

**MINUTES
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT BOARD OF THE CITY OF STUART
JUNE 4, 2024
AT 4:00 PM
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
121 SW FLAGLER AVE.
STUART, FLORIDA 34994**

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

**Chair - Tom Campenni
Vice Chair - Mark Brechbill
Board Member - Anita Cocoves
Board Member - Aaron Hawkins
Board Member - Frank McChrystal
Board Member - Bonnie Moser
Board Member - Andy Noble**

ADMINISTRATIVE

**CRA Executive Director - Pinal Gandhi-Savdas
Board Secretary - Susej T. Meleqi**

CALL TO ORDER

4:05 PM

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Campenni, Board Member Hawkins, Board Member Moser, Board Member Noble

ABSENT: Board Member McChrystal, Vice Chair Brechbill, Board Member Cocoves

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Clerk's Note: Meeting began without a quorum; quorum was met at 4:08 PM. Comments from the Public were heard prior to the Approval of the Agenda and the adoption of the Minutes.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Approve

MOVED BY: Bonnie Moser

SECONDED BY: Andy Noble

Motion approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. APPROVAL OF 05/07/2024 CRB MINUTES

MOTION: Approve

MOVED BY: Andy Noble

SECONDED BY: Aaron Hawkins

Motion approved unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (Non-Agenda Related) (3 Minutes Max.)

1. Robert Whitlach - Stuart; Representative of Avonlea; commented as an application for awnings and reviewed challenges.
2. Alan Fredrich - Port St. Lucie; Business owner who benefited from the improvement grants and spoke in favor of the BIRP program.

COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS (Non-Agenda Items)

No Comments.

ACTION ITEMS

2. DISCUSSION & DELIBERATION ON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM (BIRP) GUIDELINES

Jordan Pinkston, CRA Program Manager, presented the history, results, and purpose of the Business Improvement Grant Program (BIRP).

Board Member Moser began the discussion, commented on urban and suburban architecture; recognizes the guidelines and the effects on the participating business. In favor of the idea of a separate landscape program and proposed it be based on a percentage instead of a point system.

Pinal Gandhi-Savdas, CRA Executive Director, stated the point system is easier and separating the landscaping would be more efficient.

Chair Campenni commented on the types of structures, and maybe separating that in the program. He also inquired about the budget.

Gandhi-Savdas reported that the program has \$50,000.00 and Campenni suggested the Director come back to the board with a dollar amount. Ms. Gandhi-Savdas stated she is working on the budget for next year and the information would be brought to the Board in August.

Board Member Hawkins asked if funds could be rolled from year to year and the CRA Director responded that it stays within the CRA budget, but goes back to the fund balance, not to the particular program. Hawkins asked about specific eligibility and stated he was in favor of separating the program which would focus on the goals of helping small business owners.

Board Member Noble inquired about the maximum amount allowed by the grant, which is

\$10,000.00. Stated he was in favor of separating the landscaping from the BIRP, to allow the focus to be specifically on what the applications are designed for.

Chair Campenni commented in favor of the separation and noted that he would like to see \$50,000.00, then \$25,000.00 for landscape and irrigation. Landscaping should be limited to \$5,000.00 per applicant and BIRP remains at \$10,000.00 with a 50/50 match and the applicants for BIRP would also be eligible for the landscape program.

There was a brief discussion on shade trees; Board Member Moser commented on Live Oaks being a good investment for year-around shade.

Chair Campenni commented that there is a separate tree program and felt business owners should be left to decide their landscaping, then the City as a whole, plant more shade trees; keeping the programs separate.

Board Member Noble asked about the commercial associations and Pinal Gandhi-Savdas responded that they have business tax.

Jordan Pinkston requested a discussion on awnings, clarified that the program currently offers to extend current awnings or the purchase new awnings, and that replacement of existing awnings are not covered in the program. Noted that in 2021, the Board made changes to the BIRP to reflect the awnings guidelines.

Ms. Gandhi-Savdas announced that applications would be brought to the board at the next meeting (July) and the adjustments would be brought to them at the following meeting (August).

A brief discussion on the reduction per applicant occurred.

The Board thanked the CRA for the presentation.

STAFF UPDATE

ADJOURNMENT

4:42 PM

Susej T. Meleqi, Board Secretary

Tom Campenni, Chair

**Minutes to be approved at the CRB
Meeting this 2nd day of July, 2024.**