

Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2025 at 3:00 PM

Chair Rudy Rothseiden
Vice Chair Kelly Harris
Member Brian Boukari
Member Jovante Hayes
Member Rick Robertson

City Manager Mike DaRoza
City Attorney Marian Rush

Meeting Location: James A. Lewis City Commission Chambers
15100 NW 142 Terrace
Alachua, FL 32615



ALACHUA CRA
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board Meeting

Notice given pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes. In order to appeal any decision made at this meeting, you will need a verbatim record of the proceedings. It will be your responsibility to ensure such a record is made.

CALL TO ORDER

Rudy Rothseiden – Chair 3:00 pm

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Member Brian Boukari moved to approve the agenda with the amendment to include information about the Gateway Sign on Main Street during the Staff Updates; seconded by Member Jovante Hayes.

Passed by unanimous consent.

I. OLD BUSINESS

II. NEW BUSINESS

A) APPROVE MEETING MINUTES- JANUARY 27, 2025

Member Boukari moved to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2025 meeting; seconded by Vice Chair Kelly Harris.

Passed by unanimous consent.

B) STAFF UPDATES

Susan King, Community Redevelopment Coordinator, presented her Staff Updates.

Theatre Park Refresh Project. Recommendation for the bid award will be presented to the City Commission at tonight's meeting. The recommended contractor is TriMark Construction Group.

Member Rick Robertson asked if the contract award should be presented to the Community Redevelopment Agency first.

Ms. King stated that the City Commission is the board who approves and awards the contracts.

Six two-hour parking signs are scheduled to be installed along Main Street this week.

Chair Rothseiden asked to see an image of the parking signs.

The Annual Report was published within the required deadlines.

Member Boukari asked if Ms. King has any other information concerning a legislative item moving through the State government concerning CRAs. This action would disband all CRAs in the state or at the least minimize their ability to do projects for the city.

Ms. King stated that it has been partially derailed, but she is following it closely.

Member Harris questioned an amount listed on the financial report.

Ms. King stated that it is a typo. The number should be 0. It is correct in the report online.

Main Street Lighting Project. Staff arranged for the installation of 36 grapevine light balls in four trees along Main Street. Additional lighting further along Main Street is being worked on.

Gateway Sign Project. Work is progressing. However, the property will not be donated. The property owners offered to sell it for \$40,000 but that was negotiated down to \$30,000. The property was appraised for \$36,000. It is approximately 2000 sq feet. Mr. Hitchcock thought he owned more of the property than he actually did. Ms. King stated that the purchase of the piece of property will be presented to the City Commission.

Member Boukari emphasized that he is adamantly opposed to the purchase of a "piece of dirt" that would benefit the property owner in enhancing their business and increase the visibility of the building that is located behind where the sign would be. He reiterated that there are other options. Such as going across the street and talking to the business owner there or holding onto the funds and finding other projects for those funds.

Chair Rothseiden suggested to Member Boukari that he make a motion, so opinions of this board would be heard by the CRA.

Member Boukari moved to ask Ms. King to forward to the CRA our desire not to move forward with the purchase of the corner lot for the gateway signage at the cost of \$30,000; seconded by Vice Chair Harris.

Vice Chair Harris affirmed that she is in total agreement with this motion. The property owner knows that the city wants that piece of property and is not willing to negotiate. Maybe we should just hold off until a later date.

Ms. King attested to the fact that it is not money that they want to spend, but all other options for the placement of the sign have been researched. There is no other option for the location.

Member Boukari addressed Ms. King. He emphasized that Ms. King has been an excellent steward of the funds of this board, and he has been an advocate for this project all along. However, he finds it reprehensible to be placing this board and the CRA in the position of having to spend \$30,000 on a piece of dirt that is not buildable or usable in anyway. Its use would be to put a sign on it. He believes the property owner knows this and is only trying to obtain funds from the city. He also stated that just because this project has been going on for a while irresponsible decisions should not be made to keep the project moving.

Chair Rothseiden asked if Carson Crockett, Planner, could give the board more information concerning the property, and he asked Ms. King for further information concerning the costs of the sign.

Ms. King elaborated on the cost breakdown of the sign. Theme Works was the company that gave us the quote a year ago. The engineering and design would be \$22,000 and the fabrication of the sign would be approximately \$87,000. The electronic message board has been estimated at \$30,000 (on the high side) The monies in the budget for the sign project were placed back in reserves for the Theater Park project so this project was bumped to next fiscal year. Ms. King emphasized that she respects the board's

opinions but if the property is not purchased then the gateway sign project can not move forward at all.

Vice Chair Harris asked if the city could counter offer.

Ms. King explained that the property owner started at \$40,000 and they conceded to \$30,000 after negotiations.

Member Jovante Hayes asked what the total monies would be including the property cost. Chair Rothseiden stated the total quoted would be about \$170,000.

Member Robertson asked if the city owned a piece of property in the general area that the sign could be placed on.

Ms. King confirmed that the city does not have any property in the area. The closest place would be near Skinner Park playground, but it would not be visible from 441 so it wouldn't have the same effect. She also stated that this was slated to be presented to the Commission at the second meeting in June. All the cost information and pros/cons will be presented to the board.

Member Rick Robertson agreed with the opinions of the board. The purchase of property that would benefit a non-participating business is not a good decision.

Member Boukari asked to hear from Mr. Crockett for more information concerning the property.

Mr. Crockett stated the property is approximately, 1500-2000 sq foot in size which would work out to be a price point of approximately \$15.00 per sq ft at the suggested sale price. The Alachua County Property Appraiser appraised it to be about \$10.00 per sq ft. This property is zoned CI (Commercial Intensive) with a Future Land Use category of Commercial.

Member Boukari asked about the setbacks for building anything. He also asked Mr. Crockett for his opinion concerning building anything other than a sign on this property, based on his expertise, experience and knowledge.

Mr. Crockett conceded that a sign is about the only thing possible for this particular area.

Member Boukari expressed his opinions again concerning the uselessness of the property for anything other than a sign and the fact that there is no rush to make this decision because of budgetary constraints.

Chair Rothseiden opened the floor to citizen comments concerning the motion on the floor.

Mandy Bucci, business owner on Main Street, expressed that the benefits of a beautiful sign would far outweigh the minimal cost of this property.

Michelle Lee, business owner on Main Street, stated that she also agrees with what Ms. Bucci previously stated. She also added the sign would bring increased traffic, tax dollars and new business to downtown. She believes the city talks about many things for a long period of time and never actually manifests any changes. Let's get this done. There have been too many hours of work put into this for a restart to happen.

Member Boukari expressed his support for this project up to this point. However, the purchase of the property is not right for the city at this time. He believes the city needs to let the sellers know that the city will not be taken advantage of. The property use is not going to change because of the size and location.

Chair Rothseiden brought the meeting back to the motion on the floor.

Motion passed by 4-1 roll call vote.

Citizen- Gib Coerper stated that the property owner may be able to write off the lot if donated for the sign.

Chair Rothseiden asked about timelines for the Theatre Park Project.

Ms. King stated that the contract imposes a 120 day completion deadline and she believes it will be completed before October of this year.

III. BOARD COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

Chair Rothseiden reiterated to Ms. King that she is doing a wonderful job she is doing.

Member Robertson wanted to remind everyone that the CRA district is not just Main Street. It encompasses more businesses than that and the CRA has implemented projects that have improved the CRA district area.

Member Hayes asked if there is a market analysis for the CRA district. Ms. King stated that the original one is from 2017, and she believes there is a more recent one.

Vice Chair Harris stated that there are now four (4) potholes on Nw 148th Street. They are getting larger and need to be assessed for repair.

Chair Rothseiden asserted that business owners on Main Street agree that more foot/vehicle traffic needs to increase to keep the small town ambiance alive. He would

like to see more events held on Main Street and welcomes any ideas to accomplish this. He also asked for a self-evaluation of progress or setbacks in the CRA district. He commented that he noticed a lot of standing water on Skinner Field, and it is not being utilized a lot for baseball. He recommended using this area for events during the summer to attract people to downtown if it is not being used for the intended purpose.

Member Boukari agrees that the batting cages and ball field area can be better utilized to attract citizens to downtown.

IV. CITIZENS COMMENTS

Gib Coerper explained that the park does have installed drainage, but you are not going to beat mother nature at times.

Mandy Bucci agrees that the park can be used as a multi-use space. However, businesses do get traffic from the batting cages being used so please do not remove an aspect that currently generates foot traffic for the downtown businesses.

Michelle Lee acknowledges that the CRA district is bigger than just Main Street, but changes need to start somewhere, and Main Street is the place to do that. She also informed the board that a grant is being written to apply for a concert series. This would qualify for the Revitalize Main Street initiative. She explained that the grant would be \$40,000 for three years, and they are going to ask the city to do the match funds.

Mandy Bucci handed information about the Levitt Music Series Grant eligibility criteria to the board at the dias. The information handed to the board will be uploaded with the minutes.

Ms. King further explained the details of the grant and the process of applying for it.

Member Boukari moved to ask the CRA to consider partnering with the Levitt Foundation to match the funds given in the grant request if awarded; seconded by Member Hayes.

Vice Chair Harris abstained from voting.

Motion passed by 4-0 roll call vote.

Chair Rothseiden suggested that someone reach out to the University of Florida about maybe an intern position that could possibly assist Ms. King with some of her duties, just to get her some help with so much going on at once.

ADJOURN

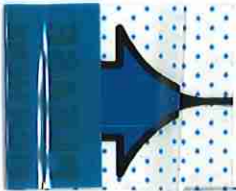
Member Boukari moved to adjourn; seconded by Vice Chair Harris.

Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Chair Rothseiden adjourned the meeting. 4:26 p.m.

ATTEST:

**CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF
ALACHUA, FLORIDA:**



CRA Advisory Board Chair

Staff Liaison



**2026-2028
Levitt Music Series Grant Eligibility Criteria**

For all applicants

- Applicant must be a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in the same town, city, or county of the proposed music series.
- The proposed music series must be free to the public.
- The proposed public space where the free concerts would be presented must be outdoors, easily accessible to people of all ages, backgrounds, and socioeconomic circumstances, and have a lawn-like setting with no fixed seating.
- The proposed public space is underused and activation of the space would create dynamic social and economic impact.
- A programming philosophy that is inclusive of all members of the community, is family-friendly, and represents a diverse range of music genres.
- A proven track record of presenting quality concerts or community events or partnering with an individual or organization that has done so.
- On an annual basis, applicant must meet the matching funds requirement.
- The proposed public space cannot be located in the same town or city as an existing Levitt Music Series (not applicable to Chicago or Los Angeles). Please visit our [Locations](#) page for current grantees.
- If an existing Levitt Music Series is located in an applicant's state or region, the proposed public space must be located a minimum of 50 miles or more from an existing Levitt Music Series (not applicable to Chicago or Los Angeles). Please visit our [Locations](#) page for current grantees.
- If an existing Levitt venue is, or will be, located in an applicant's state or region, the proposed public space must be located a minimum of 75 miles or more from the existing or developing Levitt venue. Existing Levitt venues may be found on our [Locations](#) page. Cities where Levitt venues are in development include Houston, New Orleans, and San Jose. **Please note: this radius exclusion does not apply to organizations located in Los Angeles, within the Los Angeles metro area, or Southern California.**

If applying to Levitt AMP

- All proposed Levitt AMP Music Series must take place in small to mid-sized towns and cities within the United States and its territories with a population of up to 250,000 people and may be located within a metropolitan area with a population of no more than 1,000,000.

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