



**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

November 17, 2008  
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)  
NOVEMBER 17, 2008**

The Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board convened in the South Dade Government Center, 10710 S.W. 211 Street, Room 203, Miami, Florida, at 6:00 p.m., on November 17, 2008; there being present upon roll call: Mr. Rene Infante, Mr. Stuart Archer, Mr. Kenneth Forbes, Mr. Moe Hakssa and Ms. Marleen Volkert, (Mr. Danny Lipe was late), (Chairperson Nina Betancourt and Mr. Parsuram Ramkissoon were absent); Staff members present were: Mr. Jorge Fernandez, Offices of Strategic Business Management (OSBM) Coordinator; Mr. Jason Rodriguez, CRA Analyst, OSBM; and Deputy Clerk Jill Thornton.

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

Mr. Forbes called the CRA Board meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., and upon roll call and a quorum being present, the Board proceeded to consider tonight's agenda.

**II. Approval of the Minutes**

It was moved by Mr. Archer that the minutes of the October 27, 2008, CRA meeting be approved. This motion was seconded by Ms. Volkert, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

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

**IV. Open Forum for Public Comments**

Mr. Forbes opened the floor for public input and the following person(s) appeared:

Mr. Leonard (Len) Anthony, 14820 Naranja Lakes Boulevard, Apt. PH, appeared and expressed appreciation to CRA members for discussing his e-mail expressing his concerns regarding the rezoning/remaining of the Leisure City Community Urban Center (LCCUC), which was forwarded to county staff last month. He noted he was unable to attend last month's CRA meeting, but hoped the County Commission would consider the letter drafted by the CRA's legal counsel asking the County to not rename the LCCUC. Mr. Anthony emphasized the NLCRA had been in existence for some time, but very little development had occurred in the area. He expressed concern with the CRA focusing primarily on the Mandarin Lakes development project, and not so much on other projects in the master plan, such as an amphitheatre promised to the residents of Naranja Lakes and adjacent communities. Mr. Anthony said he hoped the CRA would allow another opportunity to discuss the implementation of a community facility in

Naranja. He also expressed concern with the unresolved lighting issues in the CRA District. He noted as a resident of a Special Taxing District and having paid street lighting taxes since 1985, he felt the residents of this district deserved some kind of benefit for special taxes paid many years.

Mr. Forbes asked staff to provide Mr. Anthony with a copy of the letter drafted by Mr. Zelkowitz, Legal Counsel for the CRA, expressing the CRA's concerns regarding the County renaming the LCCUC. He advised that later in tonight's meeting, Mr. Scott Hedge, Naranja Lakes Construction, LLC Representative, would address the status of the community center, currently under construction in the CRA District.

Mr. Phillip Murray, 13248 SW 256<sup>th</sup> Terrace, Naranja, appeared before the CRA and commended Ms. Rachel Bach, CRA Economic Development Coordinator, for a thorough job done in drafting the NLCRA Action Plan. However, he noted most of the statistics described in this report, although alarming, were not new to the residents familiar with this area. Mr. Murray expressed concern with the 14.9% unemployment rate in the CRA District and with only 37.6% of the residents obtaining a high school diploma. He suggested, in addition to the GED courses offered at the South Dade Skills Center, that additional GED preparatory courses be offered twice a week at the underutilized community facility operated by the Community Action Agency (CAA) in the Naranja area. Mr. Murray stated unless true change occurred, this report would prove to be meaningless.

Mr. Forbes explained that people could not be forced to take advantage of the programs offered to them. He noted Miami-Dade County School Board once offered several educational/training programs to address unemployment in the area, but very few people took advantage of these programs.

Mr. Archer pointed out other issues included parents not ensuring their kids attend school, and parents needing to be educated as well.

Mr. Infante concurred that there was a need for change and that parents were ultimately responsible for the education of their children, but noted there was also a need for creating incentives to encourage children to attend school. He said he felt the action plan developed by Ms. Bach would afford the CRA the ability to resolve these issues. Mr. Infante pointed out another alarming statistic in Ms. Bach's report was the percentage of foreclosures in the CRA District, which was the highest rate in the County.

