



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

South Dade Government Center  
Room 203  
10710 S.W. 211 Street  
Miami, Florida

February 25, 2008  
As Advertised

Harvey Ruvin, Clerk  
Board of County Commissioners

Kay Madry Sullivan, Director  
Clerk of the Board Division

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**CLERK'S SUMMARY AND OFFICIAL MINUTES  
NARANJA LAKES  
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA)  
FEBRUARY 25, 2008**

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., February 25, 2008; there being present upon roll call: Chairperson Nina Betancourt, Mr. Rene Infante, Mr. Moe Hakssa, Mr. Stuart Archer and Mr. Kenneth Forbes; (Mr. Danny Lipe, Mr. Parsuram Ramkisson and Ms. Marlene Volkert were late); Staff members present were: Mr. Mike Iturrey, CRA Coordinator; Mr. Jason Rodriguez, CRA Analyst, Office of Strategic Business Management; and Deputy Clerk Jill Thornton.

**I. Meeting Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairperson Betancourt called the CRA Board meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

**II. Approval of the Minutes**

No Action Taken.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

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

**IV. Open Forum for Public Comments**

Chairperson Betancourt opened the floor for public input and the following person(s) appeared:

1) Mr. Leonard (Len) Anthony, 14820 Naranja Lakes Boulevard, Apt PH, appeared before the CRA and expressed disappointment with minimal assistance provided by the CRA to the Naranja community after it was destroyed by Hurricane Andrew; and with minimal progress on any of the issues he raised before the CRA since that time. He also expressed concern that he had paid a special "lighting" tax for over eighteen (18) years, yet had not seen the County provide lighting in the Naranja area, except in Mandarin Lakes, a commercial development area. Mr. Anthony noted the only real progress he had seen was the commercial development endeavor and construction of the public library; however, he noted, the Community Council, not the CRA, was instrumental in prioritizing the construction of this facility. Mr. Anthony expressed further disappointment with the CRA's discussion on the Executive Director position. Additionally, he expressed concern that no detailed development plan was provided to the community for review; that no public informational workshops were held to inform the community of the CRA's progress in development, goals and objectives; and that no community facilities were constructed, as promised, for access by the entire CRA District communities.

Mr. Anthony stated he felt little attention had been given to the concerns of the residents, and he intended to present all future concerns in writing, and forward a copy to the Offices of the County Mayor, Commissioners Moss and Sorenson and the County Attorney's Office.

2) Mr. Phillip Murray, 13248 SW 256<sup>th</sup> Terrace, appeared before the CRA and expressed concern with the percentage of African Americans residing in the NLCRA District that was not equitably reflected in this CRA's board membership. He noted the reason for his concern was that a CRA member previously stood before the CRA requesting assistance for his business, and he felt the CRA board should demonstrate the same due diligence to an African American also standing before the CRA requesting assistance. Mr. Murray pointed out the issues concerning the Villages of Naranja had been ongoing for some time, yet remain unresolved.

Regarding Mr. Murray's comments, Mr. Infante clarified he did not support the CRA member's request for assistance because he felt it was inappropriate at the time, and not made in proper forum; and that he did not believe any CRA member(s) would support that request for the same reason.

Chairperson Betancourt clarified that no action was taken by the CRA on the CRA member's request; and that CRA board members were appointed by Commissioners Moss and Sorenson when the CRA was created.

Mr. Forbes further clarified that when the CRA was created, three African Americans were appointed as members, but two had since resigned because they moved elsewhere. He stated he felt the CRA had been responsive to everyone within the CRA District's community without racial preference. Mr. Forbes pointed out the reason the CRA was created was to ensure the Redevelopment Plan was implemented.

Chairperson Betancourt noted when vacancies occurred on the CRA Board, résumés submitted were forwarded to the County Commissioners to decide whom they wished to appoint. Regarding Mr. Anthony's comments, Chairperson Betancourt clarified that an Executive Director Subcommittee was created for the specific purpose of conducting a workshop to discuss the CRA hiring an Executive Director. She noted that workshop was properly advertised, with an agenda, but no action was taken since it was only a workshop.

