection reports to Ms. Cogen if this information was not included in their records.

Following a discussion between Mr. Forbes and Ms. Martinez regarding the appropriate management company in 2004 and the conditions stated in the Miami-Dade Housing Agency-Special Housing Department's Rental Regulatory Agreement, Ms. Martinez stated she would need to research the accounting of the historical documents in order to provide an answer, but she preferred to move forward in a proactive way to address the immediate issues. Ms. Martinez pointed out that MDHA entered into a rental regulatory agreement in 1994, which allowed the apartments to be converted into condominiums in twenty years; however, the State of Florida entered into a much stricter rental regulatory agreement in 1995 that superseded the Agency's agreement and required this apartment complex remain affordable housing for fifty years.

Ms. Martinez noted that since the last CRA workshop, much had been accomplished concerning the deployable conditions at the Villages of Naranja. She noted within 24 hours of that workshop, she pulled the Agency's inspection report and called Florida Housing, whose job was also to inspect the property. She noted by the next morning, Greater Miami Neighborhoods, as well as the existing management company were removed from this project. Since that time, she noted, a new management company has taken over and resolved the trash issues; paid the past due utility bills; and cleaned up the pool area with the exception of repairing the pump.

Ms. Martinez noted issues were still pending with the eviction notices; however, the new management company made a commitment to the Agency that they would work with tenants, individually, to ensure no one was summarily removed from their apartment. She noted MDHA would continue monitoring this situation, and she would provide a status report every month to the CRA Board, if they so desired. Ms. Martinez also noted Mr. Archer provided her with a list of concerns, grievances and suggestions and wanted the Agency to look at Safety and Health issues immediately, which she agreed with. She noted site visits were conducted to inspect the concerns raised, with some visible improvements, and additional site visits had been scheduled. Ms. Martinez advised that the Agency was working with their Section 8 partners to inspect the

units and ensure the rules and regulations were complied with; and the Agency would ensure that rents were kept at a reasonable level pursuant to the regulatory agreement.

Mr. Infante recommended the MDHA review the status of the eviction notices as a priority. He commented that it was unfair to evict residents for not paying rent when living in these conditions.

Mr. Archer noted that until now, the tenants had no one to support their concerns and this rental agreement needed to be dealt with. He noted there was no excuse for these living conditions and it was imperative that all health and safety issues be addressed immediately. He stated the Agency needed to implement the following: 1) reorganize their operations to ensure that everyone knew his/her role and responsibilities; 2) ensure that all other agencies involved were able to review the inspection reports; 3) make enforcement a priority by collecting fines from all people negligent in doing their jobs or impose civil and/or criminal action against those agencies/owners responsible; and 4) create an oversight committee.

Ms. Martinez noted the Office of Community Economic Development (OCED) Director, Mr. Jose Citron, received the commitment that the new management agency and the Tax Syndicate for development investments had taken over the project. She noted the Agency would work with each tenant in arrears and would commit in writing, a summary of the conversations held with them.

Mr. Iturrey cautioned the CRA members on requiring the Agency to take action and advised that any actions this Board would like the agency to take needed to be voted on by the Board as a whole, and should be in the form of a recommendation. He suggested they combine their requests and present them in the form of a motion.

Mr. Infante stated he did not want to hinder the process by any action the CRA Board recommended.

Discussion ensued regarding the property management contract and the responsibilities of County Agencies concerning this contract. Mr. Forbes requested the CRA be provided with a copy of the new management company's contract.

Ms. Martinez noted the agreement was with Florida Housing but she could provide a copy. She further noted they would commit in writing that they would work with each tenant before evicting anyone. Ms. Martinez advised that Greater Miami Neighborhoods was no longer involved with this project; that the Tax Syndicators had taken over and she could have both the new Management Company and the Tax Syndicators present at the next CRA meeting.

In response to Mr. Forbes' question, Mr. Iturrey explained that a group of private investors invested in properties eligible to receive tax credits such as Villages of Naranja, and it was in their best interest that the properties be maintained properly to protect their investment. He noted when this does not occur, the company overseeing the private investments steps in and takes over the management of the properties.

Following further discussion, Mr. Iturrey explained the tax credit program was a financing mechanism. He recommended that a County staff person, who was an expert on the tax credit program, be present at the next CRA meeting to explain how the tax credit program worked.

Following further discussion, Mr. Archer questioned whether the original owner could face civil or criminal liabilities.

Ms. Martinez noted action was taken in order for the management company to be taken over by the tax syndicators at the State level, which was very serious. She stated she was unsure whether further action would be taken, but staff was doing a global review of this particular company and the properties managed by them.

