

**WESTGATE/BELVEDERE HOMES COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
1280 N. CONGRESS AVE., SUITE 215, WEST PALM BEACH, FL. 33409
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING**

August 14, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER (IN PERSON MEETING BROADCASTED ON ZOOM PLATFORM)

Mr. Daniels, the Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:04p.m. The roll was called by Ms. Bui.

Present: Ronald L. Daniels
Joanne Ruffy
Ralph Lewis
Ruth Haggerty

Absent: Enol Gilles
Joseph Kirby

Staff Present: Elizée Michel, Executive Director
Denise Pennell, Senior Planner
Carmen Geraine, Bookkeeper
Mai Bui, Redevelopment Specialist/Administrative Assistant
Thomas J. Baird, Esq., General Counsel

Absent:

Others Present: Deputy Gomez, Deputy Robinson, Dorritt Miller,
Chuck Lesnick, and Len Schwartz (All Virtually Via Zoom).
Francisco Rojo, Justin Gilbert, and Aaron Taylor attended in person

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

1. Additions, Deletions, Substitutions to Agenda

- The following items were added to the agenda:
- Item #3: 6 Month Option Agreement Extension with the Danza Group
- Item #4: Calendar Modification for the October Meeting

2. Adoption of Agenda

- It was moved by Ms. Ruffy and seconded by Ms. Haggerty to adopt the agenda as amended. Motion carried (4-0)

III. ADOPTION OF W/BH CRA MINUTES

- **It was moved by Ms. Haggerty and seconded by Ms. Ruffy to adopt the July 10, 2023 minutes. Motion carried (4-0)**

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

- PBSO Deputy Gomez and Deputy Robinson gave a brief report to the Board about police activities in the Westgate CRA area for the previous month. Deputy Robinson and Board member Mr. Lewis reported that there was a loud popup block party on Chickamauga by the Dennis Koehler Preserve at one of the properties the CRA owned. The Sheriff had talked to the tenants to stop such activities. Deputy Robinson stated that they are monitoring the area and have not seen any more incidents at that location recently.

V. DISCLOSURES

- No Disclosures

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

- No Consent Agenda

VII. REGULAR AGENDA

1. Adoption of Resolution to Approve the FY 2023-2024 Budget

Mr. Michel presented the item to the Board.

A revised copy of the Capital Improvement Budget Page was provided to the Board at the request of Ms. Haggerty to change the loan amount requested last year from 11 million to 10.6 million. This revision ensures that the revenues and the expenditures are balanced on that budget page. The Board approved by a separate resolution the 11 million loan, but last year's budget only had 10.6 million.

The Budget includes four parts, the Redevelopment Trust Fund, the Capital Improvement Project, the Transportation Enhancement grants and the Debt Service Fund. The Redevelopment Trust Fund presents in a line-by-line format all the items funded by the tax increment revenues and rental income.

Ms. Haggerty pointed out that the TIF amount included on the Redevelopment Trust Fund page is \$1,000 less than the amount in the staff report.

Mr. Michel responded that the Redevelopment Trust Fund page amount is the correct amount.

The total amount projected for the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Trust fund is \$3,994,556.

This part details the administrative and the programmatic expenses. The preliminary tax roll value shows that the TIF might increase by 14.7% this year (an increase of \$513,937 to last year's TIF); The final tax is computed at the end of the year. The projected amount will change if the Board of County Commissioners further reduced the millage rate at their August 22 meeting. The County Board of County Commissioners voted last month to reduce the millage rate for the general fund from 4.75 to 4.5.

The Capital Improvement Project portion provides funding from the trust fund and grants to complete infrastructure improvement projects and acquire properties for redevelopment. Grants and loans are included in this portion of the Budget. The Total amount projected for Capital Improvement is \$1,830,000.

The Transportation Enhancement part shows the grants received from the Transportation Planning Agency and the Department of Transportation. These grants are being managed by the Palm Beach County Engineering Department on behalf of the Westgate CRA. This funding is provided on a reimbursement basis. Two projects were completed last year. There are three more left to be completed. A construction contractor has been selected for two of them.

The Debt Service Fund shows how funds will be used to pay off debt.

Staff are asking the Board to approve the budget and adopt a resolution to recommend the budget to Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners for final approval.

It was moved by Ms. Ruffy and seconded by Ms. Haggerty to authorize staff to adopt a resolution to recommend the budget to Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners for approval. The motion passed (3-1) with Mr. Lewis dissenting.

2. Consideration of Unsolicited Proposal for Cherokee Avenue, Chickamauga Drive and Westgate Avenue Site

Mr. Michel, Francisco Rojo and Justin Gilbert with Landmark Development Corporation presented the item.

At the June 12 Board Meeting, Landmark Development Corporation through their Vice President, Francisco Rojo discussed with the CRA board its interest in redeveloping a property owned by the CRA located at the corner of Cherokee Avenue, Loxahatchee

Drive and Westgate Avenue. The Corporation intends to combine the CRA owned land with another parcel to build a mixed-use development.

The proposed development would include (i) commercial/retail uses, together with (ii) a residential component. The size of the commercial/retail space would depend in part on any financial commitments obtained for the lease of a portion of the space.

The developer proposes to fund the development with Low Income Tax Credits program equity which requires that most of the units be set aside for low-income elderly persons. It is also proposed to include some units for people who make up to 120% of the median income in response to the staff request for a mixed-income development.

Development that has more than 40% of the total units qualified at or below the Workforce Housing Program Low-Income Category that is at or below 80% of Median Family Income are not permitted by right. Such projects need special consideration by the CRA Board for approval.