Mr. Forbes noted the issue was exasperated by non-citizens residing in the area, who desired to participate in the programs offered, but were restricted from doing so by the government or the lack of resources. He noted the CRA desired to see a change in these statistics, but the people needed to desire a change as well.

Mr. Archer stated the CRA was concerned with all of these issues, but the people needed incentives or a desire to take advantage of the programs being offered. He pointed out the new library and park, currently under construction in the Naranja area, would soon be opened.

Ms. Carrie Lynn Coleman, 27447 SW 143<sup>rd</sup> Court, appeared before the CRA and questioned who would be responsible for maintaining the new park once it opened. She expressed concern with the county park located on SW 272<sup>nd</sup> Street, near Mandarin Lakes, that was unclean and unsafe for children to use. She noted, even if the CRA built several parks in the community, the residents would not use them if the County did not ensure the parks were maintained and safe. She stated she often drove her children to safer parks located outside the CRA District, and as a result, spent money outside the CRA boundaries. Ms. Coleman noted residents' spending money outside the CRA District boundaries could have a negative economic impact on redevelopment.

Mr. Forbes noted the subject park was unsupervised, and the County had reduced its budget for funding parks. He suggested Ms. Coleman contact Commissioner Sorenson's office and request a meeting to discuss her concerns and request Commissioner Sorenson's help in this matter.

Mr. Infante concurred that the parks needed to be maintained and safe. He suggested the CRA consider, as part of its future working plan, a joint venture with the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure the parks within the CRA District were maintained, safe and pleasant. He noted the CRA should encourage leadership and cooperation among the residents within the CRA District.

Ms. Coleman advised that she had worked for the Federal Office of National Drug Control Policy and had experience in grant writing and consultant work helping other communities nationwide obtain grants. She noted the CRA community could easily compete for the Weed and Seed funds. She also noted many other non-profit organizations were looking to expand their reach, and could partner with the CRA to improve the education system in the CRA District.

Mr. Hakssa suggested, in the interim, Ms. Coleman meet with Sergeant Hernandez, Miami-Dade Police Department to discuss what the police department could do to help ensure the parks within the CRA District were maintained and safe.

## **V. Old Business**

### **Community Policing**

Sergeant Ozzie Hernandez, Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD), Cutler Ridge District, noted there were no additional statistics to report, aside from those noted in the NLCRA Initiative Monthly Progress Report, dated November 11, 2008, included in the agenda packet. He noted MDPD identified two homes in Waterside Community, in which residents suspected of dealing in stolen cars were arrested. He also noted the police were currently working on leads of criminal activity in the Sea Pines Community. Additionally, Sergeant Hernandez noted the MDPD Cutler Ridge District assisted with a community event held by Mandarin Lakes Homeowners Association last Saturday (11/15) in their new club center.

In response to Mr. Forbes' question regarding the status of security in the Village of Naranja Lakes and Hidden Grove communities, Sergeant Hernandez noted the new security company hired by those communities was very effective, and lately, the areas had been quiet. He

indicated that criminal activity was now occurring more frequently in the Sea Pines, Waterside and Modello communities.

## **Update on General Old Business**

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

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

### **Mandarin Lakes**

Not presented.

### **Infrastructure Construction**

Mr. Ignacio Serralta, CRA Construction Consultant, SRS Engineering, provided an overview of the document entitled “NLCRA Construction Progress Report-November 2008” listing the construction activities in the Naranja Lakes CRA to date, and highlighted the following:

- Canal Street Bridge – The construction work on Canal Street Bridge was progressing smoothly, as scheduled. Anzac Construction, Inc had completed most of the concrete construction of the bridge, including the concrete parapet walls and had begun constructing the approaching slabs at both ends of the bridge.
- SW 140<sup>th</sup> Ave Plaza (Civic Building) and Entrance Features – ELCI Construction, Inc had completed the framing of all interior walls in the Civic Building; installed all plumbing fixtures and air condition duct work, and had begun placing drainage in areas surrounding the site. The construction of this Building should be completed in the beginning of year 2009. One Entrance Feature on SW 272<sup>nd</sup> Street was currently under construction.
- Request for Payment No. 28 – A request for Payment No. 28 was submitted by the contractor in the amount of \$348,409.84, which was reviewed and found in compliance by SRS Engineering.

