



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

Board of County Commissioners

South Dade Government Center
Naranja Neighborhood Center
13955 S.W. 264 Street
Miami, Florida

May 7, 2007
As Advertised

Harvey Ruvlin, Clerk
Board of County Commissioners

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**CLERK'S SUMMARY AND OFFICIAL MINUTES
NARANJA LAKES
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA)
MAY 07, 2007**

The Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board convened in a special workshop session at the Naranja Neighborhood Center, 13955 S.W. 264th Street, Miami, Florida, at 6:00 p.m. on May 7, 2007; there being present upon roll call: Mr. Moe Hakssa, Mr. Stuart Archer, Mr. Kenneth Forbes and Chairperson Nina Betancourt; (Mr. Parsuram Ramkissoon was late); (Mr. Rene Infante, Mr. Daniel Lipe and Ms. Volkert 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 Akira Spann and Jill Thornton.

I. Start of Special Workshop Meeting Call to Order

Chairperson Betancourt called the CRA Special Workshop to order at 6:09 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Upon roll call, the Board proceeded to consider tonight's agenda.

III. Introductions

Chairperson Betancourt recognized and introduced the following representatives of various governmental departments, present tonight:

Ms. Sheila Martinez, Development and Loan Administration Division, Miami-Dade Housing Agency.

Mr. Jorge Rendon, Compliance Unit Director, Development and Loan Administration Division, Miami-Dade Housing Agency.

Ms. Susana Cortazar, Administrative Officer 3, Shelter Plus Office, Miami-Dade Housing Agency.

Mr. Roberto T. Lazo, Housing Inspector Supervisor, Inspection Office, Miami-Dade Housing Agency.

Ms. Jenny Nillo, Outreach Specialist, Team Metro South Office.

Ms. Monica Rusconi, Homestead Housing Authority Representative.

Mr. Patrick Brown, Public Housing Division Director, Miami-Dade Housing Agency.

Chairperson Betancourt stated the purpose of tonight's workshop was to discuss issues within the Villages of Naranja and Hidden Grove Apartments.

IV. Open Forum for Public Comments

Chairperson Betancourt opened the public hearing and the following persons appeared before the CRA to address their concerns:

Ms. Minnie Williams, 13920 S.W. 268 Street Bldg. 9 Apt.105, appeared before the CRA and expressed concern regarding management negligence. She noted that the garbage was piling up by the dumpsters and the complex was not maintained properly.

Mr. Philip Murray, 13248 S.W. 256 Terrace, appeared before the CRA and expressed concern about the dwindling number of residents coming to meetings despite the living conditions of the apartment complex.

Ms. Stacie Wise, 13920 S.W. 268 Street Apt. 108, appeared before the CRA and noted that she had a pest problem in her kitchen because the garbage disposable was not repaired. She stated that the dumpsters outside her apartment created a safety hazard because fires were started.

Mrs. Carolyn Edgecomb, 13795 S.W. 268 Street, appeared before the CRA and noted the Village of Naranja was built with the intent to enhance the community but the opposite occurred. She stated that the complex was infested with rats.

Mrs. Gloria Johnson, 13830 S.W. 268 Street Bldg. 13 Apt.102, appeared before the CRA and expressed concern regarding the trash pile-up and the rodents in the neighborhood. Ms. Johnson noted the pool has not been cleaned in two months and kids were swimming in it. She stated that drugs were a big problem affecting the neighborhood, especially the kids and the elderly. Ms. Johnson noted that a faulty traffic light on S.W. 137 Avenue and S.W. 268 Street and the lights around the complex were a safety hazard that needs to be repaired. Ms. Johnson provided CRA members with photographs taken in April 2007, to support her comments.

Mr. Forbes noted for the record that another set of pictures taken by Ms. Johnson were given to Commissioner Moss at his forum in March and the first garbage pick-up occurred within that week.