## **V. Old Business**

### **Community Policing**

Sergeant Ozzie Hernandez, Miami-Dade Police Department, Cutler Ridge District, provided an overview of the monthly community policing report entitled "Naranja Lakes CRA Initiative Monthly Progress Report," dated February 20, 2008 that was submitted to CRA members via email and included in tonight's agenda package. He noted this month's arrests increased to thirty-five (35) as a result of an increase in robberies within the CRA District, specifically near the Villages of Naranja (SW 268<sup>th</sup> Street and 137<sup>th</sup> Avenue). He further noted the first Reside Empowering Neighborhood Enforcement Walk (RENEW) operation was conducted at the Villages of Naranja and the Hidden Grove Complex this month, during which two police squads

went door-to-door, providing contact information to residents and receiving information of criminal activity within the area. Sergeant Hernandez advised that only a portion of the Hidden Groves Complex was covered by the conclusion of the four-hour operation; and next month's RENEW operation would include visiting the Modella Community, and the remainder of the Hidden Groves Complex.

### **Heritage Report**

It was moved by Mr. Forbes that the Heritage Village Report provided to CRA members via email, be accepted as presented. This motion was seconded by Mr. Archer for discussion.

Mr. Archer noted he was satisfied with the report indicating the For-Sale advertisement for the Heritage Village units would begin in April 2008; however, he stated he felt the process had been extremely slow and was disgraceful to those in need of housing.

Mr. Forbes commented that the process would be even slower given the current housing market.

Hearing no further comments or questions, the CRA proceeded to vote on the foregoing motion, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

### **Update on General Old Business**

#### **Current re-zoning applications in CRA**

Mr. Iturrey reported that no current re-zoning applications had been submitted for properties located within the NLCRA district boundaries.

#### **Mandarin Lakes**

It was moved by Mr. Forbes that the Mandarin Lakes Sale and Closing Report provided to CRA members via email, be accepted as presented. This motion was seconded by Mr. Archer, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

Mr. Iturrey advised that additional copies of this report were available for the public.

## **VI. New Business**

### **a. Discussion on Lighting Study**

Mr. Garfield Perry, Engineer, Public Works Department (PWD), noted he administered PWD's arterial lighting program, and became aware of the lighting issues in the Naranja Lakes area last month while attending a staff meeting. He also noted he received a map of the CRA District boundaries on Friday of last week. Mr. Perry stated he previously discussed a specific lighting issue occurring on SW 144<sup>th</sup> Avenue with Mr. Jason Rodriguez, in which he provided a cost estimate to fix those lights. Following a brief explanation of the PWD's arterial lighting program, Mr. Perry noted PWD was responsible for installing and maintaining lights on arterial

and half section roads. He advised that the applicable roadways considered arterial in the CRA District were: SW 288th, 280th, 272nd and 268th Streets; and that PWD would consider providing lighting on SW 157th, 152nd, 147th (Naranja Boulevard) and 137<sup>th</sup> Avenues at no cost, without the required Special Taxing District formation.

Chairperson Betancourt stated CRA members were very familiar with the process, which had been explained a number of times to the CRA by Florida Power and Light (FPL) and PWD representatives. She noted she recalled some communities lacked the means in which to form a special taxing district, and the CRA discussed allocating some funds, but the PWD agreed to designate certain roadways as arterial for lighting.

Mr. Iturrey explained that the CRA contemplated installing lighting on specific sections of SW 144<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and decided to allocate some monies to study lighting needed within the entire CRA district.

Chairperson Betancourt expounded that the CRA set aside \$100,000 to allocate for lighting and decided to review the entire CRA district for lighting needs because of some informal quasi-studies that were previously done.