Mr. Forbes requested the CRA Board reconsider its action approving tonight’s agenda as presented, to add a report by Mr. Scott Hedge, Representative of Naranja Lakes Construction (NLC LLC).

Hearing no objection, the Board proceeded to consider the report presented by Mr. Hedge.

Mr. Scott Hedge, Vice-President, Architecture and Planning, DeGuardiola Properties, appeared before the CRA on behalf of NLC LLC, and responded to comments made by speakers during open forum for public comments, regarding community facilities proposed, but not developed. He noted the Civic Building, currently under construction at SW 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue, belonged to the

CRA and was part of the master plan which, hopefully, would be used to conduct monthly CRA meetings, as well as other public meetings. He noted this facility would probably not be completed until the first part of year 2009. He also noted the developers were working with the CRA to develop a plan to maintain this facility, which was a significant investment by the CRA and should be maintained.

Mr. Hedge noted a proposed amphitheatre was included in the second phase of the Redevelopment Agreement that should come under construction in year 2009, depending upon the economy and completion of the infrastructure work. Mr. Hedge expressed appreciation for the cooperation and assistance of County staff, Mr. Jorge Fernandez and Mr. Jason Rodriguez in moving projects forward. He noted Mr. Zelkowitz provided the developers with a draft of a modification to the Redevelopment Agreement that provided for the removal of certain timelines that would allow the developers to proceed with implementing phase II of the project. He noted this draft was currently being reviewed by the developers and included language providing for a surplus of generated TIF dollars to be used for other projects, if available. Mr. Hedge suggested the CRA members review this language as well.

In response to Mr. Archer's question regarding when the bridge at SW 280<sup>th</sup> Street would be constructed, Mr. Hedge noted this bridge was included in phase II of the project, but the modification to the Redevelopment Agreement needed to be finalized before moving forward with phase II and constructing this bridge. He noted, once the redevelopment agreement was amended, the CRA could revisit the timelines, but some issues concerning the plat needed to be resolved and bonding requirements needed to be satisfied before the plat could be approved. Mr. Hedge further noted the developer was currently negotiating with the contractors, who constructed the bridge in phase I of the project, to also construct the bridge in phase II, but needed to coordinate with the contractor on when to begin this project upon completing phase I.

In response to Mr. Archer's questions regarding the lighting issues on roadways in Mandarin Lakes and on the east side of the canal, Mr. Hedge noted Mandarin Lakes was part of a special taxing district that provided funding for lighting on all main roadways (SW 280<sup>th</sup> St, 272<sup>nd</sup> St, 140<sup>th</sup> Ave, 145<sup>th</sup> Ave, and Naranja Lakes Blvd) in phase I of the Redevelopment Agreement. He noted the lights on the east side of the canal should be operating, and agreed to contact FPL to ensure they were.

## **VI. New Business**

### **Update on Naranja Lakes CRA Budget**

Mr. Jorge Fernandez, OSBM Coordinator, advised that the FY 2008-09 NLCRA Budget was approved by the Economic Development and Human Services (EDHS) Committee on November 12, 2008, and was forwarded to the December 2, 2008 Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting for approval.

### **Progress Report regarding Economic Development**

Ms. Rachel Bach, Economic Development Coordinator for the NLCRA, introduced Ms. Chris Morley, her business partner who assisted her in collecting data on the CRA District. Ms. Bach noted the data collection phase was completed and she drafted an action plan containing much information and updated statistics on the current economic, housing, foreclosure and unemployment conditions in the CRA District. She also included information regarding the gap between education and services provided to this area. Ms. Bach further noted the focus of redevelopment areas had been on building affordable housing, but these statistics showed a substantial amount of affordable housing and rentals within the CRA District. She noted the rental statistics were typical for distressed redevelopment areas caused by a lack of homeowner investments.

