

**BUILDING BOARD  
MEETING  
JULY 27, 2010**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mary Fleenor, Chairman  
John Burrage, Thomas Cavanaugh,  
Peter Cocco, James Getz

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** James McClary, David Reeves, Larry Sandles

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Suzy Russell, Permit Supervisor  
Randy Cole, Building Official

**CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A. Roll Call

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Meeting of March 23, 2010

- Mr. Burrage MOVED, Mr. Cavanaugh SECONDED approval of the March 23, 2010 minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Presentations to Larry Sandles and James McClary

- Ms. Fleenor noted neither Messrs. Sandles nor McClary were present, adding both of their terms would expire on August 2, 2010. She confirmed the City Clerk's Office would ensure both plaques were mailed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. Election of Vice Chairman (to complete Larry Sandles' term)

- Recording Secretary Kelly opened the floor for nominations.

- Ms. Fleenor NOMINATED Mr. Cavanaugh to serve as Vice Chairman.

- As there were no other nominations, Mr. Cavanaugh was appointed Vice Chairman by acclamation.

B. CabinetSmart Inc., Joseph McAteer, Qualifier: Violation of City Code, Section 7-11(a), No person, persons or corporation shall engage in contracting or specialty contracting without first obtaining a Certificate of Competency issued by the City of Punta Gorda.

- Ms. Suzy Russell, Permit Supervisor, announced Mr. Joseph McAteer, qualifier, had submitted his application, including the correct fee and violation amount, adding she intended to review the application with Mr. Randy Cole, Building Official, to determine whether the application must be reviewed by the Board.

C. Changes to the State Certification & Radon Tax Fees (effective October 1, 2010)

- Ms. Russell stated she provided reports to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the State on a quarterly basis for fees collected on new construction and additions,

adding same had always been based on one-half of one cent per square foot on each; however, the State had opted to change the format. She drew members' attention to an explanation of this change, as delineated in the agenda material, stating the tax would now be based on the permit fee as opposed to a valuation of the job, with a minimum of \$2 on each permit for each division.

- Ms. Fleenor asked how same impacted the Building Division's budget.
- Ms. Russell replied she was unsure at this time as the change would not be effective until October 1, 2010; however, she felt there would be a loss, basing same on the current economy. She mentioned those funds were used for continuing education.
- Ms. Fleenor asked if the City had any recourse.
- Ms. Russell replied the law had already been passed.
- Mr. Cole estimated revenues would increase only by a few hundred dollars annually.
- Ms. Russell added this fee would attach to any and all building permits.
- Mr. Cavanaugh commented it seemed this was simply a way for the State to increase their revenues.
- Mr. Coccaro noted the fee would not cover administrative costs.
- Mr. Burrage confirmed the Building Division budget was an enterprise fund.
- Mr. Cole agreed, stating same could be frustrating in that he considered many of their duties to be in the interest of public safety. He pointed out all Building Division staff members' hours had been reduced by 20% to 32 hours per week.
- Mr. Coccaro asked if permit fees would have to increase eventually.
- Mr. Cole replied City Council would not allow same. He pointed out per State law, building permit fees could only be used for enforcement of the Florida Building Code; however, it was silent with regard to being self sustaining. He noted the Building Division also handled this Board, contractor licensing and discipline, flood plain regulation, canal and dock permitting and records requests, none of which were related to the Building Code.
- Mr. Burrage commented on a recent letter to the editor where a resident looked into obtaining a permit to have a power source in his garage but decided against same because of the cost of that permit, stating it had been suggested this resident run an extension cord instead. He questioned whether this type of activity could be unsafe.
- Mr. Cole commented he had also seen that letter to the editor and had left a message with the author of same. He acknowledged a permit was required by State law to install an electrical outlet, stating the City must charge a fee to cover the cost of the inspection; however, he noted this was a \$50 permit. He mentioned permits for front door replacement, water heater installation and storm panels were currently only \$25.

- Mr. Getz asked if current reserves would sustain the Division for the next 12 months.
- Mr. Cole replied affirmatively. He announced Mr. Richard Abel, Chief Plans Examiner, would retire at the end of 2010, adding that position would not be filled.
- Mr. Burrage asked how staffing changes affected efficiency.
- Mr. Cole replied same day inspections were still being handled if requested by 6:00 a.m.
- Mr. Getz commended staff on their hard work.
- Mr. Cole encouraged members to report unlicensed work, stating same negatively affected the health, safety and welfare of the public.
- Discussion ensued with regard to the benefits of educating the public in a proactive manner.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### A. 2011 Strategic Plan

- Mr. Cole drew members' attention to Mayor Harvey Goldberg's letter, as delineated in the agenda material, stating same had been provided to the City's various stakeholders. He explained input was being sought regarding broad based objectives for possible implementation in the 2011 Strategic Plan.
- Ms. Fleenor suggested the Board review the Strategic Plan by category, noting responses were due within 30 to 45 days of Mayor Goldberg's letter of July 13, 2010.
- Mr. Cavanaugh clarified the Board was not restricted to building related initiatives.
- Ms. Fleenor confirmed there were no comments relative to Administration or Business Development. She then referred to the Quality of Life section, stating the new Retta Esplanade section was recently opened. She pointed out there was an enormous amount of traffic but no traffic control, asking if a traffic light was planned. She opined the lack of a traffic signal made this area quite dangerous.
- Mr. Cole replied a two way stop was in existence, expressing uncertainty with regard to any plans for a traffic light. He noted the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) may play a role in that decision in that U.S. 41 was a State road.
- Ms. Fleenor then suggested all utilities be run underground, noting overhead lines detracted from appearance as well as added to collateral damage during a catastrophic storm event.
- Mr. Cole recalled an initiative by Florida Power & Light (FPL) to do so, stating he seemed to recall the community would have been required to pay 25% of the cost.
- Ms. Fleenor stated she would personally be more than willing to do so, pointing out the higher return in property values in future years.

- Mr. Cavanaugh recalled this had been a controversial issue in Burnt Store Isles (BSI) a few years earlier.
- Ms. Fleenor stated she understood there were situations where residents of individual roads had financed the cost for underground utilities on their streets. She then stated the City was constructing many bicycle and pedestrian paths; however, she was not aware of any plans for same running the full length of Marion Avenue, which was a high density traffic area; thus, she suggested an expansion of sidewalk areas to accommodate both pedestrian and bicycle traffic. She commented favorably on the proposal to install rumble strips in the historic district as a traffic calming measure; however, she had found same to deteriorate fairly quickly, suggesting other methods of construction and materials be studied.
- Mr. Cole asked if members wished to have their ideas submitted as a Board or individually.
- Mr. Cavanaugh MOVED, Mr. Getz SECONDED to make recommendations as a Board. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- Recording Secretary Kelly confirmed an excerpt of this section of the minutes would be provided to the City Manager.
- Mr. Cavanaugh then stated he believed Charlotte Harbor was essential to the economic development of Punta Gorda's future, adding he did not believe the City was capitalizing on same as much as they should. He urged development of the west mooring field, stating he believed same would be significant in bringing business to Punta Gorda. He acknowledged the tie to the Best Western in pursuit of the necessary submerged land lease; however, he understood financing was simply not available. He recommended the City pursue development of the west mooring field on its own.
- Consensus of the Board was in support of same.
- Mr. Cavanaugh further suggested inclusion of the Punta Gorda Boat Club basin as part of that submerged land lease.
- Mr. Burrage commented on the City Marketplace property, stating same spoiled all of downtown.
- Ms. Fleenor agreed that property was a blight on the area.
- Mr. Cavanaugh countered the property was privately owned.
- Mr. Burrage then raised the issue of fluoridation of the City's water, stating same could fall under Quality of Life.
- Ms. Fleenor concurred.
- Consensus of the Board was to recommend the City's water be fluoridated and to include same under Utilities.

- Ms. Fleenor expressed concern with regard to the waste of water from the flushing of water mains.
  - Mr. Burrage explained same was necessary to ensure water did not become stagnant, particularly in the summer months, adding hydrant function was checked as well.
  - Ms. Fleenor confirmed members wished to include development of the west mooring field under both Waterfront/Canal System and Quality of Life.
  - Mr. Cavanaugh suggested the entrance into Ponce de Leon Inlet be widened, noting the Punta Gorda Isles Canal Advisory Committee (PGI CAC) had recommended same.
  - Ms. Fleenor agreed, noting that area was often congested. She continued navigation in that area could also be problematic due to fishing lines. She mentioned a high spot existed in Ponce de Leon Inlet, suggesting the City annex the area far enough out to allow the dredging of same.
  - Mr. Cavanaugh MOVED, Mr. Getz SECONDED to recommend the widening of Ponce de Leon Inlet and to annex out far enough to allow the City the ability to dredge the above mentioned high spot. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- B. City of Punta Gorda's Procedures for Quasi-judicial Proceedings for Rules and Ex-parte Communications (information only)
- Mr. Cole drew members' attention to Resolution #2870-10, as delineated in the agenda material, stating same was being provided for the Board's information only. He clarified Resolution #2870-10 had been adopted by City Council.
  - Mr. Burrage expressed hope staff would ensure the Board Attorney's presence if necessary.
  - Mr. Cole agreed, stating any item could be continued to the following meeting if a situation arose where the Board Attorney was not present. He mentioned the Board Attorney would be present any time the City Attorney was present.
  - Ms. Fleenor expressed concern with regard to Section VI.2, Party Intervenors, stating she would not wish to disallow another party's contribution.
  - Mr. Cole responded he did not believe that was the intent.
  - Ms. Russell added any party appearing before the Board would have previously been advised by staff of the required procedures.
  - Mr. Burrage clarified applicants were provided 30 minutes to present their case.
  - Ms. Fleenor opined same was a guideline.
  - Mr. Cavanaugh then noted other advisory boards and committees provided an agenda item for citizen comments.
  - Consensus of the Board was to add "Member Comments" and "Citizen Comments" to future agendas.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- Meeting Adjourned: 10:25 a.m.

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Mary Fleenor, Chairman

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Mary Kelly, Recording Secretary