Sergeant Hernandez noted he recalled PWD representatives agreed to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of designating SW 144<sup>th</sup> Avenue as an arterial roadway based on the amount of traffic.

Mr. Archer noted a segment of SW 144th Avenue roadway, between SW 280th and 284th Streets, had existing lights that faced westward but were not turned on. He noted his preference would be to have them face eastward and turned back on.

Mr. Perry noted PWD's highway plan provided lighting at various locations. He suggested any community or association not included in a Special Taxing District that desired lighting, could identify the roadways in need of lighting and submit a request to PWD, so that PWD could examine the lights and determine what could be provided with PWD sources.

Mr. Archer noted this was promised to the CRA months ago, and the issue had been discussed for nearly two years. He pointed out that lights had been shut off, even in the special taxing districts, and asked what could be done by the PWD to resolve these issues.

Mr. Perry noted he was the PWD's representative who handled roadway lighting, and he had not been aware of all of these issues; only that he received an e-mail from Mr. Jason Rodriguez regarding a specific lighting issue, in which he responded with a cost estimate.

Mr. Forbes stated he understood that the CRA deferred allocating funding for lighting on SW 144<sup>th</sup> Avenue to have FPL and PWD identify other roadways in need of lighting, and provide cost estimates.

Following further discussion among CRA members and Mr. Perry regarding the lighting issue, Mr. Iturrey clarified the CRA had a commitment from PWD to maintain the lights on SW 144<sup>th</sup> Avenue once the infrastructure was in place.

Sergeant Hernandez stated he was available to meet with PWD representatives, and show them all areas without lighting within the CRA District. He noted SW 144<sup>th</sup> Avenue was previously a small road that became a well-traveled roadway as a result of the surrounding development. He also noted a segment of this roadway, between SW 280<sup>th</sup> and 284<sup>th</sup> Streets, had old, existing light poles with lights directed towards an area where a trailer park once existed. He noted, however, those lights were never turned back on once the trailer park was removed.

Mr. Perry suggested those light poles were probably located on private-owned land, but if Ms. Esther Calas, the PWD Director approved, he could have those lights re-directed to face the street. He advised that requiring PWD to install new poles required a large sum of money, and probably would not occur. Mr. Perry noted some exceptions were made, and if the PWD Director approved him working with the CRA, he would conduct a study of the area and present it to the PWD Director for consideration.

Mr. Iturrey noted the CRA allocated some funding for lighting within the community redevelopment area, and could only provide startup costs for certain areas, but not maintenance costs. He noted, however, the CRA's intent was to identify areas within the entire CRA District, in need of lighting.

Mr. Perry stated that if the CRA provided him with a list identifying the roadways of concern, he would present the list to the PWD Director for review.

It was moved by Mr. Forbes that Sergeant Hernandez meet with PWD representatives to show them the areas of high priority, in need of lighting, that were already identified by the MDPD. This motion was seconded by Mr. Archer for discussion.

Ms. Marie Levrant, District Coordinator for Commissioner Katy Sorenson's District 8 Office, suggested Sergeant Hernandez provide the PWD with a request, recommending roadways in need of lighting, so that PWD could evaluate the need and costs.

Responding to Mr. Forbes' inquiry as to how long the study would take, Mr. Perry stated that once he received the request, he would physically observe the area and authorize FPL to install lights on existing FPL light poles, which could take up to six (6) months, depending on the outcome of the study.

The CRA proceeded to vote on the foregoing motion, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

Following further discussion, it was moved by Mr. Forbes that Mr. Perry provide a status report of the proposed study to the CRA within 90 days. This motion was seconded by Mr. Infante, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

Sergeant Hernandez noted he would immediately forward a list of roadways he recommended in need of lighting, but noted he felt the process would be expedited if he could show the PWD Representatives the areas instead.

Mr. Perry vowed to work in an efficient manner once he received the list of roadways.

Mr. Hakssa asked Mr. Perry to provide the CRA with a map indicating the roadways the PWD already provided lighting for, and requested the PWD turn those lights back on.

Mr. Archer expressed appreciation to Mr. Perry for attending tonight's (2/25) meeting to address the CRA members' concerns regarding street lighting issues in the CRA District.

Upon conclusion of discussion, Chairperson Betancourt noted she needed to leave tonight's (2/25) meeting early, and relinquished the Chair to Mr. Forbes.

#### **b. Discussion on Villages of Naranja**

Ms. Isabel Sanchez, Richman Asset Management, Inc., appeared before the CRA and advised that her company took over the property management services of the Villages of Naranja from WRC (the previous company) on May 09, 2007. She noted they hired a security company, installed surveillance cameras throughout the property, and cooperated with the police to secure the premises. She further noted several improvements were made to the property, including enhanced lighting and landscaping, increased trash pickups to four times per week, repaired all fire alarms and exterior lights, and installed new speed bumps and awnings. Ms. Sanchez acknowledged the need for more improvements, but pointed out the process was challenging. She noted when her company assumed management of the property; many vacant units had been vandalized, costing over a half-million dollars in repairs. She further noted they made attempts to work with non-paying residents whose rents were in arrears, but evicted those non-paying residents involved in crime in the area.

Mr. Archer pointed out the property owners bought this property as a tax credit, and were responsible for maintaining the facility, knowing they could face the problems as described; and they had the ability to contact the police or various agencies regarding vandalism. Mr. Archer noted the CRA received several complaints regarding garbage piled-up on this property since last November; and that the maintenance staff was entering units unannounced to make repairs, without speaking the English language.

Ms. Sanchez stated those reports were inaccurate and only on one occasion when the trucks broke down, had garbage stacked up. She advised that new, bilingual maintenance crews were hired, and the staffing issues had improved.

Mr. Archer questioned the status of the community center for the children's after-school activities and the broken mailboxes.

Ms. Sanchez noted the community center was already closed when her company assumed the management of the Villages of Naranja, but they were in the process of repairing it in order to

reinstate the after-school lunch program. She noted that process; however, was delayed some due to vandalism of the maintenance shop and theft of some equipment. Regarding the mailboxes, Ms. Sanchez noted mailboxes were constantly being repaired or replaced because tenants often took them when evicted. She advised that the mailboxes needed to be special ordered, and involved a long process with the post office to install them. She also advised that her company planned to have a mail kiosk constructed in a central location with installed security cameras, but a survey and permits were needed, and they were in the process of obtaining proposals. Ms. Sanchez further noted the laundry room's operating hours were extended, but it was vandalized as well, and staff had received threats for reporting incidents to the police. She acknowledged that many repairs were needed when her company took over this property, but they were trying to find solutions rather than make excuses.

Mr. Infante noted the CRA preferred to see a plan, and asked whether Ms. Sanchez had a plan that that she could submit a copy of to the CRA. He also noted the CRA required the police to cooperate with this area.

Ms. Sanchez noted her office had a plan and a no-tolerance policy. She pointed out that when her company was unsuccessful in finding security companies to work this area, they offered MDPD some office space as a central location for writing police reports, and they hired off-duty police officers, which was unreliable since officers worked only when available. Ms. Sanchez acknowledged that many of the Village of Naranja residents were hardworking, decent individuals, and that community issues had improved somewhat, and they wished to continue improving them.

In response to Mr. Infante's question regarding the children's after-school program, Ms. Sanchez noted the primary issue was not with the residents, but with outside individuals from neighboring communities that enter the Villages of Naranja premises, and mothers in fear for their children. She noted her company began running background checks on individuals entering the property, and in December 2007, the Villages of Naranja became 100% occupied.

Mr. Ramkissoon commended the new property management company for the improvements he had seen, and for taking on this task.

