

The staff and board of the Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency are deeply saddened by the death of our Chairman, James Lamar Shuler. Lamar served on the CRA board for 5 years, the last several months as Chairman. He also served for many years on the board of the West Atlantic Redevelopment Coalition, and was chair of that board as well. Lamar was deeply committed to the revitalization of Delray Beach and the West Atlantic area. He had been in Delray through the years of disinvestment and blight, when most of the shops were empty and there was no reason to go downtown, but he believed very strongly that the City could come back and that it could be someplace special. And he wanted to be involved in that comeback. Lamar was an unapologetic advocate for progress. He put his own dollars and his hard work into renovating his funeral home on West Atlantic so that it stood out as a gem. He served on boards and committees, giving of his time and energy even during the worst stages of his illness, because he wanted to see things improve and he wanted to make a difference.

Lamar believed very strongly in growth and redevelopment, and he embraced change, but he was also committed to making sure that everyone benefited from the progress, and that “the little guy” didn’t get left out. He believed in treating everyone with dignity and respect. He was a big supporter of the CRA’s affordable housing programs and initiatives to help small businesses, and a champion of projects like the conversion of the LaFrance Hotel into housing for low income elderly residents. It was a pleasure working with him on the CRA board because he understood how important these projects were to the West Atlantic community and the City as a whole, and how people’s lives could truly be changed for the better. He always got the big picture. We are all so thankful for the time we had with him and for the leadership he provided, and we will miss him terribly.