

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING
MAY 28, 2009**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dawn MacGibbon, Chairman
Nancy Lisby, Karen Maxey,
Nancy Miller-Houck, Christel Schmidt

MEMBERS ABSENT: Julia Moore

OTHERS PRESENT: David Hilston, Urban Design Manager

CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Roll Call
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting - June 18, 2009
 - Ms. MacGibbon announced the Board's next meeting would be held one week prior to their regularly scheduled meeting day.
- C. Last Scheduled Meeting - April 23, 2009

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Meeting of April 23, 2009
 - Ms. Schmidt MOVED, Ms. Lisby SECONDED approval of the April 23, 2009 minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Certificates of Appropriateness
 - 1. HPAB Review
 - a. CA-12-09 - 306 Marion Avenue - Allow a motor scooter rental and bicycle rental business to be located in a portion of the building
 - Mr. David Hilston, Urban Design Manager, stated this was a special exception request, adding it was felt this type of business would attract people from the mooring fields and marinas; thus, staff recommended approval of the request. He explained a special exception was necessary because of the motorized scooters, stating the City did not wish to open up the downtown to automobile sales.
 - Ms. MacGibbon clarified the request was strictly for rentals as opposed to sales.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck confirmed the ensuing noise level would not be detrimental.
 - Mr. Hilston agreed, stating the scooters must be 49.5 cc's or under.
 - Ms. Lisby asked who would operate the business.
 - Mr. Hilston replied Ms. Erica Raffel.
 - Ms. Schmidt MOVED, Ms. Maxey SECONDED approval of CA-12-09. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. CA-13-09 - 512 East Marion Avenue - Installation of a wood sandblasted ground sign on two wooden posts
 - Mr. Hilston displayed an overhead of a rendering of the proposed sign, as delineated in the agenda material, stating the sign was appropriate for the location. He concluded staff had no objections to the request.
 - Ms. MacGibbon mentioned 512 East Marion Avenue was a contributing structure.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck commented favorably on the sign's appearance.
 - Ms. Schmidt concurred, suggesting some landscaping be added around the sign.
 - Ms. MacGibbon asked if landscaping would be in compliance with zoning regulations.
 - Mr. Hilston replied he believed so.
 - Ms. MacGibbon mentioned the applicant, Mr. Thomas Huff, had done a great deal of work for historic preservation.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck MOVED, Ms. Schmidt SECONDED approval of CA-13-09. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- c. CA-14-09 - 308 Sullivan Street - MDO Board lettered 2-sided sign
 - Mr. Hilston displayed an overhead of the proposed, suspended sign, as denoted in the agenda material, stating the sign was completely in accordance with what the City was attempting to promote.
 - Ms. Lisby asked if the Board had ever discussed the possibility of posting the historic value of structures such as this as well as that discussed under CA-13-09.
 - Ms. MacGibbon responded this Board had discussed numerous aspects of historic signage for many years; however, the problem always came down to money.
 - Mr. Hilston agreed same was cost prohibitive from a fiscal/economic perspective.
 - Ms. MacGibbon stated the Board could recommend funding of historic markers as part of the Strategic Plan. She recalled the Board had been asked for input on a Charlotte County sign program, specifically for a list of significant locations; however, she was unsure of the status of that program at this time.
 - Ms. Lisby noted Ms. Linda Coleman, Charlotte County staff, would be the appropriate person to contact.
 - Ms. Lisby MOVED, Ms. Miller-Houck SECONDED approval of CA-14-09. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- 2. Information Only
 - a. CA-11-09 - 320 Harvey Street - Fence
 - Mr. Hilston announced CA-11-09 also included a replacement of vinyl siding with Hardie Board as well as of windows in addition to the fence. He suggested continuing this item to the Board's next meeting to allow staff to provide additional information.

He noted CA-11-09 had been approved administratively and was being presented for informational purposes.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Wayfinding Phase I

- Mr. Hilston announced engineering plans should be received by the following day, adding copies of the slip base had been provided in the agenda material. He stated he believed the process had reached the point where submittal could be made to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), which had promised a two week turn-around time for permitting. He displayed an overhead depicting the front and back of a typical sign with a coin emblem medallion at the top. He stated FDOT required use of their brown, industrial sized marker at sites such as boat ramps, hospitals, parks, etc., acknowledging same would change the signs' appearance.
- Ms. MacGibbon expressed great surprise regarding same.
- Mr. Hilston agreed; however, he advised the remaining signs in the Wayfinding Program did not fall under FDOT's jurisdiction, adding the difference would be noticeable.
- Ms. Lisby asked if directions to the train depot could be made a part of this program.
- Mr. Hilston advised a specific sign was designated in Phase II for the History Park, adding a sign could be created for the train depot also.
- Ms. Lisby mentioned a brown sign existed on Olympia Avenue pointing to the History Park. She clarified FDOT approval was required because of it being on a road which fell under State jurisdiction. She questioned the start date for Phase II.
- Mr. Hilston replied he hoped stimulus funds could be utilized as the project was ready to proceed. He noted Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds would be used on the east side, allowing completion the following year.
- Ms. Miller-Houck questioned the delay in use of stimulus funds.
- Mr. Hilston responded the City must await the next round of same, stating \$21,000 received in the first round must be utilized in a low- to moderate-income neighborhood.
- Ms. Lisby questioned the timing of receipt of the second phase of stimulus funding.
- Mr. Hilston replied most likely within the next year.
- Ms. Miller-Houck questioned the status of the bike trail.
- Mr. Hilston replied the City had received \$580,000, Wayfinding signs being a component of same, albeit not for use on major roadways.
- Ms. MacGibbon clarified Wayfinding signs within the Linear Park would be complimentary to the Wayfinding System.

- Ms. Lisby asked if all signs would have the hibiscus on the rear face.
- Mr. Hilston replied affirmatively.
- Ms. MacGibbon expressed approval of same.
- Ms. Miller-Houck commented it seemed the City was moving forward with utilizing the hibiscus as a brand. She recalled Main Street Punta Gorda (MSPG) had a marketing firm which was attempting to change the City's brand from the "City of Hibiscus."
- Mr. Hilston clarified the issue of branding as discussed by MSPG was different.
- Ms. MacGibbon countered MSPG was limited as to what branding they could pursue, stating it must have a historic element per State and Federal MSPG guidelines. She mentioned a recent article in the Wall Street Journal on the branding of Providence, Rhode Island, recommending members research and read same.
- Ms. Lisby interjected all of the various groups interested in branding would be attending the next Revitalization Committee meeting on Monday, June 15, 2009.
- Ms. MacGibbon noted Ms. Maxey was new to the Board, providing her with a detailed review of the issues surrounding branding, MSPG, the Revitalization Committee and the former Enterprise Punta Gorda (EPG) group. She asserted hiring an outside consultant to brand a City made no sense.
- Ms. Lisby commented it may be important to develop a packet of historic information detailing Punta Gorda's designation as the "City of Hibiscus" to provide to Revitalization Committee members.
- Ms. Miller-Houck suggested Board members plan on attending the June 15, 2009 Revitalization Committee meeting.
- Ms. MacGibbon agreed, pointing out Ms. Lisby was the Board's representative and should thus speak on behalf of the Board; however, members could certainly speak as individuals.
- Discussion ensued with regard to the contents of the above mentioned packet of historic information, with a consensus to include information relative to the following: original resolution designating Punta Gorda as the "City of Hibiscus"; Main Street's obligation to branding; funds already expended on the Wayfinding System; Wall Street Journal article; history related to Mr. Harry Goulding; Hibiscus Festival.
- Ms. MacGibbon noted she already had a great deal of this information, adding she would attempt to organize same into a concise form. She mentioned a new hibiscus was hybridized each year and presented at the Hibiscus Festival, stating same would be given to the City.
- Ms. Lisby suggested utilizing the new hibiscus either at the History Park or Hector House Plaza.

- Ms. MacGibbon agreed, recalling Ms. Lisby's recommendation for businesses to incorporate the hibiscus into their signage.
- Ms. Schmidt recommended painting a hibiscus mural on the large wall of Charlevoi Condominiums.
- Ms. Maxey expressed approval of Ms. Schmidt's suggestion, stating same would welcome visitors to Punta Gorda.
- Ms. Miller-Houck commented on the Wayfinding System, questioning the first step and the timing of same.
- Mr. Hilston replied signage in the Linear Park in the Historic District was guaranteed at this time, adding staff hoped to use stimulus funds in the future on the Marion Avenue and Olympia Avenue portions through the Historic District.
- Ms. MacGibbon clarified the plan was for Wayfinding signage to be installed downtown followed by installation in the Linear Park. She then drew members' attention to a photograph, as delineated in the agenda material, of the dedication of the historic marker for the site of the former Hotel Punta Gorda, pointing out the Hibiscus seal on same. She noted this was one of three historic markers to be installed by Charlotte County.
- Ms. Miller-Houck commented favorably on the City's appearance, especially in light of the poor economy.
- Ms. MacGibbon asked staff to present information on the Wayfinding System at the next Revitalization Committee meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Punta Gorda Historical Society, Inc.
- Ms. Lisby stated the Punta Gorda Historical Society (PGHS) was attempting to raise the additional \$8,000 to \$10,000 needed to finish the Price House. She advised the Trabue Cottage needed a new roof, stating the least expensive estimate/bid was \$55,000.
 - Ms. MacGibbon expressed surprise at such a high amount.
 - Ms. Lisby explained structural work was required in addition to the roof itself. She continued her PGHS report, stating the History Park would be ready for the Hibiscus Festival, including tours and preparation of the gardens.
 - Ms. MacGibbon announced children's activities at the Hibiscus Festival would be more old fashioned than in the past, adding there would also be art related activities. She mentioned organizers were seeking someone who would be in charge of games.

- Ms. Lisby confirmed the Hibiscus Festival was scheduled for June 20, 2009. She then announced a Certificate of Appropriateness may be coming to this Board as City Council seemed to have a question relative to locating a business in the History Park.
 - Ms. MacGibbon recalled one retail business was allowed.
 - Ms. Lisby concluded she would keep the Board updated.
- B. Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Status Report
- Mr. Hilston announced projects were moving rapidly toward completion, including the parking garage and installation of playground equipment at the interactive fountain. He mentioned the fountain had turned out to be extremely popular and well attended.
 - Ms. Schmidt commented the interactive fountain was wonderful.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck asked if any retail operations were confirmed for the parking garage.
 - Mr. Hilston replied a lease had been signed for an Irish pub, stating Thomas Ryan & Associates continued to market the property.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck confirmed there was no activity on the City Marketplace property.
 - Ms. MacGibbon asked if the hotel on that site was on hold.
 - Mr. Hilston replied affirmatively; however, he understood “feelers” were going out regarding costs associated with clearing, filling, etc.
 - Ms. Lisby confirmed the City conducted due diligence, specifically with regard to financial responsibility, on any company with which they conducted business.
 - Mr. Hilston then reported a request had already been submitted to reserve the top deck of the parking garage for a party.
- C. City of Punta Gorda Parks & Recreation Master Plan
- Ms. MacGibbon announced this document could be viewed on the City’s web site.
 - Mr. Hilston advised three chapters of the Master Plan had been completed. He urged members to view the document and provide comments on same.
 - Ms. MacGibbon then commented on the City Manager’s request for input on the Strategic Plan, confirming same was a five year plan. She asked all members to be prepared to discuss project suggestions at the Board’s next meeting, stating she would bring copies of the Board’s last annual report.
 - Ms. Lisby asked how new members were recruited for appointment to the Board.
 - Ms. MacGibbon replied the City Clerk announced vacancies at City Council Meetings, adding sometimes members were recruited through word of mouth in the community.
 - Ms. Maxey mentioned a friend had recommended she apply for appointment to the Board, especially in light of her commitment and background, providing a brief review of the latter.

Note: Ms. Miller-Houck left the meeting at 9:52 a.m.

- Ms. Schmidt then requested the Board be made privy to the same issues and projects as that provided to Team Punta Gorda (TPG) and MSPG.
- Ms. MacGibbon acknowledged Ms. Schmidt's comment; however, she questioned how the Board fit in with a decision regarding the color of a building downtown, for example. She agreed signage fell under the Board's jurisdiction. She asked why recommendations were so routinely sought by the City from TPG and MSPG.
- Mr. Hilston replied representatives of each group regularly attended City Council Meetings and requested allowance to review same.
- Ms. MacGibbon urged members to contact City Councilmembers regarding projects on which they believed the Board should have the opportunity for input. She then requested an update on the entranceway sign.
- Mr. Hilston replied the design was being redone, adding the hibiscus would be incorporated within same.
- Ms. MacGibbon confirmed the hibiscus sculpture would be made a part of the sign. She reiterated she would provide copies of the Board's last few annual reports, requesting staff include same as an agenda item for their next meeting.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Ms. Schmidt commented on the award for the old Charlotte County Courthouse, as announced by Ms. Lisby at the Board's last meeting, asking if a local ceremony was planned.
- Mr. Hilston expressed uncertainty regarding same.
- Ms. MacGibbon offered to contact Ms. Linda Coleman, Charlotte County, to determine whether or not a ceremony was planned.
- Ms. Lisby asserted some type of marker should be placed at the old Courthouse announcing receipt of this award.
- Mr. Hilston reminded members the architect had been awarded.
- Ms. Schmidt then asked if murals were planned for the parking garage.
- Mr. Hilston replied staff would provide a report to the Board on same at their next meeting.
- Ms. Schmidt then questioned the status of oral histories.
- Ms. MacGibbon replied Ms. Carol Mahler had conducted same; however, she was unsure where those recordings were located.
- Ms. Lisby mentioned Ms. Lori Coventry also did oral histories approximately one year earlier. She stated she would attempt to contact both individuals. She suggested this be included as a recommendation for the Strategic Plan.
- Consensus of the Board was agreement with same.

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting Adjourned: 10:22 a.m.

Dawn MacGibbon, Chairman

Mary Kelly, Recording Secretary