Ms. Sanchez noted her office was in contact with Mr. Jason Rodriguez regarding complaints. She noted emails she received regarding garbage issues or that her company refused to rent to low-income persons were disturbing and untrue. She further noted her company's strict policy concerning work orders, which required a 24-hour turnaround. She also noted they inspected all units to prepare a list of needed repairs, and were in the process of making repairs, but had to pay out \$70,000 in delinquent rents; \$200,000 in back taxes and another \$10,000 to repair the exterior light posts. Ms. Sanchez noted her purpose for coming before the CRA tonight was to acknowledge the existing issues and to advise that they planned to correct them.

Mr. Infante stated he was pleased to hear all of the fire alarms had been repaired, which was a real safety issue.

Mr. Hakssa noted that he had drove past the Villages of Naranja nearly twice a day and had seen the improvements; and that he appreciated the efforts of the new management company. Mr. Hakssa invited Ms. Sanchez and her staff to contact the CRA for any possible assistance.

Sergeant Hernandez suggested the new property management company invest funds for repairing the fence around the property to secure it from intruders entering the premises; and to rebuild the community center as a place for kids to participate in after-school activities. He also suggested funds be invested in armed security to enforce the common grounds.

Ms. Sanchez advised they recently hired a security company that planned to install a security booth at the entranceway of the property and require identification from people entering the property.

Sergeant Hernandez responded to questions by Mr. Archer regarding field interviews and whether installed cameras by the property management company were appropriate for identifying criminals. He noted he was aware that some cameras had been installed in the neighborhood.

Mr. Forbes expressed appreciation to Ms. Sanchez for appearing before the CRA tonight to provide a report.

Upon conclusion of the foregoing discussion, a motion was duly made, seconded and carried to extend tonight's meeting for an additional 15 minutes in order to conclude the agenda.

### **c. Update on Subcommittee Meeting for Executive Director Search**

Mr. Steven Zelkowitz, Legal Counsel for the CRA, provided an update on the outcome of the Executive Director Subcommittee meeting. He noted the committee met and developed the general parameters for the Executive Director position, and decided the title for this position would be "Economic Development Coordinator." He advised he would draft a Request for Quotations (RFQ), as soon as possible, for advertisement in local newspapers, the Florida Redevelopment Association (FRA), and possibly the Demand Star. He also noted this position would be advertised for the remainder of this fiscal year and could possibly be extended, provided adequate funds were approved in next year's budget. Mr. Zelkowitz advised he would circulate copies of the draft RFQ to CRA members via email for review and comment; and would have it disseminated through County staff once the necessary revisions were made.

Mr. Forbes questioned whether the Subcommittee had established a timeframe for advertising the RFQ.

Mr. Zelkowitz noted the Subcommittee discussed thirty (30) days. He advised that of those who responded to the last advertisement, Mr. Robert Frank accepted a position as Executive Director with the Pompano Beach CRA, and Mr. Rick Stouts accepted a position as Executive Director with the Florida City CRA. He noted the two remaining individuals were still interested in this position and would be forwarded the RFQ.

**d. Memorandum of Understanding – MDPD**

Mr. Steve Zelkowitz, Legal Counsel for the CRA, advised that a final Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Miami-Dade Police Department and the CRA was before the CRA tonight for approval to continue the community policing activities in the CRA District. He noted the CRA previously approved this agreement subject to negotiations between the County Attorney's Office and the MDPD's legal office regarding funding contingencies language. He noted all issues had been addressed, and the funding was included in the CRA's budget, which was approved by the County Commission. Mr. Zelkowitz recommended the CRA ratify and approve the final MOU document as presented tonight.

It was moved by Volkert that the final Memorandum of Understanding between the CRA and Miami-Dade Police Department, as presented tonight, be approved. This motion was seconded by Mr. Infante, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

**VII. Next Meeting Dates:**

**a. March 24, 2008, Regular Board Meeting**

Mr. Forbes announced the next NLCRA Regular Board Meeting would be held on March 24, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

**IX. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before this Board, the Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

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Chairperson Nina Betancourt  
Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency