



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

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

June 12, 2007
As Advertised

Harvey Ruvin, Clerk
Board of County Commissioners

Kay Madry Sullivan, Director
Clerk of the Board Division

Jill Thornton, Commission Reporter
(305) 375-2505



**CLERK'S SUMMARY AND OFFICIAL MINUTES
NARANJA LAKES
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA)
JUNE 12, 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 June 12, 2007; there being present upon roll call: Mr. Moe Hakssa, Mr. Stuart Archer, Mr. Rene Infante and Mr. Kenneth Forbes; (Chairperson Nina Betancourt, Mr. Parsuram Ramkissoon, Mr. Daniel Lipe and Ms. Volkert were absent); Mr. Alberto Gonzalez, CRA Analyst, Office of Strategic Business Management (OSBM); and Jill Thornton.

I. Start of Special Workshop Meeting Call to Order

Mr. Forbes 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

Mr. Forbes recognized and introduced the following County representatives:

Mr. Spencer Errickson, Building Inspector, Miami-Dade County Building Department; and Sergeant Ozzie Hernandez, Miami-Dade Police Department, Cutler Ridge District.

Mr. Infante noted for the record, he received a call from staff member Mr. Mike Iturrey, CRA Coordinator, OSBM, informing that he could not be present at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Forbes stated the purpose of tonight's workshop was to discuss issues concerning the Sea Pines and the Waterside Communities.

IV. Open Forum for Public Comments

Mr. Forbes opened the public hearing and the following persons appeared before the CRA Board to address their concerns:

1. Mr. Dennis Whitaker, 28223 SW 143rd Court, Secretary, Board of Directors, Sea Pines Home Owners Association, noted Sea Pines was in need of better lighting, better security, efficient drainage, and needed a fence repaired along the canal side of the property.
2. Mr. Darrell Christians, 28003 SW 143rd Court, President, Board of Directors, Sea Pines Home Owners Association (HOA), noted Sea Pines Community needed upgrading and the crime reduced in the area. He requested five additional lights for the darker areas in the community and that the 100 watt bulbs be increased to 400 watts, as recommended by FPL. He also noted drains and several

fences were in need of repair; and trash needed to be removed from the South end of the property. Mr. Christians also noted he would like to see new landscaping in the Sea Pines Community and a children's playground. He stated he received estimates for repairing the wood and chain link fences ranging from \$4,200 to \$14,500; and \$12,000 to repair and resurface the deteriorated roads.

Mr. Forbes questioned whether the Sea Pines HOA had strengthened and whether Sea Pines had initiated a crime watch program.

Mr. Christians noted the Association was stronger and people were coming forward to report crime, which had reduced considerably. He noted Sea Pines HOA meetings were conducted the first Thursday of every month and the attendance needed improving. Mr. Christians further noted the Building Department needed to ensure that unsafe structures/units were repaired in the Sea Pines Community.

Mr. Forbes noted the CRA was in the process of developing a program that could assist these owners but would need to conduct another meeting regarding this matter.

Following comments by Mr. Whitaker that Sergeant Ozzie Hernandez was asked to establish a police sub-station in the Sea Pines area, Sergeant Hernandez noted he would request approval for a workstation if a site was provided. He noted the CRA district had no workstations within its district and Sea Pines HOA came forward to offer a trailer for an office.

Mr. Archer noted for the record, he owned property in the Sea Pines Community and discovered he had an outstanding permit, which he was unaware of. He suggested the process be streamlined in a way that minor paperwork issues on outstanding permits could be resolved quickly.

Mr. Christians noted at the last Sea Pines HOA meeting, the HOA Board discussed assigning a qualified representative to represent the HOA concerning unsafe structures and building permit issues within the Sea Pines community that consisted of mostly paperwork issues.

Mr. Infante suggested the Sea Pines HOA hire a qualified engineer/architect to review a site plan and determine the problems in this community that needed correcting; or establish a charrette to do the same.

In response to Mr. Hakssa's question regarding the amount of Association Fees collected per month per unit and what that money was used for, Mr. Christians noted the HOA collects about \$25/month per unit; that these funds were used to make some improvements to the community but the HOA still needed assistance in making additional needed repairs. He also noted there were 273 units, with some unoccupied and some in arrears.

3. Ms. Melvina, Durden, 27002 SW 138th Avenue, appeared on behalf of Hidden Groves Day Care and asked why the Day Care was being closed. She noted she did not have the transportation to find another Day Care for her kids.