Ms. Bach noted that after reviewing much data, her findings revealed a set of goals the CRA should consider. She noted when the NLCRA was created, the primary focus was on the primary redevelopment project, Mandarin Lakes, but the surrounding areas, unfortunately, were not addressed well by the CRA and needed to be stabilized. She noted some efforts were made to address crime in these areas, but the areas continued to decline and might be difficult to revitalize, based on the current economic downturn. In terms of redevelopment, Ms. Bach stated she wanted to explore the areas surrounding the CRA District to determine the needs and how to bring them back up to a base line, from which the CRA could build on.

Ms. Bach noted the existing Charrette and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) plans for the CRA area provided some very good recommendations for improvements, and she recommended the CRA Board continue to focus on these improvements. She stated she desired to further evaluate the infrastructure of existing neighborhoods surrounding Mandarin Lakes, and the major arterial roadways within the CRA District to see whether those areas had the capacity to handle the future redevelopment planned for the CRA. Additionally, she noted her desire to study the feasibility of improving the aesthetics and making the areas more pedestrian friendly, in keeping with the Charrette plans. Ms. Bach strongly recommended the CRA and county staff stay abreast of capital projects implemented by State and County agencies and other organizations, to ensure the CRA's goals were met as well.

In terms of economic development, Ms. Bach recommended the short-term focus be on retaining and stabilizing existing businesses within the CRA District. She added that providing more household goods and services to meet the residents' needs and ensure consumer spending was kept within the CRA District should also be considered. In the long-term, Ms. Bach recommended the CRA evaluate the vacant properties and substandard/deteriorated buildings in the CRA District that were obsolete for modern use when considering and encouraging commercial revitalization in the area. Ms. Bach recommended the CRA should currently focus on maintaining and stabilizing existing businesses by helping them grow and assist them in tapping existing resources and small business programs available through Miami-Dade County.

Ms. Bach noted contained in the action plan were some general recommendations and she wanted to move forward with completing meetings with CRA members and conducting a public workshop to get input on these recommendations. She stated that public awareness and assistance were keys to pairing businesses with available resources. She also noted she wanted to inventory existing programs and explore which programs could be developed using the funds

allocated in the CRA budget for economic development. She also noted there were some administrative restrictions on using these funds for facade improvements because they were federal dollars, and might be better suited for assisting local businesses. Additionally, she noted she wanted to collect Business Tax Data (business tax receipts, occupational licenses) on businesses within the CRA District to determine the types of businesses existing there and what the CRA should be targeting.

Regarding Housing, Ms. Bach noted the CRA's focus should be on encouraging home ownership and investing into the community. She pointed out that Miami-Dade County would be receiving \$62 million in funds from the Neighborhood Stabilization Funding through CDBG to be used specifically for foreclosures. She noted these funds could not be used to prevent foreclosures, but could be used for land banking, land acquisition and rehabilitation and resale of properties. She noted since over 200 foreclosures existed in the CRA District and 18% of its properties were vacant or abandoned, it would be a good opportunity for the CRA to identify areas for future redevelopment where the CRA might be able to acquire some land using these CDBG funds. She also noted a plan for use of these funds should be developed quickly, since the funds would become available in January or February of 2009.

Ms. Volkert questioned whether the CRA would need to apply for these funds or would the CRA be granted funds automatically. She also questioned the process for accessing those funds, and who would prepare the application.

Ms. Bach noted if the CRA authorized her to do so, she could prepare the application. In terms of priority, she recommended the CRA move quickly with creating a plan for use of these dollars. She noted the County had not advertised the specific application requirements, but would be submitting their request for these funds to the federal government very soon, and once approved, the funds would need to be allocated within the next year (2009).

Following comments by Mr. Forbes regarding the need to process this application soon, it was moved by Ms. Volkert that the CRA authorize Ms. Bach to develop a plan for use of the Neighborhood Stabilization CDBG funds and to prepare the application to seek these dollars. This motion was seconded by Mr. Archer for discussion.

Responding to Mr. Infante's question whether the application would be expanded to seek CDBG funds for projects other than foreclosures, Mr. Scott Hedge noted the CRA would be an entity buying foreclosures and bringing them back into the market, to avoid depressing the other areas and the CRA would become an owner of the foreclosed properties. He noted the \$62 million CDBG funds designated for foreclosures could not be used for projects other than to purchase foreclosed properties.

Ms. Bach added that the funds could be used to acquire properties and land bank up to ten years for purposes of redevelopment. She noted the objective should be to develop a plan or program to utilize these funds to meet the CRA's goals, and not to be land owners.

Ms. Volkert pointed out that entities existed that could take over the responsibility of redeveloping these properties.

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

Ms. Bach noted her recommendations included a recommendation to work with other entities to bring a recreational center to the Royal Colonial Park. She recommended the CRA focus on this project since the \$1.4 million General Obligation Bond (GOB) funds allocated for this project was not substantial. She noted the Rebozo Foundation had some seed funds to build their Boys and Girls Club facility, and would be working with the County on obtaining a Florida Recreation Development grant, for which the CRA might be able to assist with. She recommended the CRA stay involved with projects like these, even if on the periphery and not from a funding perspective, because of the importance of coordinating with other entities to ensure the CRA goals were met.

Mr. Forbes asked Ms. Bach to explore and provide more information on the Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Program to help enlarge the existing businesses in the community, as well as the Assets for Independence Demonstration (AFID) Program to help existing neighborhoods blend in with the new areas being developed. He pointed out that the deadline for the CDFI had already passed, but the deadline for the AFID was January 15, 2009, and he suggested Ms. Bach look into this. Mr. Forbes noted, at one time, the process for submitting and reviewing applications was done on a quarterly basis.

Ms. Bach noted the bigger picture behind the NLCRA Action Plan was the need to amend the Redevelopment Agreement to enable the CRA to move forward with some of these projects that were not included in the current plan. She noted it would be very easy for the CRA to use the action plan recommendations as a base line for amending the Redevelopment Agreement.

Discussion ensued regarding a suggestion by Mr. Infante that the CRA create a subcommittee to work with Ms. Bach to amend the Redevelopment Agreement.

Following discussion, it was moved by Mr. Infante that the CRA establish a subcommittee to assist Ms. Bach in developing a plan for the use of the Neighborhood Stabilization Funds through CDBG, and to assist Ms. Bach in amending the CRA's Redevelopment Agreement to incorporate her recommendations provided in the action plan. This motion was seconded by Mr. Archer, and upon being put to a vote, passed unanimously by those members present.

Mr. Infante, Mr. Archer and Mr. Lipe were selected as members of this subcommittee.

Ms. Bach noted she would work on finalizing her action plan with recommendations contained therein that could become a baseline for an amendment to the CRA's Redevelopment Agreement. She also noted she would complete her meetings with CRA members, District Commissioners and County staff; and would coordinate with County staff to schedule a public workshop for public input on these recommendations before submitting a final document for approval.

Mr. Archer suggested a public workshop be conducted at the grand opening of the new community center.

Ms. Bach stated she preferred to hold the public workshop as soon as possible to get public input on the action plan recommendations before submitting the final document for approval. She noted she felt the CRA conducting an open house to unveil its future plans/priorities at the grand opening of the Community Center would be a better idea.

**VII. Next Meeting Dates:**

**December 15, 2008, Regular Board Meeting**  
**January 26, 2009 Regular Board Meeting**

It was moved by Mr. Forbes that the CRA create a three-member Ad Hoc Committee that would be available to meet in a non-action meeting to address any community issues that might arise during the month of December, in lieu of holding the December 15, 2008 CRA Regular Board Meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Archer for discussion.

Mr. Infante noted the urgency of the CRA needing to work with Ms. Bach to develop a plan for the use of the CDBG funds. He noted he preferred to conduct a Regular CRA Meeting in December to discuss and approve this plan, and would not be supportive of a non-action meeting in the month of December.

Ms. Volkert concurred with Mr. Infantes' comments.

Mr. Forbes withdrew his motion, and announced that the next NLCRA Regular Board Meeting would be held on December 15, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

**VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before this Board, the Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

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Kenneth Forbes, Acting Chairperson  
Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency