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*OF*

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*(April 24, 2019)*

**The Opa-locka Community Redevelopment Agency**

**CRA BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**April 24, 2019**

**5:30 P.M.**

**Sherbondy Village**

**215 Perviz Avenue**

**Opa-locka, Florida 33054**

**• CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairperson Jannie Russell called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 24, 2019 in the Auditorium at Sherbondy Village located at 215 Perviz Avenue, Opa-locka, Florida.

**• ROLL CALL:**

The following members of the Opa-locka Community Redevelopment Agency were present: Chairwoman Jannie Russell, Board Member Matthew Pigatt, Board Member Chris Davis, Board Member Sherelean Bass, Board Member Joseph L. Kelley Board Member Alvin Burke and Board Member Rose Tydus. Also present were Board Attorney Vincent Brown, CRA Manager, Gregory Gay and Board Clerk Kinshannita Hall.

Board Member Kelley move to approve the minutes from January 30, 2019 CRA meeting and Board Member Chris Davis second. The minutes were approved.

**• INVOCATION:**

The invocation was delivered by Board Member Rose Tydus.

**• PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

- **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Within your package you should have a memo going over the Director's report. The first item is the annual report. You are provided with a draft copy of the annual report. This is the report that is required to be submitted to Miami Dade County Office of Management and Budget on an annual year to provide information as to our status to the CRA. The report is somewhat consistent with the same as of last year with modifications as it relates to the terms and time of office as it relates to the city manager and executive director. We also highlighted some other things and we updated the information that relates to the proposed budget for the CRA. Other than that there aren't any other items that needs to be expound upon. Within the report it talks about the TIFF trust fund with its allocations, the CRA Board, Façade Improvement, and the Developer's Forum that will take place this upcoming June. One thing I would also like to highlight is the state legislation. The Florida congress is in session right now and there is an item that have been submitted on an annual bases as it relates to the sun setting of all CRAs. There is a house bill and senate bill that is going through different committees. I pulled up the latest committee report right before I left the office. Both senate bill and house bill are going through the appropriation committees at this time. They pass through the Community Affairs subcommittee, and referred to the Transportation Tourism in Economic Development Committee. They have already passed through both of these committees. At some point in time if they continue the path they are taking they will come down to the congressional floor where the items will be merged as one particular bill. At that time we will get a better determination. Some of the highlights of this bill talks about ethnic training which is what we already do for the agency. It gives reference to establishing a trust fund which we were able to do. It speaks to the requirement through the department of Economic opportunity. The DEO is in a position to shut down or make a request for a particular CRA to be considered inactive that is part of this legislation. As a part of this legislation it has always had its sun set clause. This year sun set clause states that all CRAs will sunset as of "2039" that is the proposed date. As it stands now our CRA was given a 20 year life span. Our CRA is scheduled to sun set in "2032". Most CRAs have a 30 year life span that have extended. We don't know how this legislation is going to pan out. We are closely monitoring this legislation. We have been emailing you all the highlights from the Florida Redevelopment Association. As we receive updates of information we forward it to you all. One of the things we are beginning to look at is take the CRA in other portions of the City. We have a CRA boundary along 22 avenue and only one side is only considered in the CRA. You also have another condition where South of State road nine along 27 avenue none of that area is in the CRA but the area north is in the CRA. In order to do that we would have to do an update of finding of necessity. We will also be looking at extending the time line of the CRA beyond "2032". If you have questions I will address them.

**Chairwoman Russell:** Do we have any concerns from board members?

**Board Member Pigatt:** I'm trying to understand the budget for the CRA. I see in the report it states that the CRA has yet to generate a TIFF amount large enough to sustain itself, are you saying that we don't have the funding to do what exactly?

**Mr. Gay:** Many of the CRA's that operate are staffed by a supporting agency. We are not generating a tiff high enough to sustain a level of staff to operate for it to stand by itself.

**Board Member Pigatt:** What happens when funding is not generating?

**Mr. Gay:** The municipality takes on the responsibility. The first three years there wasn't any TIFF being generated for the City of Opa-locka. We got our first TIFF in 2015 and it was \$27,000.

**Board Member Pigatt:** Does the CRA pays back the city during that time?

**Mr. Gay:** It depends on the relationship. Most municipalities takes that cost under there general funding.

**Board Member Pigatt:** I'm looking at the report and it's saying that the CRA is in debt almost a half a million dollars.

**Mr. Gay:** That is a number that is still being analyzed. When the CRA was first created dollars were devoted towards the Masterplan for the CRA and towards an executive director at that time. Those dollars were derived through the water and sewer funds. There was an upfront cost to establish the CRA. Once we go through the audit to determine that exact number those funds will be refunded back to the City. The CRA was not receiving TIFF dollars from the City but it will be figured out once the audit is complete.

**Board Member Pigatt:** This is a major concern to me. I see that a positive TIFF wasn't proposed until year four. Moving forward we don't spend money that we don't have. If we don't have the money why are we moving in that direction?

**Attorney Brown:** On a legal note, any money that the City has given the CRA in order to create a development must be paid back to the CRA. The CRA functions as a quasi-independent board of the city. There is no way a CRA can develop if it has to wait 5-10 years. If the CRA is not doing nothing there is a possibility that the County can revoke the CRA charter.

**Board Member Pigatt:** Are you saying the County wants us to spend money that we don't have to show that we are doing something?

**Attorney Brown:** The County understands the function of the CRA. Because of Opa locka significant issues with its finances. The City Commission ask to be given a CRA they had to

have a plan and submit a plan to the County as how they were going to fund and operate the CRA. The County adopted and accepted that plan for how the CRA would operate and this is what you agreed too.

**Board Member Pigatt:** I would like to request that original charter. I want to make sure we have our finances together and what were the activities that lead up to this. Moving forward I want to be briefed on this information before this meeting.

**Chairwoman Russell:** I want to say to this board the City was very aggressive in the beginning of the CRA. They had a plan in place with goals. When I was appointed to the board I received the comprehensive plan and all of the documents. I was able to go back and read and understand why the CRA was important. Somewhere along the lines we got off course. I think what is happening with the audits is that they are trying to get a direct amount as to what the CRA owes to the City. The City is also supposed to contribute. The CRA is vital to the City. We are supposed to be doing something to make our City better. I've talked to three directors within Miami-Dade County. Some of their projects that they have done and how there cities funded there CRA until they were able to be self-sustain. I think we were overly aggressive with the CRA. If you look at the budget you'll see a line item where the City is supposed to be reimbursed. I asked the director to put together a five year plan for us to show that we are paying the City back. Let's not lose track that the City is also supposed to be contributing to the CRA. It is a possibility that the balance is \$0 not \$500,000 dollars. We are waiting on the audits. I've been asking since I've been "Chair" can we get some numbers as where we should be. The CRA was supposed to have their own bank account which what was not happening. I think getting board member Pigatt and all board members the document. They can go through it and see the goals of the CRA. It is vital to our community. I wanted to ask board member Kelley and board member Tydus do they have anything they want to say to help the new members understand.

**Board Member Tydus:** We were very excited about the establishment of the CRA. I think that there were somethings as far as funding was concerned that the CRA board had no knowledge of. I would like to know how much of the City funds were given to the CRA board were water and sewer and what were general funds? I don't recall what came from the water and sewer whatever it was that should have never taken place. I don't recall a lot of actions that came before the CRA or the Commission. As Commission I do remember we approved the City funding for the CRA but I don't recall the water and sewer.

**Board Member Kelley:** I think I want to pin my hat where the Attorney is. This is a good discussion. We need to do something with what we have. It took a quite bit to convince the County Commission to grant the City of Opa-locka CRA because of our financial history. The Commission/CRA with five members took the CRA the direction that I wasn't thrilled with. We didn't have the finance and we weren't self-sufficient. Many of our areas we targeted were

going to take major dollars for the infrastructure to improve to even get TIFF dollars. I just want to stress this to this board, we need to do something. Before we talk about extending CRA, before we start changing the boundaries, I have no problem with that. If you go back down to the County and can't show them a program or initiative that we've done. It's going to be the City of Opa-locka CRA what have you done since 2013-2014. We don't have a lot of TIFF dollars but you have to do something to show that we are trying viable CRA. Everything we do will go to the county. We haven't done anything in terms of initiative. As the "Chair" said we've had plans whether you liked it or not. You do have dollars available and I strongly suggest that this board that we start to do something. We have to make some progress. All of the questions that have been raised by fellow members I have no problem with that and I know staff can provide us with that but at the end of the day we have to do something is where I want to hang my hat at. We've been at this a long time and part of this because of no funding. We need to do something and we are in "2019". We are where we are and hopefully we are able to establish the CRA with a Director and staff. It's going to take some time.