Mr. Forbes suggested those persons present tonight with concerns regarding the Hidden Grove Day Care issue, to speak with Ms. Dotlow, the Naranja Community Neighborhood Center Director, during daytime hours, and she could assist them on this issue. He also encouraged them to attend the Community Advisory Committee meeting next Tuesday (6/19) to voice their concerns on this issue.

4. An unidentified Speaker noted she was informed that tonight's meeting would address the housing issues in the Villages of Naranja.

Mr. Forbes advised that the CRA already held a Special Workshop to address the Villages of Naranja and the Hidden Grove apartment issues, and several individuals were in the process of resolving those issues. He further advised that the CRA could only receive input at these workshops, not take action. He encouraged everyone to attend the June 25, 2007 NLCRA meeting for an update report on the issues concerning the Villages of Naranja and the Hidden Grove Apartments.

5. Mr. Pablo Urgelles, 14362 SW 283rd Street, noted he owned rental property in the Sea Pines Community. He expressed concern with Sea Pines HOA's lack of an enforcement mechanism and not exerting enough pressure on property owners to make the needed repairs on their unfinished units. He also expressed concern with the lack of communication between the HOA and homeowners; that he did not receive a notification of tonight's meeting. Mr. Urgelles noted he had witnessed people crawling in and out of holes cut in the community's fences and spoke in support of the proposed police workstation to improve security and reduce crime in the area. He also spoke in support of cleaning the overgrown bushes for a common area.

6. Mr. Charles Johnson, 28216 SW 143rd Court, expressed concern with SW 144th Avenue roadway, a County property that was very dark and in need of lighting. He noted the drains in the Sea Pines Community needed repairing and were causing severe flooding in the area, which prevented many people from attending tonight's workshop. He further noted the holes in the fences served as an excellent escape for people robbing someone in the community and the area was very dark due to the overgrown bushes. He also expressed concern with criminals living in the community.

Mr. Whittaker noted Sea Pines HOA Board of Directors met with a gentleman from the Building Department's Unsafe Structures Division in 2005, who promised to furnish them with a list of all units with outstanding permits, but unfortunately, he was deployed to Iraq for military duty and the list was never provided. He noted the Board of Directors had worked on this issue for some time and had established a small Architectural Review Committee to address these issues.

Mr. Infante noted he felt the CRA should review these issues but the HOA needed to provide a master site plan outlining the issues, with a short-term and long-term goal for the CRA to act upon.

Mr. Whittaker noted the HOA was limited by Statute, when assessing private homeowners to repair their units.

Mr. Hakssa pointed out that an HOA could assess properties for a maintenance fee.

Mr. Forbes stated he felt Sea Pines and Waterside communities would be the "affordable housing" developments within the CRA district and would need assistance from the CRA. He noted the CRA needed to assess their needs and to try to develop a plan.

Mr. Archer stated he felt the three major problems in the Sea Pines area were flooding, poor drainage/infrastructure and permitting issues. He noted these were taxpaying residents who had struggled to get County services to repair the infrastructure but these roads were private.

Mr. Spencer Errickson, Field Unit Supervisor for Unsafe Structures, Building Department, noted staff was well aware of the Unsafe Structure issues in this community since Hurricane Andrew. He noted he was unsure of the legal process but the HOA needed to repair the units where property owners had not taken action; that the HOA has the right to enter and repair private units that degrade other units; and the problem would be compounded if repairs were made without permits. Mr. Errickson noted he counted 16 buildings in the community that had at least one unit in need of repair with an outstanding permit since Hurricane Andrew.

Responding to Mr. Forbes' question as to whether any type of program existed to assist these people, Mr. Errickson noted he was unaware of any specific program but the Community Action Agency (CAA) or the Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) may be able to provide some assistance, although the property owners may have to assume a large portion of the costs.

Mr. Infante noted the process would require the owners to hire a professional to draw plans and the County to approve them. He suggested the units be combined under one permit and that one professional be used to draw the plans.

Mr. Errickson noted that was a possibility since most of these buildings were "Cookie Cutter" (similar in nature) buildings, and would not require a lot of architectural time.

Mr. Forbes questioned if the CRA could apply for grants or some other type of funding mechanism to assist this community on the unsafe structures, since the CRA was a special taxing district that serves to eliminate blight and slum.

Mr. Infante pointed out that the CRA hired an engineering firm to review the primary development's infrastructure project and suggested expanding that project by hiring the same firm to assist the Sea Pines Community, since both had issues related to infrastructure and drainage.

Mr. Archer suggested a field inspector from the Building Department inspect this area to resolve the minor issues and that SRS Engineer firm be used to handle the major problems.

Mr. Alberto Gonzalez advised the CRA members that the existing contract with SRS Engineers was very specific and would have to be reviewed by staff.

In response to Mr. Forbes' question concerning how the CRA could coordinate with the various County departments involved in order to keep this project on track, Mr. Errickson noted this project would probably involve the Public Works, DERM, Zoning and Building Departments, which would need to be coordinated through the County Manager's Office.

Mr. Forbes noted the Beacon Council's website posted advertisements for businesses wanting to do business in Miami-Dade County, and the County Departments work in conjunction with the Beacon Council to ensure that this process takes place. He asked if the CRA could use this process as well.

Mr. Errickson noted this may involve a request or resolution by the CRA to establish a type of task force under the umbrella of the County Manager's Office.

Mr. Albert Gonzalez advised that the CRA would need to coordinate through the Office of Strategic Business Management in order to apply for funding or to establish programs on behalf of the private home owners.

Mr. Infante reiterated that before going through any process there should be a set of plans in place.

Mr. Errickson pointed out that permits were already obtained for a large number of these units, but had expired and needed be renewed before obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy. He noted that since most of these permits were on microfilm, one person could request a microfilm, renew the permit and then call for the inspection. He noted many of these opened permits either lacked a final inspection or had one to two categories not finalized, therefore the permit could not be closed out.

In response to Mr. Infante's question as to whether permits dating back to the 1990's could be renewed without re-submitting the plans, Mr. Errickson noted there should be copies on record in the microfilm section of the Building Department, if the original copy was not available.

Mr. Christians noted the Architectural Committee established by the Sea Pines HOA had found 30 of the 72 units in violation and letters were sent to the property owners regarding the violations. He asked how the HOA could legally pull a permit to do that work.

Mr. Archer pointed out that an HOA differed from a Condominium Association in that it served as a facilitator with no authority to go into private property to make repairs unless a unit was vacant.

Mr. Forbes suggested the Statutes be reviewed to see what authority the CRA had to assist these communities for safety purposes. He stated the CRA would like to assist these communities with a comprehensive plan that impacts their quality of life, but his concern was the CRA's ability to coordinate with the County departments to get something implemented and stay on track.

Mr. Errickson noted he was unaware of any other community in Dade County that had reached the level of devastation that Sea Pines Community had except some City of Miami residents who had experienced tornados and he believed those residents (single-family homeowners) received assistance from the Community Action Agency (CAA). Mr. Errickson further noted the CAA had the resources to assist in some manner but he was unsure what was required. He also noted the Building Department, unfortunately, was not a social outreach agency and any outreach action needed to go through an outreach agency.

Mr. Errickson apologized to the CRA members for not providing them with an "expired permit" list; that he was unaware they had not received one. He noted the list he possessed indicated there were 139 permits in the Sea Pines Community that had expired. He suggested the easiest way to resolve the unsafe structure and expired permit issues was to process one building at a time. He noted it could take up to two years to complete the total project but one building could be finished within two months. Mr. Errickson further noted the HOA needed to apply pressure on homeowners to repair their units and make them aware of the importance of taking action. He also noted the HOA should have a provision that allows them to step in when a property was not maintained. Mr. Errickson further noted the construction method used in the Sea Pines Community limited the Building Department's ability to demolish unsafe structures when adjoined to other safe units.

In response to Mr. Hakssa's question regarding the number of residents who owned their units, and the average rent paid by renters, Mr. Christians noted about 20% of residents owned their units and the average rent was approximately \$850 per month for a two bedroom unit.

In response to Mr. Hakssa's question regarding the timeframe since the \$25/month maintenance fee was imposed, Mr. Christians noted at least ten years ago.

Mr. Hakssa expressed concern that the Sea Pines Community was a private community requesting assistance from the County and the CRA, which he felt should be limited to infrastructure and safety hazards only, and that the remaining requests for landscape improvements and common grounds should fall under the HOA. Mr. Hakssa pointed out that neighboring communities charge over \$200 per month for maintenance fees and the Sea Pines HOA had no budget due to low fees that had not been raised in ten years. He suggested the Sea Pines HOA Board strengthen their authority and charge higher fees for better maintenance. He also suggested they assess a special assessment for a specific need with notice to all property owners.

Mr. Archer noted most of these units were functioning well and had only minor issues. He stated he recalled when applying for a permit that a list of needed repairs was prepared, and that list should be in the Building Department's computer data base. Mr. Archer noted the process needed to be streamlined because several homeowners were scattered throughout the Country and did not speak the English language. He suggested a field inspector be assigned to deal with the minor issues.

Mr. Errickson suggested the issues relating to other departments be dealt with first before addressing the Building Department issues because a Building permit could not be finalized until all of the trade permits had been finalized first. He suggested the HOA obtain a list of all trade permits needing renewal and call for a final inspection before trying to close out the master permit.

Mr. Infante concurred with Mr. Hakssa's comments that the HOA should be responsible and responsive and that they needed to implement certain things that would complement the CRA's efforts. He noted although the Sea Pines Community consisted of private owners, it was a blighted area that the CRA should get involved with, but he felt all the permits needed to be directed through one professional who could provide a professional opinion and assist in closing them out.

Mr. Errickson suggested an engineer certify that the work had been done to Code, and the HOA's newly created Architectural Committee obtain signatures from private homeowners on permit applications and process them for renewal and final inspections.

Mr. Infante suggested the CRA expand its existing contract with SRS Engineer Firm to see whether they could provide an engineer to inspect this work.

Sergeant Hernandez noted the CRA already addressed the security issue by implementing extra enforcement. He suggested the CRA could assist Sea Pines on their request for five additional lights quickly, which would improve the community's security. He noted a Sea Pines HOA Board member was assigned at one of their Board meetings to follow-up on suggestions by an FPL representative and they were informed that the light poles in the community were owned by the County and maintained by a fee included in their electric bill. Sergeant Hernandez noted he had seen some improvements in the community and had noticed a more aggressive clean up of the area, however, the Sea Pines HOA meetings were poorly attended and the HOA needed to be stronger in

getting more community participation to repair the area. He noted the Mandarin Lakes HOA faced the same situation when they needed support from the community to hire off duty police officers for additional security.

Mr. Forbes noted the CRA needed to see some tradeoffs, such as community participation, when fostering public/private partnerships.

Mr. Infante questioned whether the Sea Pines HOA was asking for additional lights or light poles, Mr. Whittaker noted they were asking for five additional light poles. Mr. Infante noted these poles would require permits in order to install them, which was not that simple and the CRA needed an estimate. He noted the CRA could address many of these issues if it decided to expand its current contract with SRS Engineers, who were experts in infrastructure.

Mr. Whittaker stated he was told by an FPL representative that they needed the original underground wiring master plan for that area, which he had obtained but was in the process of getting required information from FPL in order to get approval from the County for the additional poles. Mr. Whittaker noted the FPL representative recommended the 100 watt light bulbs be changed to a 400 watt light bulb; however, in order to accommodate a different size bulb, the entire housing (head) needed to be changed.

Sergeant Hernandez said the existing light poles were in dark pockets of the community, which could be improved with little expense. He stated he would work with the outreach groups accessible to the police department to have them clean up the overgrown field. He noted the most serious issue in the Sea Pines Community was poor drainage and asked whether a cost estimate to repair the drains had been obtained.

Mr. Whittaker noted he met with a contractor who had previously done roadwork in the Sea Pines Community and his best estimate was \$25,000 per drain without seeing a topography layout of the property.

Mr. Infante said he would continue working with the Sea Pines HOA Board of Directors but would like to see them present a short-term and a long-term plan to the CRA.

Mr. Forbes asked staff to ensure that representatives from the Community Action Agency (CAA) and the Office of Community Economic Development (OCED) were present at the next NLCRA meeting to answer questions concerning potential assistance to the Sea Pines Community. Mr. Forbes also asked staff to have the SRS Engineers Construction Consultants present as well to inquire about amending their contract.

Mr. Hakssa reminded staff to include in that agenda, additional time under public comments, to address the comments of those individuals who were present tonight from Villages of Naranja and the Hidden Grove Apartments.

V. Setting of Next Workshop Date

Mr. Forbes announced that the next NLCRA Special Workshop session would be held on July 09, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. to address the concerns of the business owners within the NLCRA District.

Mr. Infante noted he would not be present at the June 25th NLCRA meeting and asked Mr. Forbes to address the topic of expanding SRS Engineer's consultant contract at that meeting.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the CRA, the Special Workshop session was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Kenneth Forbes, Acting Chairperson
Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency