



Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2025 at 3:00 PM

Chair Rudy Rothseiden
Vice Chair Kelly Harris
Member Brian Boukari
Member Mandy Bucci
Member Jovante Hayes

**City Manager Rodolfo
Valladares**
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

Member - Jovante Hayes
Resigned prior to meeting

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Kelly Harris moved to approve the agenda with an additional item D under new business for the proposed budget information; seconded by Member Brian Boukari.

Passed by unanimous consent.

I. OLD BUSINESS

II. NEW BUSINESS

A) APPROVE MEETING MINUTES- MAY 19, 2025

Member Boukari moved to approve the minutes from the May 19, 2025 special meeting; seconded by Vice Chair Harris.

Motion passed by 4-0 vote.

B) APPROVE MEETING MINUTES - JUNE 23, 2025- SPCRAAB

Member Boukari moved to approve the minutes from the June 23, 2025 special meeting; seconded by Vice Chair Harris.

Motion passed by 4-0 vote.

C) STAFF UPDATES

Susan King, Community Redevelopment Coordinator, presented her report.

Theatre Park-

The building permit was not approved due to the need for additional egress, according to the Fire Marshall. If all three front doorways were opened, instead of two of them having seating, the Fire Marshall would approve them. The Monarch design group revised the plans and the Fire Marshall stated he would approve that plan. The project is about two weeks behind schedule.

Vice Chair Harris asked if the step-ups for the additional doors would also be converted into ramps to avoid trips and be handicapped accessibility.

Ms. King stated she will bring that up at the meeting later this week.

Chair Rothseiden asked about what appeared to be benches and chairs that are shown on the plan.

Overview of the Past CRA studies -

Ms. King had forwarded the two past studies to the Board members prior to the meeting. She summarized what was in those reports.

Member Boukari also has the Downtown Parking Plan from 2016. If the other Board members would like a copy, he will pass it on to Ms. King for dispersement.

Vice Chair Harris added her opinion about the report information targeting specific uses

for shops downtown. She believes that this line of thinking would still be highly effective.

Ms. King stated that the trend around the country is called PopUp Shops.

Vice Chair Harris agreed that the idea of PopUp Shops would be great.

Member Mandy Bucci suggested that the first block of Main Street would be a perfect place for PopUp Shops, Farmer's Markets, and Maker's Markets. It would encourage the public to come have a look and feel safe with their kids.

Member Boukari asked Member Bucci about her vision and the frequency of these events happening in this suggested area.

Member Bucci stated that ultimately, it would be a temporary trial run to prove that a permanent area would best serve the downtown area.

Member Boukari and Chair Rothseiden specifically asked if she was referring to the area from Tony and Al's to the blinking light at 148th.

Member Bucci confirmed this as her suggestion.

Member Boukari asked how it would be accomplished as far as blocking off traffic.

Member Bucci suggested movable planters or anything on wheels that can be moved back and forth into place. She also stated that storage would be a concern. She also stated that she spoke with Ms. King about making the Special Event Permit for this a six month permit. She also stated that the 441 Market in Gainesville is losing their property that they hold their event on. She also knows that they have spoken to San Felasco Tech City about an area in their complex, and she believes that this is going to be a huge-missed opportunity if they don't steer them towards downtown. She knows that they want to run it themselves.

Member Boukari restated that the city would provide an area for them and bear the cost of blocking it off every week and they would come in and fill the spaces up.

Member Bucci confirmed that this is what was discussed with members of the Farmers Market. She also stated that some of their vendors would need power and parking for the vendors and visitors. She is requesting a proposal to take to them, so the City can be considered. She also knows that they do not pay anything to be where they are now, so the city would have to cover the cost of the little bit of electricity used.

Member Boukari asked what space would be used for this market other than the specified downtown area.

Several areas to include churches and parks were discussed among the Board

members.

Chair Rothseiden stated that he likes the idea of movable planters, but there will be issues with longevity and weight. He thinks bollards would be a more feasible solution. He also stated that shade will also be a big issue for the public because of the heat.

Member Bucci replied that during the discussions with the Farmers Market board, this issue was discussed. The solution was to suggest a schedule of Friday nights during the hot months (which would coincide with the concert series that is being applied for) and Saturday mornings from October to March.

Chair Rothseiden suggested the space next to Bev's because there are trees and earth- not just pavement.

Member Boukari believes that a changing schedule would bring different crowds.

Chair Rothseiden then questioned the use of South Main Street because it is a highly shaded area and there would be parking available.

Member Bucci stated that she has already spoken to the Women's Club and most of their rented events occur on Saturdays and they need parking for those as well, so that is a big concern for them. She also questioned the availability of power.

Ms. King stated that power would not be an issue because when the poles were serviced last year, access was added to the majority of them.

Vice Chair Harris suggested the area from the accountant's office to the Women's Club would be good because there is parallel parking available. You could probably get 100+ vendors in this area.

Member Bucci asserted that the beautiful fact is the city would only be providing the space and not running it. She stated that she believes the area by Bev's would be great for food trucks if nobody else thought it would cause accessibility problems for the vet or CVS because they are busy on Saturday mornings.

Member Boukari replied that he believes the perfect area for food trucks that could operate any time, would be the parking lot across the street from his office, the Chamber parking lot. He believes that it would not take much effort to provide electricity in this area. He also believes that there is plenty of area for food trucks to pull in and stage.

Chair Rothseiden suggested asking a member of the Farmers Market board to walk around the downtown area with a board member to visually assess these areas.

Ms. King also suggested having them make a presentation to the CRA board along with this committee's information for the September meeting.

Chair Rothseiden stated that there is a huge amount of information in the reports that Ms. King has presented and asked if any Board members have comments on any other subject.

Member Bucci brought up the 2016 report concerning trails. She suggested some kind of informational handout that would inform the public of these attractions. She suggested a handout with a QR code that would expand exposure for all the businesses and attractions available.

Member Boukari stated that there used to be something to that effect in place, but the problem is who is going to keep up with it? Who will have the responsibility of ensuring the information is current?

Member Bucci then suggested social media pages, but again the question is - who will maintain the sites?

Chair Rothseiden interjected with the term consistency. He asserted that the key would be consistency. He also suggested that an intern would be a cost-effective solution. The younger generation would be adept at the current social media pages.

Member Boukari agreed that an intern would be a perfect tool. However, the framework of the responsibilities would need to be set up in advance so that when the internship is concluded, the next one could step right in and keep going.

Vice Chair Harris loves the idea of the QR code if it is utilized correctly.

Member Bucci suggested the idea of an appreciation event for the Main Street businesses. This event would get everyone involved and make them feel like they have a stake in their future.

Member Boukari added his ideas concerning the old warehouse next to the Chamber building. He believes this building could be a resource and utilized for many different things.

Chair Rothseiden agreed that this space could be utilized for hometown - downtown comradery.

Member Boukari believes that people are looking for places where they go to hang out and relax with friends, but the city has to provide the whole package. He believes the current alcohol ordinance hinders this. He stated that the ordinance was drafted at a time when religious entities held more standing than businesses, and it hurt many businesses. He states that now you have church-going folks wanting to have a glass of wine or a beer with their friends.

Chair Rothseiden commended the Board for accomplishing incremental small steps.

The cogs of governmental work sometimes move slower than they would like, but he believes a big step would be the alcohol ordinance change. He also thinks other groups should be involved in some of the ideas that the Board want to see happen. He questioned the total use of the facade grant monies, wanting to know if citizens knew about it.

Ms. King explained the facade grants, the vibrancy grants and the Levitt music series grant. She likes the vibrancy grant that was proposed. She also indicated that a small town up north does micro-grants for small-scale events. If businesses want to do a small-scale event, the CRA makes matching funds to help make the event happen. Because we don't have a special event coordinator, this idea may encourage small businesses to do more small-scale events. She also listed many items that could be applied for in a vibrancy grant. She would like to see a vibrancy grant program developed and approved.

Vice Chair Harris asked if the grant money Ms. King received recently could be used for the bollards that were being discussed.

Ms. King stated the T-mobile monies were for Theatre Park. However, once Theatre Park is finished, the city could apply again for another T-Mobile grant for other things. She assured the Board that she looks for grant opportunities every day.

Chair Rothseiden asked how other types of businesses could be recruited to open in the downtown area. He used the newly opened ice-cream shop as an example. He suggested a bike shop, a bakery or a disc golf place. But he reiterated that the need for an anchor restaurant is paramount to attracting new businesses. He suggested old car shows or Mardi Gras to carry over after the Christmas events every year.

Member Boukari stated Alachua does not have the growth in housing that other communities have had. He believes that Alachua is a drive-through community. He believes that businesses need to believe the population will sustain their business. He believes the demographic of people that want to go out after work is changing because they don't live in Alachua. He believes that the businesses stated by the Chair would be perfect for flex spaces and a large warehouse space is perfect for this. He cited an example from the town of Winter Garden.

Member Boukari also stated that Progress Corporate Park has applied this approach and it has been successful.

Chair Rothseiden and Member Boukari discussed the pros and cons of the Enis building.

Vice Chair Harris agreed that a building is needed. The challenge is that currently sellers are marketing way too high. She believes that the PopUp shop concept would give businesses a glimpse of what could happen to their businesses in the Main Street area. She stated that a food truck rally might be the band-aid to keep things going until bigger decisions can be made.

Member Boukari agreed that small steps like a food truck rally would draw people to the area, which is what's needed first.

Member Bucci states that a physical and apparent change needs to be made. She reiterates that most residents believe that it's all talk, talk, talk. She believes that a major physical investment needs to be made. It would take a very small investment to make a very big change to the downtown/Main Street businesses. She has spoken to several possible investors.

Member Boukari agreed with Member Bucci. However, he compared Alachua to High Springs in terms of food space and flow. He stated that High Springs does not have the resources for their downtown area, but they do have an anchor restaurant.

Member Bucci believes that the city needs to show the anchors that it is willing to invest in them by putting our foot forward now.

Member Boukari contended that there would be problems that arise from blocking off any part of Main Street because there was just a lengthy discussion about parking problems downtown, resulting in a test run for time-limited parking.

Chair Rothseiden stated that the best way for anything to happen is to make motions to the CRA Board. He states that we can have all the discussions in the world, but we are an advisory board. This Board needs to forward these ideas to the CRA Board in the form of a motion.

Member Boukari asked Member Bucci for clarification of her vision for the closing of a portion of downtown.

Member Bucci responded that there are no specifics at this time. All these ideas are coming and this is the perfect opportunity to decide on a place for these ideas to start to happen instead of just talking about it.

Chair Rothseiden explains to member Bucci how a motion is made and works.

Vice Chair Harris states that it is great that there are a lot of folks ready to get their feet on the ground and motions need to include some of this information.

Member Boukari moved to ask Ms. King to explore, at least from a safety and logistics perspective, what would be required to shut down the block of 150th to 148th on a temporary basis and possibly obtain some estimates and timeframes for those requirements, such as bollards for blocking off the roads.

Member Boukari withdraws his previous motion that was not seconded. He asked the Chair if he felt more information, such as costs, was needed from Ms. King before presenting it to the CRA Board.

Chair Rothseiden stated his opinion was that the message needs to get to the CRA Board for action. Then if more information is needed to go from there.

Ms. King stated that she believes the CRA Board will want some indication of cost in the presentation put before them.

Member Boukari moved to ask Ms. King to approach the CRA with the information we have discussed here today, exploring for a trial period the intermittent closure of the block of Main Street that is between NW 150th and NW 148th, and that she take to them, to the best of her ability, the cost of what might necessary to effectuate that and to provide to them any other information that might be necessary for them to approve the further exploration of this idea; seconded by Member Bucci.

Vice Chair Harris commented on the importance of providing a shaded area for a Farmers Market.

Motion passed by 4-0 roll call vote.

Member Boukari moved to ask Ms. King to inform and solicit from the CRA Board any opinions about farmers markets, and inform them that we are interested in exploring working with any farmers market, specifically the one located at the Alachua County Fire Station that is looking to move location; seconded by Vice Chair Harris.

Motion passed by 4-0 roll call vote.

Ms. King informed Chair Rothseiden that in terms of the vibrancy grant, she would need to write up a sample guidelines for how it will work. This will be for next fiscal year and the CRA meetings are being booked up. She will wait until after October 1st to include this on any agenda for the CRA Board.

Chair Rothseiden suggested that facade grants be put to a Special Meeting.

Ms. King commented that once the Planning Department is fully staffed again, it would be feasible, but over the last few months, it has not been possible to do so.

Member Boukari moved to ask Ms. King to bring back to this board any information about what was previously done, as well as what the City previously had, concerning pamphlets and online media; seconded by Member Bucci.

Motion passed by 4-0 roll call vote.

Ms. King informed the Board of other accomplishments from the Downtown Action Plan, including the lighting, banners and outdoor dining.

D) PROPOSED BUDGET INFORMATION

Ms. King, Community Redevelopment Coordinator, presented her report.

Member Boukari questioned the Grants & Aids portion of the budget.

Ms. King explained further.

Chair Rothseiden asked about the gateway signs project.

Ms. King stated that it all depends on the purchase of the land, and it has not been voted on yet. The item is on the CRA agenda in two weeks August 11th.

Vice Chair Harris commended Ms. King for her presentation and persistent work.

Chair Rothseiden asked what defines professional services as it falls under this category.

Ms. King stated she would have to get back to him with that information.

Vice Chair Harris brought to Ms. King's attention to the change in landscaping services on Main Street. The contractors don't blow grass under the doors anymore and are more conscious of the business owners.

Member Boukari and Member Bucci commended Ms. King and other staff, for being good stewards of this Board's monetary concerns and actions.

III. BOARD COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

Member Boukari expressed thanks to past member Mr. Hayes for his contributions to the Board. Mr. Boukari also expressed the need to be mindful of term limits for the Chair. He also stated that a concerned citizen approached him about obstructions on the sidewalk along Main Street to include signs and table/chair set-ups. He recommended exploring the ordinance wording and update the verbiage for current times simply because of safety concerns.

Chair Rothseiden brought up the dead tree in front of the Meyer House.

Ms. King stated she would note it and go check on it.

Member Boukari also stated that a tree by his office is also near dead.

Ms. King stated that some of these trees are on a list and she would check that list.

Vice Chair Harris commented on the landscaping picked by Landscapes Unlimited. She has seen hummingbirds on multiple occasions and is thrilled by this.

Chair Rothseiden reiterated the need for more events to occur in the downtown/Main Street area. He expressed the need to create a "bigger picture idea" for people to contribute to.

IV. CITIZENS COMMENTS

ADJOURN

Vice Chair Harris moved to adjourn.

Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Chair Rothseiden adjourned the meeting. 5:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

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



CRA Advisory Board Chair



Staff Liaison