

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING  
MARCH 24, 2011**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Chalifoux, Chairman  
Cynthia Beauford-Johnson, Gordon Bower, Bill Cote,  
Nancy Lisby, Karen Lyons, Jan Sidebottom

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** John Hagerman

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner  
David Hilston, Urban Design Manager  
Joan LeBeau, Chief Planner

**CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. Roll Call
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting
- 1. April 28, 2011

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. February 24, 2011
- Ms. Lisby MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED approval of the February 24, 2011 minutes.  
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. CA-05-11 – 121 East Marion Avenue Signage
- Mr. Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner, announced this was an application for signage at 20/10 Optical at the subject location. He stated the building, constructed in 1926 as a commercial structure, was located in the downtown commercial historic district and was listed on the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) as well as individually on the National Register. He explained the proposed signage consisted of window and projecting signs, adding both met City Code requirements. He recommended approval of CA-05-11 as the proposed signs would not detract from the historic or architectural character of the structure based on the evidence submitted by the applicant.
- Mr. Bower asked how high the sign would be placed.
- Mr. Austin replied it would be located toward the top of the parapet wall, estimating the distance between the bottom of the sign and the sidewalk at approximately 16 to 20 feet.
- Mr. Bower asked if same would be the highest projecting sign downtown.
- Mr. Austin expressed uncertainty; however, he noted City Code limited the size of the sign itself. He mentioned City Code also specified a minimum height.
- Ms. Lisby asked if City Code addressed sign color.

- Mr. Austin replied color was not regulated anywhere in the City.
  - Mr. Chalifoux called three times for anyone to speak on CA-05-11.
  - Mr. Cote MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED to close the public hearing. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
  - Mr. Chalifoux stated he would be in favor of requiring the sign to be placed similarly to other signs downtown, citing Attorney Michael Haymans' sign as an example. He clarified he was not opposed to the sign being projecting but rather he simply wished signage to be more uniform.
  - Ms. Lisby commented the sign, as depicted in the agenda material, appeared out of character.
  - Ms. Sidebottom added it was a modern sign on a historic building.
  - Mr. Austin interjected signage was difficult to regulate due to First Amendment rights.
  - Discussion ensued with regard to sign standards/regulations for multi-tenant buildings.
  - Mr. Cote MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED approval of CA-05-11.
  - VOTING AYE: Beauford-Johnson, Cote, Lisby, Lyons, Sidebottom.
  - VOTING NAY: Bower, Chalifoux.
  - MOTION CARRIED.
- B. Discussion regarding Drafting/Revising Ordinance for the Saving of Historic Structures and Adoption of Guidelines as Part of Zoning Code
- Mr. Chalifoux stated at the March 2, 2011 City Council meeting, the City Attorney advised a "loophole" existed within the provisions of Chapter 26 of the City Code with regard to historic structures located outside the boundaries of a designated historic district. He announced City Council indicated staff, with the advice of this Board, should work to craft proposed changes to Chapter 26 to rectify this situation. He reminded members this issue arose as a result of CA-01-11, 501 East Olympia Avenue, briefly commenting on Ms. Maria Gauta's demolition request for same. He continued City Council also appeared amenable to considering additional provisions which provided more protection to historic structures from demolition. He opined a property owner who wished to demolish a historic structure should offer the funds necessary for same to a party who was willing to relocate the building. He noted he had presented such a proposal to the City Manager who in turn had requested the City Attorney research same; however, the City Attorney had not taken action in a manner timely enough to possibly save 501 East Olympia Avenue. He concluded no action was required at this time.

- Ms. Lisby maintained City Code should be amended so as to be much more strict, pointing out the loss of many historic structures. She expressed concern the City may eventually lose its historic districts completely.
- Mr. Bower voiced frustration with situations where a property owner allowed a structure to deteriorate to a point where it could be argued its rehabilitation was cost prohibitive, as was the case with Ms. Gauta's property.
- Mr. Chalifoux agreed, adding there had been several other similar situations. He pointed out Ms. Gauta had allowed over \$600,000 in fines to accrue before taking any action, adding he understood she planned to seek a reduction to almost nothing.
- Mr. Cote asked if any of the existing fines had been paid.
- Mr. Chalifoux replied the City had received nothing to date.
- Mr. David Hilston, Urban Design Manager, stated he was unaware of any finalization of the Code Compliance Division's case against the property, specifically any decision of the Code Enforcement Board (CEB).
- Recording Secretary Kelly stated the City Attorney had indicated he anticipated Ms. Gauta would request a reduction in fines from the CEB.
- Consensus of the Board was to recommend the CEB deny any request for a fine reduction in Case #06-30629, 501 East Olympia Avenue.
- Mr. Hilston concluded staff would ensure the CEB was aware of this Board's recommendation. He noted this situation brought to light the need for an update/ expansion of the historic districts' surveys.
- Mr. Chalifoux asserted the Board had requested same be included in the City's Strategic Plan to no avail. He confirmed the Board could re-submit their recommendation.
- Mr. Hilston suggested the Board seek matching State funds to perform an update of the survey, which must precede any possible expansion of the historic districts.
- Mr. Chalifoux stated he would prepare a letter to the City Manager outlining the Board's recommendations. He then drew members' attention to Section 8.1 of the City Code, as delineated in the agenda material, reiterating his recommendation to include a requirement for a property owner who wished to demolish a historic structure to offer the funds necessary for same to a party who was willing to relocate the structure. He expressed frustration at the lack of timely response from the City Attorney.
- Mr. Hilston stated he would meet with Ms. Teri Tubbs, Zoning Official, in order to draft language which would express the Board's recommendations.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. Fund Raising for Historic Projects

- Ms. Lisby asked if Main Street Punta Gorda (MSPG) had an adequate supply of the Board's historic brochures.
- Ms. Sidebottom replied she still had a few.
- Mr. Chalifoux noted he had asked the Finance Department to provide the Board with a monthly report of total donations, asking staff to follow up on same.
- Ms. Lyons then commented at the Board's previous meeting, she had been asked to draft an application form for an award program; however, she noted same had not been included on this meeting's agenda.
- Mr. Chalifoux requested the award program be maintained as an ongoing agenda item under Unfinished Business.

### B. City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan – Historic Element

- Ms. Joan LeBeau, Chief Planner, announced the first public hearing of the Comprehensive Plan's Evaluation & Appraisal Report (EAR) would be presented to the Planning Commission on March 28, 2011. She asked members to submit any comments before that date to ensure same were made a part of the record. She advised she had begun preparation of the proposed Historic Element, adding a sub-committee would be meeting to discuss same on the last Friday of every month. She concluded she would continue to seek input over the next 18 months.

### C. Punta Gorda Historical Society Update

- Ms. Lisby announced a volunteer had offered to produce a brochure for a walking tour of the historic district in order to identify various historic homes, adding she had been asked to present same to this Board for approval. She asked members to advise her of any specific properties they may wish to include.
- Consensus of the Board was to recommend the volunteer move forward.
- Ms. Lisby then announced a pineapple garden had been started at the Train Depot with the assistance of Publix. She advised a "chili cook-off" was planned for April 2, 2011, noting same was intended to be a fund raiser for the Train Depot Museum. She requested cooking volunteers, noting Ms. Lyons had already offered her time.
- Ms. Lyons submitted a draft application form into the record, asking members to provide her with any comments or suggestions regarding same. She confirmed applications would be submitted to the Urban Design Division.
- Mr. Chalifoux suggested adding the "City of Hibiscus" logo.
- Ms. Lyons agreed, stating she intended to include an aesthetically pleasing border.
- Ms. Lisby recommended including the word "historical" in the description section.

- Ms. Lyons responded she had omitted same as the Board had agreed to allow awards specific to landscaping. She stated she understood the program to be for revitalization awards for beautification of the City of Punta Gorda, citing as an example a newly constructed home with a historic appearance.
- Ms. Lisby stated “landscaping” should be specified somewhere on the form.
- Ms. Lyons explained landscaping could fall under the “Special” category.
- Mr. Chalifoux suggested adding “landscaping, etc.” under “Special.” He opined the description section should be re-worded.
- Mr. Bower confirmed the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) area encompassed all historic districts. He then commented on the title “Annual Revitalization Award Application,” stating same appeared to be the same as the former Revitalization Committee (RC) awards.
- Ms. Lyons countered she had understood that to be the case.
- Mr. Bower recommended “Historical Preservation Award.”
- Mr. Chalifoux suggested simply titling the form “Annual Award Application,” pointing out the Board was identified as the sponsoring body. He noted each application would be clearly explained under the description section of the form. He concluded with a request for members to study the form and submit their ideas to staff.
- Consensus of the Board was approval of same.

**COMMITTEE/BOARD COMMENTS**

- Ms. Sidebottom stated she had been disappointed to see the demolition of 501 East Olympia Avenue.
- Mr. Chalifoux announced the Charlotte County Historical Advisory Committee (CCHAC) had expressed a desire to meet with this Board on a quarterly basis and had offered to host same. He distributed a flyer for the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida Frontier Days Festival, as delineated in the agenda material, advising same would be held on March 25-26, 2011.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- Meeting Adjourned: 9:24 a.m.

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John Chalifoux, Chairman

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Mary Kelly, Recording Secretary