MINUTES
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT BOARD OF THE CITY OF STUART
OCTOBER 7, 2025
AT 4:00 PM
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
121 SW FLAGLER AVE.
STUART, FLORIDA 34994

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

Chair - Mark Brechbill
Vice Chair - Bonnie Moser
Board Member - Frederick James
Board Member - Will Laughlin
Board Member - Jeff Manera
Board Member - Clay Scherer
Board Member - Scott Whalen

ADMINISTRATIVE

CRA Executive Director - Pinal Gandhi-Savdas
Board Secretary - Susej T. Meleqi

CALL TO ORDER

4:00 PM

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Brechbill, Vice Chair Moser, Board Member James, Board Member Laughlin, Board Member Manera, Board Member Whalen

ABSENT: Board Member Scherer

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

4:01 PM MOTION: Approve.
MOVED BY: Bonnie Moser
SECONDED BY: Frederick James
Motion approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. APPROVAL OF 09/15/2025 CRB MINUTES

4:03 PM MOTION: Approve.
MOVED BY: Frederick James
SECONDED BY: Will Laughlin
Motion approved unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (Non-Agenda Related) (3 Minutes Max.)

None.

COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS (Non-Agenda Items)

Chair Brechbill

- Commented on the last meeting discussion on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and feels CRB should not be involved.
- Questioned what the advantage is to the City of the CDBG. (Pinal Gandhi-Savdas, CRA Director, gave an explanation.)
- Commented that a truly historical home is a completely different building process than an older home, and the City should stay away from that type of grant.

ACTION ITEMS

2. THE SPICE AND TEA EXCHANGE REQUESTING A MAJOR URBAN CODE CONDITIONAL USE LOCATED AT 39 SW OSCEOLA STREET. (RC)

   RESOLUTION No. 98-2025, A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, TO APPROVE A MAJOR URBAN CODE CONDITIONAL USE TO GLENN AND KIMBERLY GORDON WITH GORDON ENTERPRISES STUART, LLC ALSO KNOWN AS THE SPICE AND TEA EXCHANGE, TENANT AT 39 SW OSCEOLA STREET; TO ALLOW A FORMULA BUSINESS TO BE LOCATED WITHIN THE FORMULA BUSINESS AREA AND TO WAIVE THE REQUIRED 300 FOOT SEPARATION BETWEEN FORMULA BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Chair Brechbill read the item into the Record.

Lee Baggett, City Attorney, swore in Michelle Arbuzow, Jodi Kugler, Glenn Gordon, Kimberly Gordon, Marcella Camblor, and Max Ducharme

Michelle Arbuzow, Development Planner, presented the item.

Ms. Camblor spoke in assistance to the applicant, reviewed the benefits of having this business here.

Glenn and Kimberly Gordon, Downtown Stuart Retail, LLC, owners of Spice and Tea, gave their background and years of experience. Provided a short video of the concept and passed out a jar of tea to each board member to experience the scents. Commented that

they are here to enhance the community, small town is their special interest, and provided names of their other locations.

City Attorney Baggett, explained the issues for having to become before the board for a Major Urban Code Conditional Use.

Board Member Laughlin

- Asked if this is a franchise of the Tea and Spice. (*Response:* They are not part of that franchise, the name is different. Spice and Tea is their business, and is a franchise as well.)
- Asked the owner of Killwins, Bill Moore, as having any problems with this. (*Response:* He is in support, not opposed.)
- Commented on a concern of the possibility that the parent company could become very large and may cause a problem in the future.

Board Member Manera asked if there were any renderings. Ms. Camblor commented that the building is in the process of an already approved renovation to the facade and will have signage that meets code. Mr. Gordon explained what they have done in Fisherman's Village to compliment other businesses.

Board Member James thanked the staff for all the information they provided. He welcomes them.

Board Member Whalen

- Asked if there have been any kickbacks, how many employees they will staff, and why in Stuart. (*Response:* Have been coming to Stuart for years, and have not received any kickbacks, they plan on employing 6 to 8 people, and they love the small downtown feel and charm of Stuart.)

Vice Chair Moser is conflicted with the location, but really appreciates the care put into our land development code. Read the code portion, "The proposed formula business will not alter the identity of the urban district in any way which detracts from its uniqueness or contributes to a nationwide trend of standardized downtown offerings." She worries if we say yes here, what comes next.

Chair Brechbill

- Stated there are 98 franchises, and they own four (4) of the franchises and asked who will be overseeing this one. (*Response:* Will hire a local person to fill manager position and run this store.)
- Commented that their businesses are in high-end areas and asked if this is more expensive than other leases? (*Response:* No, comparable to Mt. Dora.)
- How many internet sales are there? (*Response:* Stated less than five (5) percent and explained the follow-through on an internet order process.)
- Asked what their season is? (*Response:* Stated fall and winter are the busiest, summer is the slowest.)

- Asked the hours? (*Response:* Stated 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day. Hours are modified to fit the location.)
- Asked staff what impact a multiple-location franchise will have on existing leasing costs.

Development Director Kugler explained what their analysis includes and explained that they look at the character, what type of sales they make, the ambiance, and if it is a formula-based business. Stated that their review does not include the costs and rent.

Chair Brechbill asked City Attorney Baggett if this request to allow a formula business and to waive the required 300 foot separation is legal.

City Attorney Baggett stated that we have factors in the code and, in this case, it is not directly in the downtown area. There is testimony from the applicant that they will comply with rules downtown regarding signage and frontage and not alter the urban community. He reviewed the statements within the presentation regarding meeting our codes.

Board Members continued discussion and made their statements.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Bill Moore, Stuart - Owner of Killwins; Commented that we can't control free market, unconstitutional; in favor.
2. Max Ducharme - Stuart; Commented that he is a partner in the ownership group of the building; feels that sales are down, and we do need to evaluate allowing businesses like this in; in favor.
3. Robin Peters- Funky Monkey; Mom and pop store and feels if we bring in one franchise, they will all try to come; opposed.
4. Lillian Peterson - Argento Jewelry; Commented that this store is not a big franchise, not a corporate name, and will complement our downtown feel; in favor.

Chair Brechbill concluded by stating that 98 locations is considered a large franchise, and we must set a precedent, otherwise do away with the code.

5:28 PM MOTION: Approved.
MOVED BY: James Frederickson
SECONDED BY: Bonnie Moser
VOTE: MOTION FAILED 4/2 5:41 p.m.
NO: Mark Brechbill, Bonnie Moser, Jeff Manera, Scott Whalen
YES: Frederick James, Will Laughlin

STAFF UPDATE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

5:41 PM

Susej T. Meleqi, Board Secretary

Mark Brechbill, Chair

Minutes to be approved at the CRB Meeting this 4th day of November, 2025.