

A meeting of the Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board was held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at City Hall, 400 South Orange Avenue, Second Floor, Veterans Conference Room, Orlando, Florida. Vice Chair Kimberly Stewart called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. noting a quorum was present.

Board Members Present Kimberly Stewart, *Vice Chair*
Rachel Moalli
Steve Garrity
Kelly Martinez Semrad, *Orange County Commissioner*

Board Members Absent Dr. Eugene Jones, *Chairman*
Doug Taylor

Staff Present

David Barilla, Executive Director
Justin Eason, Assistant Director
Dr. Kristen Holmes, Assistant Director
Stacey Adams, Chief Assistant City Attorney
Felix Roman, Board Secretary
Liz Nigro, Senior Administrative Assistant
Alejandra Caceres, Interactive Media Coordinator
Charles Zollars, Economic Development Coordinator
Christel Brooks, Fiscal Coordinator
Christina Hyson, Project Manager
Gerhard van der Snel, Downtown Facilities Supervisor
Jeremiah Caret, Project Manager
Kelly Allen, Marketing and Communications Manager
Kiara Alamo-Valentin, Marketing and Communications Intern
Kim C. King-Maysonet, Business Development Assistant Manager
Michael Whiteman, Economic Development Coordinator
Rose M. Vignetti Garlick, Discover Downtown Manager
Samantha Levine, Housing and Homelessness Initiatives Manager

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Rachel Moalli and seconded by Steve Garrity to approve the January 22, 2025, CRA Advisory Board meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

None

New Business

a. Funding Agreement for Christian Service Center 407 Connect Project

Samantha Levine, Housing and Homelessness Initiatives Manager

The “Dignity Bus” concept, created by the Vero-based organization “The Source,” has demonstrated a unique and effective approach to addressing unsheltered homelessness by providing overnight accommodation in a custom-fabricated 45-foot bus outfitted with 19-20 sleeping pods, storage compartments, restrooms, pet compartments, a comprehensive surveillance system, and facilities for onboard personnel.

Recognizing that the need for shelter is only increasing in our community (the 2024 point in time count showed a 24% increase in unsheltered homelessness in Orange County), the “407 CONNECT” Project contemplates using two buses to pair overnight shelter with case management to help move the nightly guests toward housing as quickly as possible. We anticipate that incorporating two buses with sleeping accommodations for a minimum of 39

individuals nightly into our system will result in permanent housing for approximately 407 individuals over three years.

The Downtown Orlando Community Redevelopment Area Plan (Redevelopment Plan) specifically notes the challenge created by the perception that the Area is unsafe, partially due to the visible homeless persons residing therein, and such perception and the loitering of homeless persons in the Area are impediments to further redevelopment of the Area. The Redevelopment Plan also provides that the CRA may support and fund construction and/or operation of Emergency Shelters, transitional housing, supportive service centers and outreach programs for the Homeless population that are designed to assist individuals in regaining self-sufficiency and minimize the impacts of homeless persons on the residents and businesses within the Area. Further, the Redevelopment Plan calls for the CRA to continue collaboration with homeless service providers on issues related to downtown homelessness.

The Christian Service Center (CSC) is a housing-focused comprehensive day services organization that has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to manage client needs with a service reach of over 400 individuals daily. In 2023, CSC successfully housed 276 individuals. This project would follow a case management model similar to their successful RUSH program. An additional benefit of contracting with CSC is that a successful Dignity Bus program model relies on individuals having a safe place to exit the bus and remain during daytime hours (if they don't go to work) and the CSC is the only service provider in the CRA that provides that opportunity, as well as the full range of wrap-around services for clients.

The Funding Agreement for Christian Service Center 407 Connect Project (Agreement) provides for the City to provide funding to the Christian Service Center for the costs of purchasing the two buses and the CRA to provide funding to the Christian Service Center for the costs of three years of operating the overnight buses, supportive case management, and housing assistance. The agreement provides for operational funding in the following amounts: Year one (FY 24/25): \$1,009,330.30; Year two (FY 25/26): \$1,026,171.96 and year three (FY 26/27): \$1,056,944.65

Staff requested that the CRA Advisory Board recommend to the CRA that it approve the Funding Agreement For Christian Service Center 407 Connect Project, subject to review and approval of the City Attorney's Office, and authorize the Chair and Executive Director to execute the Agreement.

A motion was made by Steve Garrity and seconded by Rachel Moalli to recommend to the CRA that it approve the Funding Agreement For Christian Service Center 407 Connect Project, subject to review and approval of the City Attorney's Office, and authorize the Chair and Executive Director to execute the Agreement. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Amendment to Focus Area Map for DTO Retail and Restaurant Programs

Charles Zollars, Economic Development Coordinator

The DTO Retail and DTO Restaurant Programs (Programs) were created in 2023 and allow for qualifying businesses to be eligible for reimbursement funding for tenant improvements and rent expenses. Higher funding amounts are available for personal service businesses and retail businesses in designated focus areas for the Retail Program, along with higher funding amounts for restaurants and food halls in designated focus areas for the Restaurant Program.

These revisions amend the Focus Area Maps to both the DTO Retail Program and Restaurant Program, extending the focus area eastward from Magnolia Avenue to Rosalind Avenue, covering Livingston Street to the north and Pine Street to the south. This expansion aims to attract new restaurants and food halls to this area while also encouraging the growth of existing ones.

Staff requested that the CRA Advisory Board recommend to the CRA that it approve the revised Program Guidelines for both the DTO Retail Program and DTO Restaurant Program to include revised Focus Area Maps.

A motion was made by Rachel Moalli and seconded by Steve Garrity to approve the revised Program Guidelines for both the DTO Retail Program and DTO Restaurant Program to include revised Focus Area Maps. The motion carried unanimously.

c. DTO Retail Program Funding Agreement with The Wig Factory, LLC

Michael Whiteman, Economic Development Coordinator

In 2010, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) created the CRA Retail Stimulus Program to attract strong retail operators and to achieve high-quality interior buildouts of new retail establishments within the CRA. In 2023, the program was divided into two programs, the DTO Retail Program and the DTO Restaurant Program. The DTO Retail Program allows qualifying businesses to be eligible for up to \$150,000 for tenant improvements and \$50,000 for rent expenses for a potential maximum funding amount of \$200,000. Exact funding levels are dependent on program criteria such as location, square footage, and retail classification.

The Wig Factory, LLC, a retail store, has signed a three (3) year lease for the space located at 642 W Church Street Orlando, Florida 32805. This 800 sq. ft. retail space will offer a variety of wigs, hair care products, and styling services. This entrepreneur brings over eight (8) years of ownership experience in a similar type of retail business to this new venture.

The Wig Factory, LLC has applied for funding in the amount of \$35,129 which includes \$20,000 for tenant improvements, along with \$15,129 in rent assistance. Funding received would be used for build-out expenses including electrical, ceiling, mechanical systems, plumbing, flooring and interior build out. The overall build out of the space is anticipated to cost approximately \$35,000 and with \$20,000 from the CRA under this Funding Agreement.

Staff requested that the CRA Advisory Board recommend to the CRA approval of the DTO Retail Program Funding Agreement between the Community Redevelopment Agency and The Wig Factory, LLC, subject to review and approval of the City Attorney's Office, and authorization for the Chair and Executive Director of the CRA to execute such Funding Agreement.

A motion was made by Steve Garrity and seconded by Orange County Commissioner Kelly Martinez Semrad to request to the CRA that it approve the DTO Retail Program Funding Agreement between the Community Redevelopment Agency and The Wig Factory, LLC, subject to review and approval of the City Attorney's Office, and authorization for the Chair and Executive Director of the CRA to execute such Funding Agreement. The motion failed 2 to 2, with Kimberly Stewart and Rachel Moalli voting no.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Kimberly Stewart to reconsider the previous action and seconded by Rachel Moalli. The motion carried unanimously.

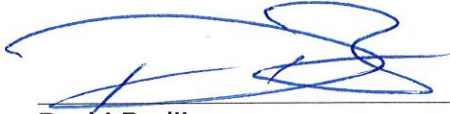
A motion was made by Vice Chair Kimberly Stewart to table this item for reconsideration at a future meeting to allow for the submission of a Profit and Loss (P&L) statement by the applicant, and additional conversation with staff regarding the DTO Retail Program. Steve Garrity seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board will be held on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Veterans Conference Room.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board, Vice Chair Kimberly Stewart adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.



David Barilla
Executive Director



Felix Roman
Board Secretary