

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2010**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Christel Schmidt, Chairman
Dianne Bettmann, John Chalifoux,
Nancy Lisby, Dawn MacGibbon

OTHERS PRESENT: Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner
John Hagerman

CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Roll Call
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting - March 25, 2010
- C. Amended Bylaws
 - Ms. MacGibbon drew members' attention to the amended bylaws, as delineated in the agenda material, confirming the only change was reference to the Revitalization Committee which had been sunsetted.
- D. Election of Officers
 - Mr. Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Manager, opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.
 - Mr. Chalifoux NOMINATED Ms. Schmidt for Chairman.
 - Ms. Bettmann MOVED, Mr. Chalifoux SECONDED to close the nominations. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
 - As there were no other nominations, Ms. Schmidt was appointed Chairman by acclamation.
 - Mr. Austin opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman.
 - Ms. MacGibbon NOMINATED Mr. Chalifoux for Vice Chairman.
 - Ms. Bettmann MOVED, Ms. MacGibbon SECONDED to close the nominations be closed. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
 - As there were no other nominations, Mr. Chalifoux was appointed Vice Chairman by acclamation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Meeting of January 28, 2010
 - Ms. MacGibbon MOVED, Mr. Chalifoux SECONDED approval of the January 28, 2010 minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Certificate of Appropriateness
 1. HPAB Review
 - a. CA-05-10 - 207 Cross Street (Banyan Point) - Awning & Monument Signage
 - Mr. Austin announced the subject building was a non-contributing structure located in the National Register Historic District (NRHD) and had been constructed circa 1927. He mentioned the building's non-contributing status was due to insensitive alterations and renovations performed sometime between World War II and the mid-1980s, adding other alterations were made in the years since the 1987 NRHD survey. He acknowledged it was difficult to determine if the structure was closer in appearance to the original 1920s version without full architectural or photographic evidence. He stated the proposed signage consisted of an awning sign facing U.S. 41 South, building identification signage and a ground sign south of the building in a landscaped island within the building's associated parking area. He explained the awning sign met the requirements of City Code, adding the applicant had requested the ground sign be considered under the guidelines of City Code Section 11.11, Creative Signs. He concluded staff recommended approval based on the evidence provided, offering to answer any questions of the Board.
 - Ms. MacGibbon clarified approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness by the Board was all that was needed under Section 11.11. She commented on the proposed building identification sign, "Established 1927," asking Mr. Chalifoux to comment on same.
 - Mr. Chalifoux explained while working jointly with Charlotte County on historic signs, it had been determined there was no cohesiveness with regard to signs in the historic district.
 - Ms. MacGibbon clarified she had no objection to the sign but rather perhaps the building could be officially recognized by uniform signage.
 - Mr. John Hagerman, applicant, commended City staff on their assistance throughout the application process. He noted he had conferred with Mr. Vernon Peoples, local historian, on the history of the subject structure, adding the awning itself was in place as of 1942.
 - Ms. MacGibbon reiterated she simply wished to let the applicant know there may be a standardized sign available in the future.
 - Mr. Chalifoux displayed an overhead of a preliminary sign design for that described by Ms. MacGibbon.

- Mr. Austin explained the signage being displayed was intended to serve as additional recognition of individual structures.
- Mr. Hagerman commented favorably on the sign being displayed, stating he would be delighted to display same when available.
- Mr. Chalifoux confirmed he had no objection to the sign depicted in the agenda material.
- Ms. MacGibbon MOVED, Ms. Bettmann SECONDED approval of CA-05-10, the applicant to be allowed to have both the proposed sign and the historic sign displayed by Mr. Chalifoux when available. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Information Only

a. CA-03-10 - 301 Durrance Street, Concrete on Driveway

- Mr. Austin stated the applicants had an existing, non-conforming gravel driveway/apron approximately 20 feet from the property line. He explained the applicants originally intended to simply concrete the gravel area; however, City Code prohibited parking in front of a building; thus, the proposed driveway had to be extended an additional 20 feet to allow parking behind the principle frontage line of the structure. He concluded this was a fairly straightforward project but a marked improvement.
 - Mr. Chalifoux commented the residents of this home parked a large commercial trailer at this location, asking if same was allowed.
 - Mr. Austin replied affirmatively other than in the Special Residential Overlay (SRO) districts.
 - Ms. MacGibbon expressed concern with the prohibition against gravel.
 - Mr. Austin countered City Code no longer permitted same.
 - Ms. MacGibbon commented on the significant amount of paving being done and its effect with regard to generation of heat, being “green” and run-off, stating she would be in favor of shell driveways. She recalled grass and/or brick parking areas were encouraged in the late 1990s for those reasons, specifically downtown and in the NRHD. She suggested it may be time to revisit this issue due to the movement towards “green” building.
 - Mr. Austin stated the Public Works Department was concerned with debris on right-of-ways (ROWS) such as gravel due to the potential for trip hazards.
 - Ms. MacGibbon recommended the City consider allowing shell.
 - Mr. Chalifoux agreed, pointing out shell was quite durable.
- b. CA-04-10 - Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Wind Retrofit
- Mr. Austin explained CA-04-10 encompassed all projects which were part of the HMGP received after Hurricane Charley in August 2004. He advised the program involved 11

different structures with 9 property owners, 2 being commercial and the others residential. He stated all projects were either shutter and/or impact glass additions. He clarified the program was closed and had been for approximately three years, adding all projects were reviewed by the State.

- Ms. Schmidt confirmed applications were no longer being accepted.
- Ms. MacGibbon commented there was a great deal of frustration regarding this project due to changing program parameters. She asked Mr. Austin to list the properties.
- Mr. Austin did so as follows: 109 East Olympia Avenue (commercial); 111 McGregor Street; 601 West Retta Esplanade; 613 West Retta Esplanade; 130 Tamiami Trail (commercial); 211 Harvey Street; 519 West Olympia Avenue; 615 West Marion Avenue; 707 West Retta Esplanade; 805 West Retta Esplanade; 604 West Marion Avenue. He advised the program was closed in 2005 or 2006.
- Ms. Lisby asked how the public was made aware of this program.
- Mr. Austin replied two public meetings were held, adding a mailing/door-to-door was done in 2005.
- Ms. Lisby countered no one came to her home nor did she receive any information in the mail.
- Mr. Austin explained the program was focused on a specific area based on high flood hazard.
- Ms. Schmidt confirmed the above mentioned properties had been approved in theory.
- Discussion ensued with regard to the ever changing requirements of this program.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Punta Gorda Historical Society, Inc.
 - Ms. Lisby reported the History Park Christmas event was very successful, adding the next venture was the historic building tour to include the old Courthouse on March 6, 2010. She advised the tickets were printed on souvenir post cards depicting buildings no longer in existence and displayed samples of same.
 - Ms. Bettmann asked if the local trolley would be part of the tour.
 - Ms. Lisby replied it would not due to the cost associated with same.

STAFF COMMENTS

- A. Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Project Status Report
 - Mr. Austin announced the bicycle loaner program was operational. He advised work on Retta Esplanade between U.S. 41 North and South would commence in March 2010 and was expected to be complete by July 2010. He stated Phase 1 of the Linear Park was pushed back from February to March 2010.

- Ms. Lisby questioned the completion date of the Shreve Street/Pompano Avenue project.
- Mr. Austin replied a press release was issued the previous day and read same into the record, adding completion was anticipated by the end of April 2010.
- Ms. Lisby commented the influx of traffic on Olympia Avenue resulting from the number of road construction projects and the inability of drivers to read signs were making travel through the City outrageous.
- Mr. Austin mentioned the bridge closure on Aqui Esta Drive and the Shreve Street/Pompano Avenue project were not intended to overlap but had done so due to delays.
- Mr. Chalifoux expressed concern with regard to drivers speeding on Olympia and Marion Avenues in conjunction with the bicycle loaner program, stating he planned to contact Police Chief Butch Arenal as he envisioned a horrible accident.
- Mr. Austin agreed the presence of parallel parking and lack of curb bulbs on Olympia Avenue tended to encourage speeders due to the wide field of view. He noted Chief Arenal was very open to community outreach.
- Ms. MacGibbon commented speeding had been a problem for many years, adding Chief Arenal met with residents approximately one year earlier regarding same as well as other issues. She recalled suggestions to brick the intersections as was done on Marion Avenue or installation of stop signs at each intersection. She acknowledged police officers could not be present 24 hours per day. She then commented on the road project ongoing in the historic district, stating the release of tannic water had stained curbs and driveways as well as ruined lawns. She expressed hope the City planned to conduct a clean-up following conclusion of this project.
- Mr. Austin opined it would be appropriate to address the Board's concerns with the City Manager and/or City Council. He agreed traffic calming was the obvious solution to the speeding issue; however, it was costly to do properly.
- Ms. MacGibbon pointed out bricking was just accomplished in another section, asking why same was not extended to these other intersections.
- Mr. Austin replied the downtown flooding mitigation project was being accomplished through grant funding and was never addressed from a planning perspective.
- Discussion ensued with regard to traffic calming practices.
- Ms. MacGibbon stated perhaps the Board could gather signatures on a letter from concerned residents in order to gain the City's attention to this issue.

MEMBER COMMENTS

- Ms. Bettmann confirmed no letters of interest had been submitted relative to the Board's vacancies.

- Ms. Lisby confirmed members were not required to be residents of the historic district but rather must be City residents.
- Ms. MacGibbon then recalled a question arose regarding whether the Board could receive funds, noting Section 5.G. of their bylaws stated the Board could “receive and recommend to City Council use of any cash, historic façade easements, historic structures or artifacts donated to the City of Punta Gorda.” She clarified it appeared the Board could only recommend how to spend any funds it raised. She suggested the Board may wish to petition City Council with a request to be allowed to decide how any funds raised were designated.
- Mr. Austin mentioned staff had been directed by City Council to produce a donation program for the parks system, stating he believed same would be presented on March 17, 2010. He clarified perhaps that program could serve as a model for that suggested by Ms. MacGibbon, albeit strictly for historic preservation.
- Ms. MacGibbon asked Mr. Austin to provide copies of staff’s program to members by electronic mail. She then noted City Manager Howard Kunik had not yet received any agenda material relative to the murals at the Herald Court Centre, as discussed at the previous meeting.
- Ms. Schmidt confirmed she and Ms. Sandy Pond, Punta Gorda Mural Society (PGMS), met with City Manager Kunik; however, the Main Street Punta Gorda (MSPG) meeting was scheduled to be held after the March 3, 2010 CRA Meeting; thus, the project would be presented at the April 2010 CRA meeting.
- Ms. MacGibbon then stated she understood the Revitalization Committee awards program would be handled by either MSPG or Team Punta Gorda (TPG); however, she advised she had suggested City Manager Kunik turn the program over to this Board as they were City sanctioned. She opined most business and property owners would prefer an official award. She pointed out this Board had handled architectural awards years earlier with participation by premier architects during a weekend long event, providing a detailed description of same.
- Mr. Chalifoux commented a historic revitalization award program may provide an incentive to some property owners.
- Ms. Lisby expressed concern with regard to the potential for diluting the significance of Punta Gorda’s historic district bit by bit.
- Ms. MacGibbon agreed, stating she would not wish to see countless awards programs cropping up.

- Ms. Schmidt offered to write a letter to the City Manager and City Council regarding the Board's intention to consider an overall awards program, requesting same be placed on the next agenda.
- Mr. Austin stated he would attempt to provide as much back-up information as possible from other award programs.
- Ms. MacGibbon added she would research her own files for information relative to the architectural award program.
- Mr. Chalifoux then reported he believed Mr. Terry Yonker, leasing agent for the parking garage, was on board with the Board's mural idea for that structure; however, their schedules had conflicted over the past several weeks. He commented on the historic tour available through the City's web site, advising he had transferred all information to Excel and was now making his own notes. He stated he would provide copies to members for review at the following month's meeting. He mentioned he had studied the 2002/2003 survey and discovered a recommendation was made to expand the NRHD; however, the suggestion was placed on the back burner following Hurricane Charley.
- Ms. MacGibbon commented there had been a concern with regard to a negative effect on the NRHD due to the loss of so many contributing structures in the hurricane. She explained another survey was due at this time.
- Mr. Austin agreed, noting a historic district designation was based on the density of contributing structures.
- Ms. MacGibbon asked when the survey would be conducted.
- Mr. Austin replied he would need to first meet with Mr. David Hilston, Urban Design Manager, regarding same, stating he would need to investigate the availability of matching grant funding as well.
- Ms. MacGibbon noted the surveys were conducted every ten years; thus, the next survey was due. She cautioned grant applications were typically submitted one year in advance.
- Ms. Lisby interjected State grant applications were submitted during spring and awarded in October.
- Mr. Austin stated he believed Mr. Hilston wished to have a letter from the Board asking staff to pursue grant funding to update the survey in order to maintain historic status.
- Ms. MacGibbon offered to draft same, confirming she would address the letter to Mr. Hilston and copy City Manager Kunik and Mr. Dennis Murphy, Growth Management Director.

- Ms. Schmidt then reported she and Ms. Pond met with the Downtown Merchants Association (DMA), TPG and the Visual Arts Center, adding after initial skepticism, the response seemed to be favorable toward the parking garage murals.
- Ms. MacGibbon questioned the basis for the initial skepticism.
- Ms. Schmidt replied some people felt it may be “too much” or “too gaudy.” She noted she informed the various groups of their desire to form a jury to decide on actual picture locations as well as on the artist.
- Ms. MacGibbon stated she understood the PGMS would decide on the artist as well as the property; however, the renderings would be presented to the City.
- Ms. Schmidt mentioned there was some concern with regard to a proliferation of murals in the City. She stated she would also like to have a say as to the artwork itself. She mentioned a suggestion was made to place the metal hibiscus sculpture currently located on Ms. MacGibbon’s home on the entryway to the parking garage.
- Ms. MacGibbon recalled that sculpture had been intended to be a part of an entranceway sign into Punta Gorda; however, the project seemed to have fallen by the wayside. She asserted the sculpture had sat undisplayed in MSPG’s offices for over one year before she retrieved same. She mentioned the artist who made the sculpture had a number of available designs. She clarified donation of the sculpture was dependent upon the project.
- Ms. Schmidt then questioned the status of the Wayfinding System.
- Mr. Austin replied Mr. Hilston was experiencing some problems with the contractors who in turn were having a problem relative to procurement of materials. He confirmed he would provide Ms. Schmidt with color pictures of the Wayfinding System.
- Mr. Chalifoux requested all members be provided with same.

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting Adjourned: 10:14 a.m.

Christel Schmidt, Chairman

Mary Kelly, Recording Secretary