



Legislation Text

File #: 180735., **Version:** 1

NW 1st Ave Special Façade Improvements Program (B)

At the January 3rd, 2019 City Commission Meeting, Commissioner Warren requested that the CRA place the midtown façade grant agreement with PreDevco, LLC on the February CRA agenda. Mr. Rod Shelton of PreDevco had contacted Commissioner Warren and requested that his façade grant be extended beyond the December 31, 2018 deadline.

Before construction began on the NW 1st Ave Streetscape Project, steps were taken to offer support to businesses along the corridor through multiple initiatives. One of these initiatives was a special Midtown Façade Grant Program. The program was created in order to encourage and support private investment in businesses that may have been impacted during street renovations by helping to make significant enhancements to their properties and building exteriors. The program focused on properties located within the geographic area bounded by West University Avenue, NW 2nd Avenue, NW 16th Street and NW 20th Street. This was an enhanced version of the Commercial Façade Improvements Program, offering up to a 100% reimbursement for eligible improvements (see Midtown Façade Grant Program_R3 V2, Page 3).

The special program was time-limited and designed to be implemented in conjunction with construction of the NW 1st Avenue Streetscape, which was completed in July of 2018. As per page 6 of the application, the following requirements were listed and made part of all contracts:

- A. Applications must be submitted to the CRA by December 1, 2017, 5 PM.
- B. All approved projects must commence by January 31, 2018, and complete by December 31, 2018, to be eligible for grant reimbursement.
- C. Grants may not be awarded for projects started before the grant award.
- D. The CRA will distribute funds to the grant Recipient only upon validation that the work has been completed and it is demonstrated that all contractors are paid in full. Valid receipts must be submitted to receive reimbursement fund disbursement.

The CRA Board approved the program in July of 2016. Applications were to be accepted from August 1, 2016 to October 31, 2017.

To encourage more participation, the CRA board voted to extend the program in May of 2017 to accept applications until December 1, 2017, subject to CPUH Advisory Board Approval (approved by CPUH Board in June of 2017).

Mr. Rich Guber of PreDevco, LLC (the contract purchaser) submitted an application for the vacant building that was the former UF Bookstore, located at 1614 W University Avenue, on 11/28/2017. The application included extensive façade work, hardscape, landscape, and improving building accessibility. The plans included a Walgreen's on the first floor and a sports bar on the second floor. They were informed on 01/05/2018 that they were approved for a reimbursement of up to \$57,500, based on the work proposed in the application. In March of 2018, the CRA Project Manager and Mr. Rich Guber exchanged correspondence regarding a second legal address for the upstairs, where a restaurant or sports bar would be added. It was determined that due to the

second legal address, they were eligible for an additional \$57, 500, for a total of \$115,000. Mr. Guber submitted a second application, this one for suite 200 (upstairs) on March 11, 2018. The Façade agreements for Suites 100 and 200 were executed on 6/27/2018. The terms of the program required that all work was completed by December 31, 2018. Because the work was not completed by this date, the contract terminated.

The CRA Board has the authority to extend the program. The extension would also apply to other projects that were approved but either reduced their scope to finish in time or were not completed by the deadline. These applicants were approved for an additional \$13,161 in grants. It should also be noted that the application for PreDevco was approved with the condition that a Walgreen's would be in the building. However, Mr. Shelton has communicated that the tenant will be a Wawa and not a Walgreens. Accepting this change would require the CRA Board to re-open the program and allow new applications.

None

CRA Staff to the CRA Board: Hear Presentation