



Lake Park Town Commission, Florida

Special Call Community Redevelopment Agency

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 6:30 PM

Commission Chamber, Town Hall, 535 Park Avenue, Lake Park, FL 33403

Roger Michaud	—	Chair
Kimberly Glas-Castro	—	Vice-Chair
John Linden	—	Agency Member
Carmen Rodriguez	—	Agency Member
Mary Beth Taylor	—	Agency Member
Judith Thomas	—	Agency Member
Henry K. Stark	—	Agency Member
John O. D'Agostino	—	Executive Director
Thomas J. Baird, Esq.	—	Agency Attorney
Vivian Mendez, MMC	—	Agency Clerk

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE AND BE ADVISED, that if any interested person desires to appeal any decision of the Town Commission, with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, such interested person will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations in order to participate in the meeting should contact the Town Clerk's office by calling 881-3311 at least 48 hours in advance to request accommodations.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

6:32 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair Roger Michaud

Vice-Chair Kimberly Glas-Castro

Board Member John Linden

Board Member Carmen Rodriguez

Board Member Mary-Beth Taylor

Board Member Judith Thomas

Board Member Henry Stark

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dianne Sophinos

SPECIAL PRESENTATION/REPORT:

NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT:

This time is provided for addressing items that do not appear on the Agenda. Please complete a comment card and provide it to the Agency Clerk so speakers may be announced. Please remember comments are limited to a TOTAL of three minutes.

NONE

Motion made to reorganize the agenda to have item 4 come before item 3 by Board Member Linden,
Seconded by Board Member Stark.

Voting Yea: Chair Michaud, Board Member Linden, Board Member Rodriguez, Board Member Taylor,
Board Member Thomas, Board Member Stark.

Voting Nay: Vice-Chair Glas-Castro.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

NONE

CONSENT AGENDA:

Board Member Stark requested that the meeting minutes be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Motion made to pull the meeting minutes off of the Consent Agenda by Board Member Stark, Seconded
by Board Member Taylor.

Voting Yea: Chair Michaud, Board Member Linden, Board Member Rodriguez, Board Member Taylor,
Board Member Thomas, Board Member Stark, Vice-Chair Glas-Castro.

Motion made to approve item number 2 of the Consent Agenda by Board Member Stark, Seconded by Board Member Rodriguez.

Voting Yea: Chair Michaud, Vice-Chair Glas-Castro, Board Member Linden, Board Member Rodriguez, Board Member Taylor, Board Member Thomas, Board Member Stark.

Board Member Stark questioned how his comments were not all included in the minutes and requested that his comments be included. The Board deferred the minutes to the next meeting to allow the Clerk's Office to amend the minutes.

1. October 18, 2023 Special Call Community Redevelopment Agency Meeting Minutes
Item #1 was pulled from the agenda for approval at a future meeting.
2. Request for Authorization for the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Executive Director to Encumber and Expend Funds from the CRA Budget and Accept Two Proposals for ACME Barricades to Provide Maintenance of Traffic Services During the 2023 Holiday Display.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. Recreation Building Discussion (800 Park Avenue)

Board Member Linden read from a prepared statement so that there would not be any misunderstanding from people. He stated the following:

"The 800 building as we know is been under-utilized by the location, by that location. What is best for the current and future business on Park Avenue. So while there is a thought of housing the CRA Director there; I looked at it purely from the benefit of the businesses and the people on Park Avenue. If you ask any business owner, and we all know at least one business owner, what they would like. And their number one answer is going to be the more customer. We have failed a couple of attempts to get some of that done, so this is an easy and effective way to do something about that. The flow of traffic would result in additional traffic, if indeed we were to have the Artist of Palm Beach back in the 800 building. They have approximately 300 visitors a month coming into their location, their venues, and so forth. It's easy to assume that at least 10% of those people, coming in and out, would stop down at one of the locations.

Whether it be Gastro Pub, Jesse's Brew House because the people love art and they also like to walk around and support the businesses in that area. And, of course, without a doubt, because of the location it would bleed right into 10th Street locations. People's like Coastal Brewery.

Cross marketing is a big key here and it is something that we need to consider. If the Artist of Palm Beach were in there, they could have flyers from each establishment, which they post normally on Facebook promoting their business. Now, could you do that if we had a CRA Director in there, of course. But, what you would not have is traffic. So it would be a useless point.

The question is the CRA Office it does none of that. While it may attract new business, it does nothing for the existing businesses that need more traffic. We are doing this big Christmas display lighting to try to generate more traffic. We all know that. And I think everyone is supportive of that. So traffic is what they need; we are trying to help. In the short time the Christmas display would be good, long term the Artist of Palm Beach in that location would have a long term effect. Now, there is also another perfect location for the CRA and the summer school. Right in Kelsey Park, near the tennis court there are two separate buildings. There is a small one in the front, which can easily house two or possibly three people. The back building would be able to fulfil our needs for summer camp, plus it adds a patio in the back, plus it adds grass. And ironically enough in the 800 building, I am not sure how well you guys may have been in and out of there, but there are no windows in the rear section. So now the kids would actually get some sunlight and be able to do activities in the park and on the patio. It is a beautiful park and we need to show that off also. So, if somebody was to go to the CRA Office, they could indeed see what kinds of parks we have, what kinds of people we have going on and so forth. So I really think that that would work. And the 800 building, once a recreation building is built, in three to five years, whatever our timeline may be, everything changes cause summer camp would take over and would have a whole new meaning for that. Bottom line, why would new businesses want to come to Lake Park right now. Unfortunately, if you look at the history of the businesses we have coming in, there are going out. Just recently we had the barbeque place go out. So while we try to go out and get new businesses.

A new business, if they are already established, while they will bring some clientele, there are going to look to see what kind of people, what kind of flow and traffic would they get from the existing local customers or local resident and indeed some of the other businesses.

So I am proposing that we put the Artist of Palm Beach back in the 800 building to promote the Town, bring the traffic in, and put a spark that has been missing there for a while. Art as we all know is a huge draw in crowd. And if there numbers stay consistent, like they have been doing, moving from place to place, 300 a month is probably an underestimate. So, while this is for discussion only, I would support, I would like to put an agenda item put in for the Resolution to have the Artist of Palm Beach back in the 800 building so we can discuss other things, such as, term of the lease, rent and so forth. Thank you Chair for your time. That all I have got to say on this right now."

Board Member Rodriguez explained that as a small business owner in the CRA, the area was described as an arts district. She agreed with Board Member Linden that the Artists of Palm Beach County would be good in that building.

Board Member Taylor stated that this concept was not new. Back in 2009 the Town hired a CRA person and opened the gallery. The CRA has been marketed as an art district, but she has never seen it.

Board Member Stark asked if the Artists of Palm Beach County had been in the location previously, why did they leave. Executive Director D'Agostino explained that the building had to be used for a public purpose due to a bond authorization and it was determined that the Artists were not a public entity. He also stated that there is a requirement for the Town to charge fair market rent and discussed the need for dedicated CRA staff.

Board Member Stark asked about the feasibility of putting the Artists back into that location. Executive Director D'Agostino explained that there would be costs to the town to make the location habitable for the Artists such as lighting and also explained that the building is currently being used for summer camp.

Vice-Chair Glas-Castro stated the need to house CRA staff within the CRA. She suggested the possibility of CRA staff and the Artists sharing the building.

Chair Michaud stated that he has spoken with CRA business owners and they have voiced that they need direct contact with staff. He said that he does not object to the Artists coming to the Town and suggested placing them in the Evergreen House. Chair Michaud spoke about the children and the need to provide a stable, safe place for the summer camp program. He stated the desire to help the Artists find a home in the Town, but is not sure the 800 building will be the best fit.

Board Member Linden stated that he supports kids and believes that the 700 buildings on Lake Shore Drive would be better suited for the summer camp program as it has air conditioning and windows. He agrees that the CRA staff should be housed in the CRA. Board Member Linden spoke about the bond being paid off and now we should be able to do what we want with the 800 building. Executive Director D'Agostino explained that due to the co-mingling of the bond payment, the bond for the 800 building has not been fully paid off. Board Member Linden stated that the CRA Board had previously been told that the bond had been paid off. Finance Director Jeffrey Duvall explained bank's process of processing the bond payment and explained that the bond on the 800 building would be fully paid off in September 2024. Board Member Linden expressed concern that the Board had not heard of this prior to this meeting. Executive Director D'Agostino stated that there had been previous discussions about what was owed on the bond and stated that they had tried to get the bank to reverse the payment and apply the payment to paying off the 800 building, but the bank was not willing to do this. Agency Attorney Baird provided language from the covenant of the bond which states that the building must be used for public purposes only until the bond is paid off. Board Member Thomas spoke about the Memorandum of Agreement from 2019 that the Artists had provided (Exhibit A) and asked Attorney Baird to review and provide clarification. Agency Attorney Baird stated that he would review but does not feel that this is germane to the issue at hand.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

-Mary Jane Zapp 1322 Pine Road, West Palm Beach stated that the Artists had been in the 800 building and paying rent.

She spoke about things she heard in the meeting that she felt were inaccurate, specifically the comment about them needing to pay current fair market rent. She encouraged the Board to allow them to occupy the 800 building and she spoke about what their presence could do for the Town. She provided a handout to the Board (Exhibit B).

-Sharon Cahill 924 Evergreen Drive spoke about the Artists of Palm Beach County and how the Artists of Palm Beach County's presence in the Town would affect the community.

-Linda Miller 339 Eagleton Gold Drive Palm Beach Gardens spoke about the Artists of Palm Beach County and hopes the Board will consider allowing them to occupy the building.

-Cynthia George 1401 Village Blvd West Palm Beach, artist from the Artists of Palm Beach County spoke about how the artists need a home in order to provide services to kids in the community.

-Dr. Karen Karmazin 133 Dunes Edge Rd Jupiter spoke about the ways in which the arts can revitalize towns and cities and spoke about the Artists of Palm Beach County initiatives.

-Ilene Adams spoke about the Artists of Palm Beach County's accomplishments and what they could provide to the Town.

-Maxine E. Schreiber 2480 Presidential Way West Palm Beach expressed that she was offended and hurt because she felt dedicated to the Town and how they contributed many times to Town events with the hope that they would get their home back.

-Susan Munoz 512 Les Jardin spoke about her support of the Artists of Palm Beach County and expressed appreciation for Board Member Linden's support. She stated that they were promised a place in Lake Park and that is why they are here. She said that when the bond is paid off, they would appreciate the Board's consideration for placement in the 800 building.

Board Member Taylor stated that we need both the CRA staff and the Artists of Palm Beach County and suggested they share the building. She feels that the Commission and the Town need to get creative with finding a solution.

Chair Michaud requested that Executive Director D'Agostino work with the Artists to find them a home in the Town.

3. Resolution 92-11-23 Budget Adjustment to the Fiscal Year 2024 Community Redevelopment Agency Budget to Add the Position of Community Redevelopment Agency Administrator.

Human Resources Director/Assistant Town Manager Bambi McKibbon-Turner explained that the item is to adjust the budget to add the position of Community Redevelopment Agency Administrator. She provided a summary of the position and its duties.

Board Member Linden had concerns about the need for the position. He asked who this person would report to. Human Resources Director/Assistant Town Manager McKibbon-Turner stated that the position would report directly to the Executive Director. Board Member Linden stated he has concerns with the new position being able to make decisions under the current structure. Board Member Linden made several comments regarding the use of the 800 building.

Board Member Taylor had concerns with the position being tied to the 800 building and would like to amend that part of the resolution. Human Resources Director/Assistant Town Manager McKibbon-Turner stated that the resolution is only for the expenditure of funds and does not have anything to do with where the position would be housed. Board Member Stark asked for clarification on how many positions were being filled. Human Resources Director/Assistant Town Manager McKibbon-Turner advised that if the first position is successful, a request for proposals would be issued for a 2nd person to be hired as a marketing consultant. Board Member Stark asked who had been doing this work up to this point. Human Resources Director/Assistant Town Manager McKibbon-Turner advised that a certain degree of the Executive Directors time and a few other department director's time has been given to CRA functions. Board Member Stark stated that the new position should be initially housed in Town Hall for about 6 months or so. Human Resources Director/Assistant Town Manager McKibbon-Turner advised that all employees go through an onboarding process and this position would work closely with the Executive Director, but there is no additional space available in Town Hall. Vice-Chair Glas-Castro stated that current Town Directors do not have the time to dedicate to the CRA that it deserves and advocates for filling this position. Board Member Thomas requests that the Board approve the resolution and move on. She states that this agenda item has nothing to do with where this individual would be housed. Agency Attorney Baird confirmed this to be correct. Chair Michaud stated that the business owners have said they need someone to communicate with.

Motion to approve Resolution 92-11-23 made by Board Member Thomas.

Seconded by Vice-Chair Glas-Castro.

Voting Aye: Board Member Rodriguez, Board Member Thomas, Chair Michaud, Vice-Chair

Glas-Castro, Board Member Taylor.

Voting Nay: Board Member Linden, Board Member Stark.

BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY MEMBER REQUESTS:

Chair Michaud requests that Executive Director D'Agostino contact Mary Jane Zapp and have further discussions about finding a home in Lake Park for the Artists of Palm Beach County, to be brought back as a future agenda item.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn made by Board Member Stark.

Seconded by Board Member Taylor.

Voting Aye: ALL

Meeting Adjourned 8:42pm.

FUTURE MEETING DATE: The next scheduled Community Redevelopment Agency Meeting will be conducted on December 6, 2023

Chair, Roger D. Michaud

Town Seal

Town Clerk, Vivian Mendez, MMC

Deputy Town Clerk, Laura Weidgans

Approved on this _____ of _____, 2023