Ms. Shevaela Cobb, 13860 S.W. 268 Street Building 16 Apt. 105 appeared before the CRA and expressed concern that following an inspection by the Health Department, the carpet failed to meet the standards and the landlords had yet to replace it. She stated the landlord informed her that if she handled the carpet repairs herself, she would be in violation of her lease. Mrs. Cobb noted that management would not take action against the drugs that have taken over the neighborhood or the poor condition of the apartment. She stated that she was worried about maintaining her status as a foster parent and wanted to move.

Mr. Mike Iturrey noted that any speaker receiving a Section Eight Voucher subsidy needed to state that information for the record because Housing Agency staff that inspects Section Eight homes was in the audience and they could re-inspect the homes.

Mr. Jorge Rendon suggested those residents meet with him after the meeting and provide him with that information due to privacy issues.

Mr. Michael Wise, 13920 S.W. 268 Street Building 9 Apt 108, appeared before the CRA and noted trash was spilling out into the streets. He stated that he witnessed children playing on furniture

placed by the dumpsters. Mr. Wise noted fires were started in the area and caused a safety hazard. He stated that the previous management team, under Mr. Andrews' supervision, did an excellent job with repairs and maintenance but the new team was not performing their duties.

Mr. Harvey Johnson, 6141 S.W. 62 Street South Miami, appeared before the CRA and noted that the dumpsters were not cleaned after the garbage has been picked-up.

Ms. Glenda Lee, 13720 S.W. 268 Street Bldg. 3 Apt. 106, appeared before the CRA and expressed concern regarding drugs and gambling around the complex. She stated management required that complaints were presented in the form of a signed letter. Ms. Lee noted she was worried about drug activity within close proximity to her apartment. She stated that a leak in the bathroom caused mildew damage to her carpet in the closet, and management instructed her clean it up herself when she complained about the problem. Ms Lee noted she witnessed the maintenance crew burning the furniture by the dumpsters.

Ms. Talasha Lee, 13720 S.W. 268 Street Bldg. 3 Apt. 106, appeared before the CRA and expressed concern about the condition of her apartment. She stated that Metro Dade kicked her door in because the apartment was a drug house before she moved in. Ms. Lee noted she filed numerous work orders to have repairs carried out, and management informed her that materials were scarce but she witnessed trucks bringing in new materials for empty apartments upstairs (Apts. 207 and 208).

Ms. Gloria Johnson re-appeared before the Board on behalf of Ms. Ramona Lawton, 13860 S.W. 268 Street Bldg. 17 Apt. 108, and expressed concern about the poor condition of her apartment. She stated Ms. Lawton complained to management numerous times and was served with a notice of eviction.

Mr. Manuel Reyes, 27044 S.W. 138 Court Apt. A, appeared before the CRA and noted he received conflicting information from the renting office regarding the status of Greater Miami Neighborhoods. He stated management saw him recording the complex on video camera and garbage was picked-up the next day. Mr. Reyes noted phone calls made to the assumed proper authorities went unheard because they were transferred from person to person.

There being no other persons to appear before the CRA, the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Iturrey advised that the property was owned and managed by private entities which declined an invitation to attend today's (5/07) meeting. He stated the next step was to determine what County assistance the property received, and how many Section Eight Voucher participants rented units. Mr. Iturrey noted the County had jurisdiction over units if the landlord participated in the Section Eight Voucher Program and the Homestead Housing Authority had jurisdiction is Homestead Vouchers were used. He stated there was a tenant/landlord dispute and any guidance offered by Team Metro was appreciated.

Mr. Archer noted that he was a landlord of some units under the Section Eight Voucher Program, and there were strict standards for inspections. He stated County Agencies had a responsibility to clean up the problem areas, and the tenants' responsibility to call the proper authorities about issues they were facing.

Mr. Forbes noted homeowners were against the proposed building of the Villages of Naranja because they have witnessed new affordable houses turning into slums. He stated the tenants were stuck in deplorable living conditions, and nobody came to their aid because Miami-Dade had issues with affordable housing. Mr. Forbes passed out a packet to CRA members and read the “Tenant Profile” and “Comparative Rental Structure” sections. He expressed that this information mislead the public. He stated the CRA needed to understand how these conditions could happen without any effort to rectify the problems.

Chairperson Betancourt noted that she was involved when the property was proposed and concerns rose regarding how it would deteriorate overtime, and she was trying to establish a timeframe in order to pinpoint when things started to go sour and who was accountable. She stated buildings like Villages of Naranja needed to be monitored and sometimes agencies (local, stated, and federal) could get involved.

Ms. Martinez noted some areas funded by surtax dollars needed to be monitored on a daily basis, and her department was asked to monitor units that received home funding. She stated they were investigating the projects to determine which were being monitored and how often. Ms. Martinez noted this was a top priority for them and they would ensure that the developer adhered to a loan note and a regulatory agreement. She stated tenant income verification and ensuring that the landlord rents to people with the appropriate annual income levels were of primary concern to her office.

Chairperson Betancourt noted provisions existed stating that tenants could withhold rent payments, but it had to be placed within a court registry or escrow. She stated the money would be held in escrow and would not be available to the landlord which forced him/her to carry out the necessary repairs.

Mr. Forbes advised Greater Miami Neighborhoods was a non-profit organization that received public dollars to build the property. Chairperson Betancourt noted they have buildings throughout the County and established affordable housing opportunities. She stated they were still the owners and landlord of the property and the tenants witnessed a change in management.

Mr. Forbes noted additions were coming onto the property and anyone that moved into them had the opportunity for homeownership as well as a percentage of rent payments placed aside. Mrs. Johnson noted she was informed that five percent of her rent payments would be credited to an escrow account and she would receive home buying assistance if she wanted to move. She also informed the CRA of speculation that Greater Miami Neighborhoods was filing for bankruptcy.

Responding to Mr. Forbes’s question regarding rectifying the situation, Ms. Martinez noted she had a rental regulatory agreement and a loan document stating rules and regulations, to which the County and the developer were responsible for. She stated she wanted to meet with the County Attorneys Office and the CRA to develop a plan with the loan and regulatory agreement in order to enforce compliance.

Mr. Ramkissoon asked Ms. Martinez to forward the inspection history to the CRA. He asked the Miami-Dade Police Department to provide a statement detailing resident reports. Mr. Ramkissoon also asked for Team Metro to present a report outlining enforcement actions.

Chairperson Betancourt asked CRA staff to provide a statement from the Fire Department detailing resident reports.

Mr. Archer noted the tenants needed to make more phone calls to the police regarding legitimate problems so they could provide more service to the area. Chairperson Betancourt advised that the CRA worked closely with the Police Department and they allocated resources and monies for additional police resources in the area. She stated police assignments depended on where and when the height of calls comes from.

Chairperson Betancourt noted the CRA was informed of the severity of recurring issues within the Villages of Naranja and Hidden Grove Apartments two weeks ago. She stated a Legal Aid representative should be contacted to advise the tenants about their rights during a landlord/tenant dispute.

Ms. Jenny Nillo, Team Metro South Outreach Specialist, noted an enforcement warning was issued after receiving a phone call from Mr. Forbes. She stated guidelines and a 30 day deadline to comply with the enforcement were to be followed.

Responding to Commissioner Moss representative Ms. Unita Gustave's question regarding the reoccurrence of the garbage pile-up, Chairperson Betancourt advised there was no reassurance that it would not happen again.

Sergeant Ozzie Hernandez announced the next community event "Neighborhood Resource Fair," held at the Sea Pines Community Park on Saturday May 12, 2007 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and passed out flyers throughout the neighborhood

V. Setting of Next Workshop Date

Chairperson Betancourt announced the next NLCRA Special Workshop session would be held on June 12, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. to address concerns regarding the Waterside and Sea Pines Communities.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the CRA, the Special Workshop session was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Nina Betancourt, Chairperson
Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency