

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2009**

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner
Dianne Bettmann, Ron Norsell

CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Roll Call
 - Ms. MacGibbon welcomed Mr. Chalifoux to the Board, confirming one additional vacancy remained.
 - Ms. Maxey announced Ms. Dianne Bettmann had submitted an application to fill the vacancy.
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting - September 24, 2009
- C. Last Scheduled Meeting - July 23, 2009

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Meeting of July 23, 2009
 - Ms. Maxey commented on her statement on page 3 pertaining to a suggestion relative to fund raising, stating she did not recall making that recommendation nor did she intend same.
 - Recording Secretary Kelly suggested the Board table approval of minutes until their next meeting, stating she would listen to the tapes to clarify Ms. Maxey's comment.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck MOVED, Ms. Schmidt SECONDED to table approval of the July 23, 2009 minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Certificates of Appropriateness
 - 1. Information Only
 - a. CA-18-09 – 118 Durrance Street - Construct a Single Family Residence
 - Ms. MacGibbon observed the agenda packets did not contain any information regarding the Certificates of Appropriateness (CAs), requesting future agenda packets be complete.
 - Mr. Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner, replied he would provide same by electronic mail. He then displayed an overhead of the proposed home, providing a description of same.

- Ms. MacGibbon expressed approval of the home's appearance; however, since setbacks varied throughout the historic district, the Board had decided new construction should have some synergy with surrounding homes, asking if same had been taken into consideration.
- Mr. Austin replied affirmatively.
- Ms. Miller-Houck clarified the garage would be detached.
- Mr. Chalifoux questioned the façade material of the home.
- Mr. Austin replied he understood it would be hardy board; however, he noted a building permit application had not yet been submitted.
- Ms. MacGibbon clarified the owners understood the district's design guidelines.
- b. CA-19-09 - AC Freeman House - Retractable Awning Rear Deck Area
 - Ms. MacGibbon recalled an awning had existed over an outdoor kitchen area in the past, confirming this proposal would be similar in size.
 - Ms. Lisby mentioned this was a fund raising project of the Freeman House volunteers and was not financed by the City.
- c. CA-20-08 - 320 Harvey Street - Concrete Footer/Screened Lanai Rear Yard
 - Mr. Austin displayed an overhead of the site location, stating the screened lanai would not be visible from the street; thus, there would be no visual impact.

OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Punta Gorda Historical Society, Inc.
 - Ms. Lisby announced the Society was aiming to have the Price House open near Christmas 2009, acknowledging the project would not be fully complete at that time. She explained remaining work required at least \$5,000, adding treatment for termites cost \$2,000, which represented a significant setback.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck pointed out the progress made on the Price House was significant, commending the Society for all their hard work.
 - Ms. Lisby noted the Price House would be fully air conditioned and have a warming kitchen when complete, stating it would be available for events such as receptions or card parties, for example. She mentioned the proposed museum would not be static but rather would change over time. She noted a fee schedule had not yet been developed, adding the Society was working on their lease with the City. She then advised the Train Depot would open on September 6, 2009, with three museum rooms.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck asked if weddings could be performed at the Price House.
 - Ms. Lisby replied affirmatively.
 - Ms. MacGibbon recalled an event had been scheduled at the Women's Club for July 25, 2009.

- Ms. Lisby responded “Punta Gorda Remembers” was a great success.
- Ms. Miller-Houck stated it seemed the Women’s Club was doing well as far as rentals.
- Ms. Lisby countered rentals had not been prolific, adding they were experiencing some air-conditioning problems. She mentioned handicap restrooms would be installed once funding was available.

B. Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Status Report

- Mr. Austin provided a brief update on projects financed with Federal funding such as the Linear Park.
- Ms. MacGibbon recalled one portion of the Linear Park had been slated to have exercise stations and canine friendly stations.
- Mr. Austin replied both had been designed into the project, acknowledging funding was problematic.
- Ms. MacGibbon noted those types of stations could be installed at a later date if funding prohibited same initially.
- Ms. Lisby asked if any of the tidal water connected to the ditches in the rear of the History Park.
- Mr. Austin replied affirmatively, stating the canal exited on the eastern side of the Fishermen’s Village parking lot near the tennis courts and ran back beside the six-unit condominiums and a small mangrove fringe. He clarified the area was one block from Pittman Park.
- Ms. Miller-Houck commented the water area typically emitted a strong odor.
- Mr. Austin explained the odor stemmed from decaying plant matter. He then announced staff was compiling a number of applications under the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant program, stating same were essentially transportation related.
- Ms. Miller-Houck questioned the status of the Wayfinding System.
- Mr. Austin replied the Wayfinding System had been in permitting “purgatory” for roughly two years.
- Ms. Miller-Houck asked if any tenants were confirmed for the Herald Court Centre, commenting favorably on the aesthetics of same.
- Ms. MacGibbon suggested moving to Item E.

Note: Item C was heard following Item E.

C. Discussion regarding Joint Meeting with Charlotte County

- Ms. MacGibbon stated several dates had been discussed, asking if any progress had been made.

- Mr. Austin apologized he did not have his notes regarding this issue in hand, stating there was a possibility of having the joint meeting at the County's facilities in Murdock. He confirmed he would provide details to members by electronic mail.

Note: Items D and E were heard prior to Item C.

D. Mural Society Representative to Discuss Murals on the Parking Garage

- Mr. Ron Norsell, Mural Society, announced they were only at the "thought" stage on this topic; however, they wished to move to theme. He then provided a historical review of the Mural Society and its intended purpose, which was to pictorially educate both current and future generations of the history of the community. He noted murals were usually funded by a property owner, acknowledging this was not always the case. He explained since Hurricane Charley in August 2004, it had been difficult to find suitable walls for additional murals, adding the parking garage was obviously suitable. He explained a determination must first be made as to what would be suitable and useful on a public facility to help represent or display a thought or theme which had some consensus within the community.
- Ms. MacGibbon expressed the Board's appreciation for Mr. Norsell's time, stating members had been thinking of themes such as the "City of Hibiscus" at three possible locations, specifically the parking garage, the Event Center and Charlevoi Condominiums.
- Ms. Schmidt clarified she had thought of a massive hibiscus on the Charlevoi Condominiums.
- Mr. Norsell responded there had been much discussion with Charlevoi; however, he expressed uncertainty as to the status of those discussions. He stated the hibiscus and Harry Goulding had been utilized in various murals; however, that did not exclude a mural such as that described by Ms. MacGibbon. He commented very few people understood the origin and history of the hibiscus in Punta Gorda. He opined that type of theme could be developed into a mural.
- Ms. Miller-Houck noted Punta Gorda had been the City of Hibiscus since the 1920s, asserting there had been much effort to brand the City without incorporating same.
- Ms. MacGibbon clarified seven panels existed at the parking garage, providing the opportunity for a developing theme relative to the history of hibiscus in Punta Gorda.
- Mr. Norsell stated the Mural Society's process entailed a decision on a theme, a generated history and assistance to a potential artist to understand that history, concluding the artist was then asked to use his/her artistic license to represent same.
- Ms. MacGibbon mentioned she spoke with Mr. Michael Viers, artist, who had done some of the local murals and with whom she had discussed this idea. She

acknowledged the parking garage was a public building, adding costs ran approximately \$5,000 per mural. She confirmed the Mural Society maintained the murals as far as anti-graffiti coating, for example. She asked if the Mural Society was interested in exploring the parking garage idea.

- Mr. Norsell responded affirmatively, stating the Mural Society had utilized a variety of artists from around the country but had worked diligently to focus on local artists as much as possible; however, a question arose as to whether this should be limited to local artists or to open same to all artists. He opined the City would have a great deal of influence on the decision in that the parking garage was a public structure.
- Ms. Miller-Houck questioned the proposed location on the parking garage.
- Ms. Schmidt replied the murals would encompass the entire structure.
- Ms. Miller-Houck cautioned against an overabundance of murals in the City.
- Ms. MacGibbon pointed out murals had always been placed in various locations as opposed to being placed in a line; thus, their impact was subtle and positive.
- Mr. Norsell confirmed the Mural Society was not interested in a cartoonish, caricature-like end product.
- Ms. Lisby commented there were wonderful local artists, adding there may be opportunities through the Visual Arts Center and/or the Arts & Humanities Council for grant sources which may move these projects forward if local artists were utilized. She opined a local artist had more of a vested interest outside the dollar value unlike outside artists who may come to Punta Gorda simply to do a job.
- Mr. Norsell stated artists who engaged in murals had a passion for same.
- Ms. Miller-Houck questioned the Mural Society's funding source.
- Mr. Norsell replied funds were usually provided by the building owner.
- Discussion ensued with regard to funding of existing murals.
- Mr. Norsell suggested perhaps the Board could appoint a liaison in an effort to develop ideas.
- Ms. MacGibbon agreed that was a fabulous idea, asking if anyone wished to volunteer.
- Ms. Schmidt offered to serve in that capacity.
- In response to Ms. Miller-Houck's earlier question with regard to tenants at the Herald Court Centre, Mr. Austin explained same fell to the leasing agent. He stated he understood three letters of intent had been signed, expressing uncertainty regarding their status.
- Ms. MacGibbon recalled an Irish pub was slated to open.
- Ms. Lisby commented she also understood a bakery was planned.

