



Tampa Community Redevelopment Agency  
306 East Jackson Street 2N  
Tampa, Florida 33602  
(813) 274-8325  
tampa.gov/CRA

**WEST TAMPA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Summary**

May 20, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

Martin Luther King Community Center, 2200 N. Oregon Avenue, Tampa, FL 33607

**Meeting Called to Order** by Joseph Robinson, CAC Chair at 5:39 p.m. Rollcall was taken and a quorum was established.

CAC Member	At-Large or Ex-Officio Seat	CAC Term Date	Present or Absent
Joseph Robinson, Chair	West Tampa Community Development Corp.	1/16/2027	P
Carlos Ramirez, Vice Chair	North Hyde Park Alliance	3/9/2025	P
Michael Braccia	At Large	6/29/2025	P
Sandra Sanchez	At Large	6/29/2025	P
Janice Williams	At Large	6/29/2025	P
Bobby Wilson	Old West Tampa Neighborhood Association and Crimewatch	4/13/2025	P
Jeanette LaRussa Fenton	West Tampa Chamber of Commerce	9/12/2026	P
Cynthia Maloney	North Hyde Park Civic Association	9/15/2025	P
Delphine Jones	West Riverfront Crime Watch Group	1/16/2027	P
Tina Young	Project Link Inc.	1/16/2027	P
David Iloanya	Tampa Housing Authority	7/25/2026	P
Vacant	Greater West Tampa Community Council		
Vacant	West Tampa Alliance		

P: present V: Virtual

**Staff present:** Brenda Thrower, Chris Ullian, Be Parks

**Sign In Sheet:** Jack Smith, Anabel Sierra, Dan Mathis, Deborah Howard, Gakelyne Perez, Meryl Stout, and Nathan Farley

**Public Comment:** 1. Dan Mathis announced an upcoming Main Street Homecoming event on July 12 to be held at McFarlane Park and then at Main Street business; 2. Gakelyne Perez, Meryl Stout and Nathane Farley with Coalition of Community Gardens gave an update on the MLK community garden and offered tour.

**Approval of April 15, 2025, CAC Meeting Minutes** – Chair Robinson asked for approval of the April 15<sup>th</sup> minutes. ***There was a motion (Sanchez/Maloney) to approve the minutes. The vote was unanimously approved.***

**Tampa CRA Communications Support** – Jack Smith with HCP Associates introduced himself and his firm who is the official communications contractor for Tampa CRA. He presented a power point presentation describing the firm, their experience with previous services contracts and their role with the Ybor CRA in handling district communications. HCP has prepared and published the Florida Statute required Tampa CRA Annual Reports for the past 2 years as well as the Performance Measurement report due last December. Currently, they handle the Tampa CRA social media platforms that were migrated from Ybor CRA. These include Facebook, Instagram and Linked In platforms. He encouraged all members to sign up for the CRA News Releases as well as to like/follow on social media. There was a question about the newsletter and if there will be one newsletter or district ones. A Tampa CRA newsletter will be released shortly and presented to the CRA Board at their June meeting. Redevelopment activities in each of the CRA will be spotlighted. It's just one tool for sharing positive news and CRA related information to the community. It will also serve as a reference when preparing the annual report. Content for social media should be sent to the CRA managers so it can be scheduled for sharing and posting. CAC members were asked to share the QR code to sign up for news releases with their respective organizations. HCP Associates is currently under contract until December of this year since the five-year contract with Ybor CRA expires. The intent is to issue a new Request for Proposal (RFP) this summer so that we can continue these services for another 5 years.

**Strategic Acquisition for Affordable Housing- 1712 N. Albany Avenue** – Manager Thrower introduced the opportunity to purchase the historic home at 1712 N. Albany (blue house), just north of Freedom Park and shared the history of the building. The building is currently residential and can accommodate up to two units (upstairs and downstairs) with two entrances facing Albany. Since the lot is large, it may be possible to add a third unit with the guidance of historic preservation. City Real Estate has negotiated a total purchase price up to \$480,000 with the willing seller. Be Parks commented on the affordable housing objective and that buying and renovating this property would contribute to affordable unit creation goals for the West Tampa CRA. She explained the income eligibility requirements. The CAC had a lot of questions which included the costs of renovation, current land use/zoning allowances, options to purchase for another use (i.e. coffee shop or welcome center) and the feasibility of relocating the structure to another lot. Robinson questioned the priority of acquiring this house and asked about the status of the other CRA owned house on Spruce Street. Sanchez supported buying the house since the property is valuable and part of the Main Street Business District. She stressed that we need to act now and buy this property or someone else will and they will find a way to tear the historic home down. Robinson agreed about the land being valuable and its importance to the commercial district but would like to have more information. Braccia was concerned about the renovation costs and the lack of a plan. Maloney and Jones supported the purchase to protect the historic structure. Wilson agreed to purchase it, stating that it can serve as a cornerstone building to

spur more development in the area. There was discussion about acquiring this property for commercial use rather than for affordable housing since West Tampa already has significant affordable housing projects being developed. ***There was a motion (Sanchez/Wilson) to move forward to purchasing the property, accepting a friendly amendment from Fenton asking staff to report back to the CAC on potential uses for the property prior to CRA Board approval. The vote was unanimously approved.***

## Staff Reports

- a. **Projects Team** – Report was included in the packet with comments as follows:
  1. **Public Art Utility Wraps** – Sanchez reported as the CAC Art Committee representative for this project. She said the project is moving along but feels the animal themes are not relevant to West Tampa.
  2. **New Traffic Signal at Main & Albany**- Jones requested an update from City Mobility on accidents reported at this intersection. Braccia said people have been rolling through the stop sign and there are community safety concerns.
  3. **Freedom Park** –Fenton asked about the status of this project and timeline since there has been no work started at the park yet.
  4. **Tree Trimming**- The Housing Rehabilitation & Renovation Program (HRRP) accommodates tree trimming and applications are available from Be Parks.
  5. **West Riverwalk Project** – Ramirez reported that he has been serving as a community liaison and Nina Mabilieu with City Mobility will be providing quarterly updates to the CAC moving forward.
- b. **Grants Team** – A tabloid size of the monthly grants tracking report was provided for easier reading which was well received by CAC members. The CRA Grants Team will be coming next month to provide a Grant Policy update.
- c. **Housing Update**- Report was included and Be Parks was present.
- d. **Manager Report**
  - a. **West Tampa Commercial Property Inquiry Update** - Jones asked about the status of the blighted commercial property at 2131 East Main Street and if the City/CRA can acquire it so it can be redeveloped. Thrower reported that City Real Estate staff contacted the owner on April 30, 2025, but they said they are applying for a CRA grant to rehab the building and they are not interested in selling this property. Robinson passed gavel to Ramirez. ***There was a motion (Robinson/Jones) for staff to reach out to the owner and invite them to a future CAC meeting to share their plans for the building. Vote was unanimous.***

## New Business

- a. Braccia mentioned TECO's underground utility program and feels we need to design our parks with burying utilities moving forward. He learned that TECO has an underground utility program and advised that city staff coordinate with them.

**b.** Fenton commented on the poor condition of the bulb out planters that the County installed long ago along Howard and Armenia. She feels that they need attention or removal. ***There was a motion (Fenton/Ramirez) for staff to contact Hillsborough County about beautifying these planters or consider removing them. The vote was unanimously approved.***

**c.** Robinson submitted 13 Good Neighbor Notices for various properties.

**e. Announcements**

- Next CRA Board meeting: June 12, 2025, at 9 a.m. at Tampa City Council
- Next CAC Meeting: June 17, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. at HEF Community Center

**Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.**