**Chairwoman Russell:** In our last meeting I stated, we do need to do something and I've been on the CRA board for several years. Since I've been here we always say what are we doing or do we have money. Now that we do have something we have a director that has puts some things before us. We do have something to work with. In my opinion we should use the plan that we have because it was expensive.

**Board Member Davis:** Where are we exactly with the façade program or any project? I see on the agenda we have historic city hall restoration, is that up for consideration?

**Mr. Gay:** We have been meeting with different agencies over the past two months on the idea of doing façade improvement. As many of you should understand in order for a project to be funded it has to be within the CRA boundaries. We had the opportunity to talk to several different groups with assisting us to lead us through a façade improvement program. We wanted to purely look at what we could improve the physical structures of our commercial businesses within the CRA areas. The CRA only occupies only 18 percent of the entire City. As far as commercial is concerned the areas of concentrations are on 22<sup>nd</sup> avenue, 27<sup>th</sup> avenue, Opa-locka boulevard, and Alibaba avenue Those are the main commercial corridors of our city and portions of those corridors are within the CRA. We have done analysis looking at businesses located within those corridors and we came up with a number around 160. There is particular criteria we want to develop and that is in your package. This is information we have received from one of the entities who is looking to provide improvements throughout South Florida. The company called Community Redevelop Associates of Florida provided us with a package. They have been involved with West Park, Miramar (Older Section) and Hollywood assisting businesses with façade improvement. There is a certain criteria these businesses need to fit into in order to qualify. We already have \$100,000 that we felt would be enough to get this project going.

We are looking at the coming summer months of June and July to move this project forward. We have met with this particular group and board member Kelley had several questions. It really boiled down to make sure they will be able to provide us as it relates to façade improvement within the City of Opa-locka. I will defer to board member Kelley for some input.

**Board Member Kelley:** The Company could hit the ground running in a sense of having experience in façade improvement. I wanted to make sure everyone saw the criteria that the department director laid out. I think it is a great opportunity. They are able to understand smaller government who don't have large resources. I really want us to have something in place for this initiate. This is a great opportunity to move forward.

**Board Member Davis:** How are we administering the funds? Are they going to be grants or loans or both?

**Mr. Gay:** We haven't made that decision. In most cases, the façade improvement dollars are property owner or tenant and CRA working together. The participant would have to bring some dollars to the table as well. I have seen it where it was a loan obligation. I've seen it function in multiple cases. We will work with all board members to make sure that the criteria meets your satisfaction.

**Board Member Davis:** I think it is a good idea but a bit premature given the fact that we are limited within our CRA boundaries. Based on the sign code regulations and changes those businesses within those areas are required to come into compliance and subject to expensive adjustments. My concern would be how would we choose the businesses given then that majority that would need to come in compliance are not located within the CRA therefore not able to take advantage of the CRA façade improvement program.

**Mr. Gay:** As I've expressed and you have been a part of those meetings. The businesses that are located within the CRA are able to take advantage of this funding to address the signage concern. I really don't want to put that a part of this. I'm hoping we can look at this as an initial process. This could be a pilot project get it going test it out.

**Board Member Burke:** What do we need to do to move things other than just having meetings? We have done studies it's time for us to do something.

**Chairwoman Russell:** I agree with you board member Burke. That's why we are where we are today with this façade program and taking \$100,000 dollars out to put towards a project I think is much needed and past time for it to happen. It is something manageable. This is a small project and we want to be successful in it.

**Mr. Gay:** We've met with different entities but this particular entity that we have provided you information with we felt they were more fit with going forward with our project. At our next meeting we would like to present to you a resolution in order to move forward with this particular company and bringing them on board to do our façade program if that is the wish of the CRA board.

**Board Member Pigatt:** How much money do we have in the account right now?

**Mr. Gay:** As it stands right now is approximately \$216,000 dollars.

**Chairwoman Russell:** Is someone here from the finance department?

**Mr. Gay:** We do have someone here from the finance department.

**Giovanni Stephenson:** Good evening, my name is Giovanni Stephenson.

**Chairwoman Russell:** Could you please tell us what is the dollar amount in the account.

**Giovanni Stephenson:** Currently there is approximately \$200,000 in the account like Mr. Gay noted but that is because at the beginning of the year we get our property taxes around January and a pro-rated was transferred to the CRA. We do need to speak with the county of course to make sure if any money they have may have transferred to the account.

**Board Member Pigatt:** How much is going to be allocated for the rest of the year towards staff and professional services?

**Giovanni Stephenson:** I apologize I don't have that actual number in front of me. We appropriated 10 percent of the salary for Community Development to the CRA. The budget that the CRA board pass is the budget for the CRA. The City has to adopt it into their budget on an annual basis.

**Board Member Pigatt:** How much money is allocated to pay back the half million dollar we owe the city?

**Giovanni Stephenson:** I apologize again I do not have that information in front of me. I would have to look at the CRA budget.

**Board Member Pigatt:** I ask these questions because I'm in full support of the façade improvement program but we don't even know where the money is right now. We have to get our finances right first. I'm not in support of moving forward and I'm very concerned until we know how much we have in the budget and what is the payment plan to remove ourselves out of debt with the city. Once those things are in place then we can identify what we can do with the funds.

**Chairwoman Russell:** We have more city commission members than we have others. The CRA does not have their own finance department. We rely on the finance department of the city. Since I've been "Chair" I've asked over and over again to give us a dollar amount. I've met with Mr. Gay several times and stated let's put a plan in place. We can't put a plan in place until the audits are done. That is not the fault of the CRA board. When the city gets their finances in order then we will know more for the CRA board. I understand the finances are not completed but let's not hold ourselves hostage. Maybe you all know more than me and board member Tydus since we are not a part of the city commission. I think we should move forward with the façade program. I think that the city needs to complete the audits that need to be done. Let's not forget that the city is also supposed to be contributing to the CRA which is an effort for everybody. I want to get my point across. I don't know the city finances except for the documents you give me. This board needs more time to handle the business of the board so that we are not always rushed.

**Board Member Kelley:** Bring back the resolution and layout what you are proposing. We need to move forward.

**Board Member Bass:** I read the minutes from the last meeting from January 30<sup>th</sup> and it stated that the CRA had \$395,000 dollars is that correct? I haven't heard that number but I've heard other numbers.

**Mr. Gay:** The number that was provided for you was the projected number that we were to receive based on the allocations from Miami-Dade County through their tax financing portion that is given to the city. As Mr. Stephenson said we've received these allocations over a period of time. I would need to check with Mr. Stephenson to determine the actual amount.

**Board Member Bass:** In other words the minutes are not correct when it comes to the dollar amount?

**Mr. Gay:** The minutes are correct based on projected amount.

**Board Member Bass:** Reading this is saying that we have it not the projected amount if it had stated it was a projected amount then I got that but since it didn't that's an issue.

**Chairwoman Russell:** Today was a healthy meeting. Please have the company here next meeting so they can speak for themselves.

**Mr. Gay:** They are here and they have heard many of your concerns.

**Chairwoman Russell:** Can we know who they are. Please come and introduce yourself. You don't have to talk today because we have a lot for you.

**Andrew Azebeokhai:** Good evening members my name is Andrew Azebeokhai. I'm the Executive Vice President of Community Redevelopment Associates of Florida.

**Chairwoman Russell:** We will be having another meeting soon. Thank you so much for coming today.

**Board Member Burke:** Is there any way we can have someone from finance to come back and do research so we will know the exact amount we have in the CRA account.

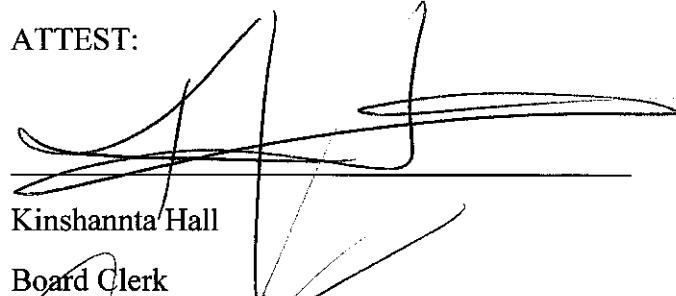
**Chairwoman Russell:** Yes and that is a concern we have had.

**Mr. Gay:** There are more items on the agenda but we can defer those items until the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved by board member Kelley and second by board member Davis to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 P.M.

ATTEST:

  
Kinshannta Hall

Board Clerk

  
Jannie Russell

Chairperson