It is estimated that the buildings would be 6 stories in height and will follow guidelines included in the CRA's Zoning Overlay.

The developer is seeking assurance, if they were able to assemble the land, the Board will consider issuing an RFQ to make the CRA owned land available for redevelopment.

Though there is already a concentration of affordable housing in the CRA, elderly housing is still needed in the area.

Staff is asking the Board to authorize staff to authorizes the issuance of an RFQ to make land CRA owned at the corner of Cherokee Avenue Loxahatchee Drive and Westgate Ave available for redevelopment.

Francisco Rojo added that a majority of the units will be set aside for low-income elderly families or individuals. He pointed out that the CRA Zoning Overlay limits to 40% the number of low-income units. The development he is proposing will not be able to meet the 40% requirement and the 10% set aside for moderate-income residents without some type of waiver from the Board. He also referred to the letter sent to the Board that outlined how the development would include some mix of uses and some mix of income. He asked the Board to consider the existing income limits including in the code to accommodate certain developments that provide more low income units.

Mr. Lewis stated that the site in his opinion is not good for elderly individuals because of safety concerns. There are gunshots, crime and shooting at night.

Francisco mentioned that the other development they built on Westgate Avenue (Westgate Plaza) has done well as far as crime is concerned.

Mr. Lewis added that there are crimes around that area. He said that he would like to see what the police reports look like for the development.

Ms. Ruffy shared that new developments may help decrease crimes in the area as vacant lands are not going to improve the CRA.

Mr. Lewis suggested that the CRA focuses on addressing the safety issues before building new developments.

Mr. Daniels asked to come back to the request to issue the RFQ and deal with the other issues later.

It was moved by Ms. Ruffy and seconded by Ms. Haggerty to authorize staff to issue the RFQ for the Cherokee Avenue Loxahatchee Drive and Westgate Avenue site. Motion passed (3-1) with Mr. Lewis dissenting.

Additional Public Comment was made by Mr. Anthony Sheffer regarding developments in the CRA. He told the board that he is partnering with a buyer who wants to develop a site on Congress Avenue for a mixed-use development. He offers to come back to give more details about the proposed development.

3. Approval of a Six-Month Extension of the Danza Group Option Agreement

Ms. Pennell introduced the item. She informed the Board that Aaron Taylor has been working with Zoning to obtain the DRO approval, but an issue came up recently where Zoning informed us that a waiver could not be used to address the lack of parking requirements. A waiver would have been administrative, but unfortunately, Zoning said that the way to address the parking requirements is to apply for a Type II Variance which needs to go through a public hearing process that can take a longer period. She added that she has been working with Zoning to see if the project could be approved without a variance but didn't obtain a solution.

Aaron Taylor, from Arc Development Global, representing the Danza Group, explained to the Board that Zoning decision to let them know that they think the project was double dipping by using a parking reduction from the Westgate Code and also a 15% parking waiver in the parking section of the County Code. The path Zoning suggested is the Type II Variance which is going to take longer.

The Danza Group is asking the Board to give them a six-month extension of the Option Agreement to allow them to apply for the Variance.

Chuck Lesnick from the Danza Group added that the Group hopes to resolve this issue in the next three months, but a six-month extension will give them a cushion to complete the Type II Variance request. He also said that they are moving forward with the other activities to keep the project moving.

It was moved by Ms. Haggerty and seconded by Ms. Rufty to approve the six-month extension of the Option Agreement with the Danza Group. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

4. Calendar Modification for October Meeting

Mr. Michel presented the item. The October meeting was scheduled for October 2nd, since October 9th is a holiday. Staff is asking to change it to October 16th because a Board Member will be out of town the 2nd. It is best to have the meeting when more members can attend to make it easier to have a quorum.

It was moved by Ms. Rufty and seconded by Mr. Lewis to move the October Meeting to October 16th. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

Ms. Pennell gave the Board an update on the progress of the project listed in the staff report.

Green Industrial on Florida Mango has broken ground.
Construction at the Hangar site is moving slowly.
Cherry Road Plaza project is in permitting.
Autumn Ridge and Greene Apartment are under construction.
Fern House has just started construction.

Ms. Pennell also introduced the new CRA website to the Board and asked them to check it out and give feedback.

Mr. Michel informed the Board that a contractor has been selected for Westgate Avenue. There is a funding shortage because the loan is not enough to cover all the projects because this year's bid price is a lot more than last year's estimate when the loan was issued.

He also gave an update on the Streetlight projects for the Westgate area. FPL is addressing comments submitted by the Palm Beach County Engineering Land Development section. They will resubmit soon. After comments are resolved, the County will issue a construction permit for FPL to install new poles and more lights in the area.

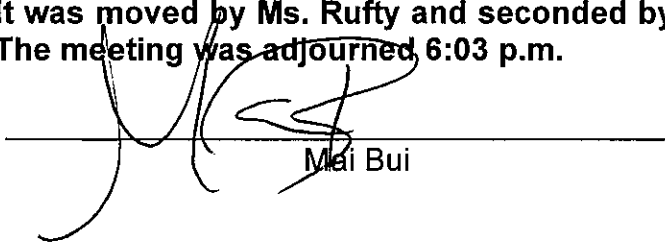
The audit process for fiscal year 2023 has started.

Backpacking At the Park on August 11, 2023 was a success.

The next event at the Park, Boo at the Park, is scheduled for Friday October 13th.

IX. AJOURNMENT

**It was moved by Ms. Ruffy and seconded by Ms. Haggerty to adjourn the meeting.
The meeting was adjourned 6:03 p.m.**



Mai Bui Administrative Assistant, Westgate CRA