It was moved by Mr. Infante that tonight's meeting be extended to 8 pm to continue this discussion. This motion was seconded by Mr. Ramkissoon and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

Following further discussion, Mr. Hakssa suggested MDHA provide a pamphlet or brochure to tenants that would educate them on how to care for their residence.

Following an extensive discussion on recommendations by the CRA member's for Miami-Dade Housing Agency to take action on, it was moved by Mr. Archer that staff draft a letter for the Chairperson's signature, to be provided to the County Manager with copies to the County Commission, requesting MDHA comply with the following recommendations:

- that all Health and Safety Hazards in the Villages of Naranja be resolved within two weeks;
- that the roles/responsibilities of the MDHA's and related agencies be organized and outlined;
- that MDHA inspections be centralized;
- that legal enforcement be prioritized and the County Manager take civil/criminal action against the agencies/owners responsible for allowing the living conditions at the Villages of Naranja to exist; and
- that the County establish an oversight committee to oversee the community's interest and review the actions taken by the MDHA for enforcing the contracts currently in place

This motion was seconded by Mr. Infante, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

Discussion ensued regarding recent eviction notices served on some tenants of the Villages of Naranja.

Mr. Iturrey recommended the eviction process be halted until this issue could be addressed with the new property owners.

Following further discussion, it was moved by Mr. Infante that the CRA recommend to the County Manager that MDHA be instructed to have the new management company of the

Villages of Naranja temporarily cease the eviction process until this issue could be discussed with the new property owners. This motion was seconded by Mr. Archer, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

Mr. Zelkowitz advised the CRA Board that they could only make recommendations; that MDHA may or may not consider their recommendations based on the legal ramifications and the advice they received from their attorney's regarding the eviction process.

Mr. Forbes requested staff provide the CRA Board with a copy of the agreement between Florida Housing and the new property owners; a copy of the new management company's contract; and copies of all violation(s) reports from the Special Housing Agency, Florida Housing, and Section 8, going forward, to be followed up with status reports on what actions were taken.

Upon conclusion of the discussion, it was moved by Mr. Archer that tonight's meeting be extended an additional 10 minutes to consider the balance of the agenda. This motion was seconded by Mr. Ramkissoon and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

Executive Director

Mr. Infante noted he and Mr. Steven Zelkowitz, Legal Counsel for the NLCRA, had worked together on drafting a request for "letter of interest" for an Executive Director position with the CRA. He noted he included additional information in this draft that stated necessary qualifications the CRA would be considering when interviewing for this position.

Mr. Ramkissoon noted he read a recent article regarding an advertisement for interested parties to assist in improving the business economic development of Overtown's CRA area. He suggested this would be a reason for the NLCRA to consider hiring an Executive Director.

Following discussion, the CRA members directed Mr. Zelkowitz to proceed with circulating the "letter of interest" request in the Florida Redevelopment Association (FRA) news letter.

In response to Mr. Zelkowitz request for clarification, the CRA members agreed that any responses received from this request should be addressed to Mr. Zelkowitz.

III. Approval of the Minutes

It was moved by Mr. Archer that the March 21, 2007 NLCRA Special Meeting be approved. This motion was seconded by Mr. Hakssa, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

Following clarification by Mr. Forbes regarding Mr. Ramkissoon's statement on page 1, last paragraph of the April 23 NLCRA meeting, it was moved by Mr. Archer that the April 23, 2007 NLCRA Meeting minutes be approved, as corrected to read: "...before the CAA" in lieu of "...before this Board." This motion was seconded by Mr. Infante, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

IV. Approval of the Agenda

It was moved by Mr. Archer that tonight's agenda be approved. This motion was seconded by Mr. Infante, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

b. Illegal Dumping Update

Mr. Archer advised the CRA Board that several persons from the Department of Solid Waste Management (DSWM) had been notified of the illegal dumping in the NLCRA district but action had not transpired. He noted he contacted Ms. Beverly Washington, Enforcement Division Chief, DSWM, who advised that her department was responsible for right-of-ways and she would take action. He also noted Ms. Washington informed him that Francie Boellard, Neighborhood Compliance Supervisor, Team Metro, had responded to a request but could not find SW 145th Avenue at 280th Street because no street sign was posted; she then advised him that she would contact Public Works Department to request the street signs be placed there. Mr. Archer further noted that DSWM took pictures of private properties and of trash thrown over the fence onto Developer George DeGuardiola's property.

VIII. Setting of Next Meeting Date

Mr. Forbes announced that the next NLCRA meeting would be held on June 25, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. and the next NLCRA Special Workshop would be held on June 12, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. to address the concerns of the Waterside and Sea Pines Communities.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before this Board, the Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Kenneth Forbes, Acting Chairperson
Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency