

City of Clearwater

*Main Library - Council Chambers
100 N. Osceola Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33755*



Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 12, 2026

1:00 PM

Main Library - Council Chambers

Community Redevelopment Agency

Roll Call

Present 5 - Chair Bruce Rector, Trustee Ryan Cotton, Trustee Michael Mannino, Trustee David Allbritton, and Trustee Lina Teixeira

Also Present: Jennifer Poirrier – City Manager, Alfred Battle – Assistant City Manager, David Margolis – City Attorney, Rosemarie Call – City Clerk, Nicole Sprague – Deputy City Clerk, and Jesus Niño – CRA Executive Director

To provide continuity for research, items are listed in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

Unapproved

1. Call to Order – Chair Rector

The meeting was called to order at 1:41 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

- 2.1 Approve the minutes of the December 1, 2025 CRA meeting as submitted in written summation by the City Clerk.

Trustee Teixeira moved to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2025 CRA meeting as submitted in written summation by the City Clerk. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

3. Citizens to be Heard Regarding Items Not on the Agenda

Jill Gibbs thanked the City Attorney for his service.

Marilyn Turman said the Community Family Fun Night welcomed approximately 5,000 participants this year. She encouraged a discussion that goes beyond planning free events and considers events that bring people to Downtown.

4. New Business Items

- 4.1 Present the 2025 Business Spotlight Winners.

On August 18, 2025, the CRA Trustees approved the continuation of the Business Spotlight Program to highlight locally owned businesses within the Downtown Clearwater and North Greenwood CRA districts. The program is intended to showcase businesses that contribute to economic vitality while strengthening community identity and visibility within redevelopment areas.

For the 2025 program cycle, a total of nine businesses were selected as Standard and Legacy Business Spotlight recipients. Legacy businesses are recognized for their long-term investment and sustained presence within the CRA districts.

The selected Business Spotlight recipients, listed by featured month, include:

- Direct Mail 2.0 (Legacy) - February - Downtown Clearwater
- One Stop Shoppe (Legacy) - March - Downtown Clearwater
- New Vision Behavior Health - April - North Greenwood
- Tequila's Restaurant (Legacy) - May - Downtown Clearwater
- Hatchet Hangout - June - North Greenwood
- Social Sips Café - July - Downtown Clearwater
- Soul Sicilian (Legacy) - August - Downtown Clearwater
- Downtown Pizza - September - Downtown Clearwater
- Emily's Restaurant (Legacy) - October - Downtown Clearwater

Throughout the upcoming year, each business will be featured through coordinated marketing efforts with Public Communications to include professional video, storytelling and digital promotion, to support business retention, increase awareness, and reinforce district identity.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

2.1 Strengthen public-private initiatives that attract, develop, and retain diversified business sector.

3.1 Support neighborhood identity through services and programs that empower community pride and belonging.

- 4.2** Approve a loan from the CRA to Clearwater Bluffs LLC and a promissory note, in connection with the approved funding contribution for the residential project on the Bluff.

On August 4, 2022, the City of Clearwater City Council (City Council) - subject to voter approval - tentatively approved a purchase and sale agreement (PSA) with Gotham Property Acquisitions, LLC (Gotham) and the DeNunzio Group, LLC (DeNunzio). The PSA contemplated the sale of the city-owned old City Hall parcel, located at 112 S. Osceola Avenue to Gotham for the construction of a new attached dwelling development project (Project). On that same date, the City Council approved a development agreement relating to both the old City Hall parcel and the separate Harborview parcel.

On February 1, 2024, the City Council approved a fourth amendment to the PSA that created a new closing condition being a funding contribution from the CRA (Contribution) in either the amount of \$2,250,000.00 (if closing on the Old City

Hall Site occurs after March 1, 2026) or in the amount of \$3,250,000.00 (if closing occurs on or before March 1, 2026). The amendment to the PSA also provided that either the \$2,250,00.00 will be disbursed at time of substantial completion of the Project or the \$3,250,000.00 will be disbursed at time of commencement of construction of the Project. On March 18, 2024, the City of Clearwater Community Redevelopment Agency Board of Trustees (Trustees) formally approved the Contribution.

On November 21, 2025, Gotham and DeNunzio assigned the PSA to Clearwater Bluffs LLC (Clearwater Bluffs), a special purpose entity established by Gotham for the development of the Project. Operating under the current framework, Gotham is working diligently toward closing. Their general contractor, Moss, has already obtained all building permits necessary to construct the Project.

In anticipation of closing, the City Attorney, City Manager, CRA Executive Director, and the Gotham team have determined the preferred mechanism to fund the Contribution. On December 4, 2025, the City Council approved a fifth amendment to the PSA providing that the Contribution would be in the form of a loan with a promissory note to be approved by the Trustees. The amount and timing of the Contribution's disbursement remain unchanged. Once the project is complete, the CRA shall discharge the loan. This change represents a win-win for the CRA and Gotham. It protects the CRA by securing the funding with the Promissory Note, while aligning the CRA interests with those of Gotham by requiring the CRA to discharge the loan upon completion of the Project.

Therefore, to ensure the success of the Project and maximize tax savings, the CRA Executive Director recommends converting the Contribution into a 30-year, nonrecourse deferred loan taking the form of a promissory note.

Trustee Allbritton moved to approve a loan from the CRA to Clearwater Bluffs LLC and a promissory note, in connection with the approved funding contribution for the residential project on the Bluff. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

4.3 Approve the amendments to the Downtown Clearwater Commercial Grant.

The Downtown Clearwater Commercial Grant Program has been updated to improve clarity, consistency, and transparency. Changes or amendments to any policy or program are not official without trustee approval.

Recommended changes:

- Table of Contents - Section 2 (pp. 1-3): Corrected typographical errors, removed duplications, standardized terminology, and clarified numbering.
- Section 3 - Available Assistance (pp. 3-4): Clarified CRA Director authority, grant thresholds, and applicant match percentages to ensure consistency and transparency.
- Section 4 - Eligible Property and Applicant (pp. 4-6): Defined eligible applicants, clarified independent ownership/operation requirements, excluded ineligible properties and mobile vendors, and clarified cumulative grant caps over 12 months.
- Section 5 - Eligible Improvements (pp. 6-7): Clarified eligible restaurant fixtures and equipment (cap \$7,500), removed entertainment and outdoor café furniture, and added retroactive reimbursement for approved improvements completed within 8 months prior to application submittal.
- Section 6 - Requirements, Reviews, & Approval Process (pp. 7-9): Removed redundancy and corrected numbering/format errors.
- Section 7 - Disbursement Policy and Procedure (pp. 9-10): Clarified documentation required for disbursement, including proof of payment, contractor information, photographs, permits, inspections, and Certificate of Occupancy/Completion. Work performed without required permits is ineligible.
- Section 11 - Application (pp. 11-13): Added Local Historic Landmark, updated Project Budget (Attachment A) including verified owner equity, and deleted Notary section.

These recommendations enhance clarity and readability, reduce applicant confusion, ensure the effective targeting of grant funds, increase transparency, and safeguard CRA resources.

APPROPRIATION CODE AND AMOUNT:

Funds for the program are available in R2003- Economic Development-City

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

2.1 Strengthen public-private initiatives that attract, develop, and retain diversified business sectors.

2.2 Cultivate a business climate that welcomes entrepreneurship, inspires local investment, supports Eco-friendly enterprises, and encourages high-quality job growth.

2.3 Promote Clearwater as a premier destination for entertainment, cultural experiences, tourism, and national sporting events.

3.1 Support neighborhood identity through services and programs that empower community pride and belonging.

Trustee Mannino moved to approve the amendments to the Downtown Clearwater Commercial Grant. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

4.4 Approve the recommended updates to the Residential Exterior Improvement Grant Program guidelines for the North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area (NGCRA).

The North Greenwood CRA Residential Exterior Improvement Grant Program provides financial assistance to homeowners for exterior (and certain qualifying interior) improvements to enhance neighborhood aesthetics and pride. Staff has reviewed the current program guidelines and recommends updates to simplify application processes, align funding with current construction costs, clarify eligibility, and improve consistency across program administration.

Recommended Summary Changes:

- Program Funding: Increase maximum grant award from \$20,000 to \$25,000 to align with rising construction and material costs.
- Program Scope: Allow limited interior repairs for life-safety issues or damage caused by exterior conditions while maintaining primary focus on exterior improvements.
- Match Waiver: Simplify the match structure to a flat 5% for households 0 -120% AMI. Community service can waive match at \$150 per hour, up to a maximum of \$25,000. Clarifies eligibility, timing, and approval processes, including staff designee approval.
- Payment Clarity: The grant is a reimbursement grant payable to the homeowner upon completion of the project receiving funding. The applicant is responsible for paying the contractor and must submit acceptable proof of payment. Partial reimbursements may be considered for work completed in phases; however, reimbursements for contractor payments shall not occur more than once every 30 days, unless otherwise approved by the CRA Director. However, the CRA Director may approve payments from the CRA to a licensed contractor for the cost of materials and/or permits. If payment is approved, such contractor may be paid for work performed before the completion of a project provided such contractor is not paid more than once per every 30 days.
- Eligibility Updates:
 - Homeowners must be current on mortgage payments or provide proof of an approved payment plan.

- Limits of \$25,000 per homeowner within a 36-month rolling period, with exceptions for ADA or life-safety issues.
- Administrative Updates:
 - Remove the requirement for homeowners to provide three contractor quotes.
 - Correct grammatical errors, deleted notary and updated CRA address, and clarify household size reporting, and added clarity to application questions.
 - Applicants must receive a “Finding of Project Completion” within 365 calendar days from the date of application approval. After the said 365 days, the grant will expire.

These updates simplify program administration, provide greater flexibility for applicants, and ensure the Residential Exterior Improvement Grant Program continues to support NGCRA and City strategic goals while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

APPROPRIATION CODE AND AMOUNT:

Funds for this program are available in project R2401, Residential Improvement Program.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

3.1 Support neighborhood identity through services and programs that empower community pride and belonging.

3.2 Preserve community livability through responsible development standards, proactive code compliance, and targeted revitalization.

Trustee Cotton moved to approve the recommended updates to the Residential Exterior Improvement Grant Program guidelines for the North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area (NGCRA). The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

- 4.5** Approve an increase to the maximum award amount for the North Greenwood Commercial Grant Program from \$75,000.00 to \$100,000.00.

The North Greenwood Commercial Grant Program was established to encourage reinvestment in commercial properties, support small businesses, and stimulate economic activity within the North Greenwood CRA. The program currently allows for a maximum grant award of \$75,000 per eligible project. Since implementation, staff has seen increased construction costs, higher material and labor expenses associated with commercial rehabilitation and

build-out projects.

Increasing the maximum grant award from \$75,000 to \$100,000 would allow the program to better respond to current market conditions and provide sufficient gap financing for higher-impact commercial projects. This adjustment would improve the program's competitiveness, encourage greater private investment, and support the CRA's broader objectives of strengthening commercial corridors and expanding economic opportunities in North Greenwood.

The proposed increase would not alter program eligibility criteria, reimbursement requirements, or oversight processes. All grant awards would continue to be subject to available funding and administrative approval in accordance with established CRA policies.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

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3.1 Support neighborhood identity through services and programs that empower community pride and belonging.

Trustee Teixeira moved to approve an increase to the maximum award amount for the North Greenwood Commercial Grant Program from \$75,000.00 to \$100,000.00. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

5. Director's Report

5.1 Director's Report for December 2025.

CRA Executive Director Jesus Nino provided a PowerPoint presentation.

In response to questions, Assistant City Manager Al Battle said a recent article in NPR highlighted museums across the country are having difficulty raising funds. He said staff also heard while discussing with groups interested in the Reimagine Clearwater Main Library Redevelopment opportunity that having the dollars to install and maintain these installations to attract activity in spaces where they

normally do not exist is waning.

Discussion ensued with consensus to schedule quarterly agenda items that present the information received by staff from organizations responding to the Reimagine Clearwater Library Redevelopment opportunity, which should include the contact person and concerns they raised.

In response to questions, Housing Manager Dylan Mayeux said the City encourages and assists new developers with developing within the city. The AHAC committee discusses each year the strategies to encourage new developers in the city. He said the Community Service Foundation is a local housing provider that developed a single-family home for a homeless veteran last year. Regarding the La Salle Street parcel, the developer approached the City a year prior to the parcel becoming available. The individual has been a developer for approximately ten years and completed a project in Brooksville, Florida. He said the Technical Review Committee reviewed the application and history of the developer and decided to move forward with the project. Staff is working with Legal to ensure terms and conditions are included in the agreement in the event the City needs to reclaim the property.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

Attest

Chair
Community Redevelopment Agency

City Clerk