



# Community Redevelopment Advisory Board Regular Meeting Minutes

**February 27, 2025 at 5:30 PM**

City Hall Commission Chambers  
401 S. Park Avenue

## **Present**

Carlos Benitez, Jay Trent, Lindsay Eriksson, Michael Perelman, Carl Creasman Jr

## **Absent**

Pragasen Ramiah

## **Staff Present**

Director of Office of Management & Budget Peter Moore, CRA Coordinator Anne Sallee

### **1. Call to Order**

Carlos Benitez called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

- a. CRAAB Annual Report Photo

Ms. Broman gathered the board together and took the group photo for the CRA annual report.

### **2. Consent Agenda**

- a. Approve the minutes of November 13, 2024

**Motion made by Dr. Perelman to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Eriksson. Motion carried unanimously with a 5-0 vote.**

### **3. Public Comments (for items not on the agenda)**

### **4. Action Items**

- a. CRA Renewal Grant Program

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) extension was approved last year. A huge thank you to the Advisory Board for playing a significant role in this achievement. The deal was valued at \$141 million, which includes \$57 million in taxes contributed by Winter Park residents and businesses. This amount, which would have otherwise gone to Orange County, will now remain in the city to be used for improvements. A revised CRA map was provided showing the three overlapping jurisdictions in West Fairbanks: the City of Winter Park, unincorporated Orange County, and a small portion of the City of Orlando.

The Renewal Grant program offered by the Winter Park Community Redevelopment Agency is not uncommon among CRAs, as most have similar programs. This program is designed to promote neighborhood improvement by incentivizing the removal of blight

and fostering neighborhood stability. This is one of the main purposes outlined in Florida statute for the existence of CRAs.

Properties may become eyesores, negatively impacting the tax base and causing difficulties for property owners due to code enforcement liens and other issues. In response to previous discussions led by this board, we have explored the possibility of establishing a Demolition Aid Grant Fund program. This program would allocate up to \$15,000 for residential properties and up to \$25,000 for commercial properties for the remediation of dilapidated, hazardous, or vacant structures.

To be eligible for this program, applicants must meet certain criteria: they must own the property and have held ownership for at least three years, demonstrate the prevention of slum or blighted conditions, and address health and safety concerns in the existing environment. Additionally, corporate franchises and government offices are not eligible applicants.

Other CRA grants are available, such as the driveway grant, the paint grant, and the home renovation grant, but these are limited to certain income levels. The Renewal Grant provides \$15,000 for demolition and covers ancillary structures. Ms. Sallee is responsible for handling the applications for these grants.

Mr. Benitez inquired about the budget for this program, and Mr. Moore responded that no additional funding was allocated for it this year. To process any applications in the current year, staff will utilize existing funds from the housing affordability and business facade budgets. While Staff does not anticipate a high demand, these tools are available in case opportunities arise.

Mr. Creasman asked if the program requests must come from citizens or if the city can offer it proactively. Ms. Sallee is preparing marketing materials for property owners.

Dr. Perelman asked how many applications are anticipated and whether there would be a maximum spending threshold for the program each year. Mr. Moore responded that the CRA budget process would incorporate this program for the board's review, estimating around 2 to 4 applicants. Dr. Perelman expressed concerns that businesses could exploit this as a turnaround opportunity and suggested an assistance limit of 75% instead of the full 100% for businesses. Mr. Moore noted that the requirement of three years of ownership might help discourage a "flipping" mentality among businesses. This program also serves as an alternative to the current business facade program, which operates on a 50/50 matching grant basis.

Dr. Perelman expressed his desire to see property owners contribute to the improvement of their properties. The discussion also addressed the cost of demolishing commercial property. The program will be tested for one year to evaluate its effectiveness. Additionally, Dr. Perelman suggested implementing limits on the grants available per applicant and per property.

**Motion made by Mr. Creasman to approve the creation of the demolition program, temporarily fund it with existing funds and become a budgeted**

**item to be reviewed after one year; seconded by Ms. Eriksson. The motion carried unanimously by a 5-0 vote.**

**b. CRA Business Facade Program Updates**

The Business Facade Program has been in existence for a long time, offering a 50/50 matching grant of up to \$20,000. This program serves as a valuable incentive for businesses to enhance their storefronts, including improvements to windows, doors, awnings, painting, and other similar upgrades. Over 70 businesses have participated in the program, and for every \$14 invested by property owners, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has contributed \$1 of public funds. The program has been active for about a decade.

Staff is now proposing to increase the maximum match for the program from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

**Motion made by Mr. Benitez to approve the increase of the maximum match to \$30K; seconded by Ms. Eriksson. The motion carried unanimously by a 5-0 vote.**

**Discussion: Dr. Perelman inquired about the typical expenditure on a facade if the city grants \$20K. The average would be \$280K with the 14:1 investment.**

**5. Non-Action Items**

**6. Staff Updates**

**a. Project Updates**

Mr. Moore provided the board with updates on the following projects:

- Denning/Fairbanks Improvement - the purchase of the property is complete
- MLK Unity Corner and MLK Playground – expected to be completed by April 2025
- W. Fairbanks Stormwater- will be underway,
- Park Avenue Gateways - half the costs, totaling \$200K, were covered by contributions, while the other half, in the amount of \$200K was funded through the CRA
- West Meadow RR/Facility - has a completion date set for September 2025

**7. Board Comments**

Carl Creasman Jr. introduced himself to the board members.

**8. Upcoming Agenda Items**

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Approved by the board on March 27, 2025

/s/ Bahiyyah Layton, Board Coordinator