- Mr. Chalifoux stated the leasing agent had indicated four parties were interested; however, nothing was confirmed. He mentioned he understood the Irish pub had pulled out.
- E. Discussion regarding the Area between the Parking Garage and the Courthouse
 - Mr. Austin announced the subject area was relative to the chiller associated with the old Courthouse, stating the City had explored all options as part of the deal to give the CRA's parcels which Charlotte County controlled to facilitate construction of the parking garage. He explained the chiller equipment was placed closer to the Courthouse than was originally planned. He clarified it would be easier to fence and landscape the area appropriately than to move the mechanical equipment. He concluded they were only at the discussion phase.
 - Ms. Schmidt asked if the design would be presented to the Board.
 - Mr. Austin offered to provide the architect's submissions to the Board as they were received.

Note: Item C was heard following Item E.

- F. Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant
 - Ms. MacGibbon announced she had sent a letter of support on behalf of the Board as the deadline was August 24, 2009. She apologized she had not brought a copy of the letter for members' review, providing a brief outline of same.
 - Mr. Austin explained the letter was fairly standard in content, stating this was a Federal program representing a competitive portion of the economic stimulus program passed earlier this year. He noted the TIGER grant was nation-wide and composed of several billion dollars, primarily geared toward large scale infrastructure projects in large metropolitan areas; however, an executive level decision was made to allow a certain percentage of funds to be geared toward smaller communities such as Punta Gorda. He described a few of the projects for which the City was seeking funding as follows: roadway resurfacing and restructuring on primary collectors; utility improvements; sidewalk connections; bicycle/pedestrian connections; Linear Park; Harborwalk; connections from U.S. 41 into the City; downtown seawalls along public portions of Charlotte Harbor frontage; seawall replacement/repair in Punta Gorda Isles (PGI) and Burnt Store Isles (BSI); a security system/video surveillance of the parking garage.
 - Ms. Maxey commented if the City received grant funds for a security system for the parking garage, perhaps the budget originally slated for same could be used for the murals discussed earlier under Item D.

Note: Ms. Miller-Houck left the meeting at 9:47 a.m.

G. City of Punta Gorda Parks & Recreation Master Plan

- Mr. Austin announced the Master Plan was still under development, albeit in its final, rough draft stage. He stated City Council was given a staff presentation regarding the waterfront parks between the Best Western and Fishermen's Village, noting same was driven by a continuing push by the community to establish a sailing center location. He explained the presentation looked at that parkland and the long term significance and potential for same to maximize the community's benefit. He encouraged members to view the presentation and express suggestions.
- Ms. MacGibbon questioned the expiration of the Boat Club's lease with the City.
- Mr. Austin replied 2021.
- Ms. MacGibbon pointed out mangroves were existing in that area.
- Mr. Austin agreed; however, there were four or five naturally occurring openings within same. He clarified mangroves would not have to be removed for the sailing center to be realized nor did the City have any intention or desire to do so.
- Ms. MacGibbon advised she met with Mr. Richard Polk who had established the gardens at the History Park. She explained she wished to establish a Harry Goulding memorial garden, passive in nature, adding Mr. Polk opined triangles at the entrances and exits of PGI may be suitable locations. She acknowledged funding continued to be a problem, stating perhaps the City could donate the necessary land while actual funding could be raised privately. She recalled Mr. Bob Crispin, former City employee, had presented drawings for such a garden in the past, asking if same were still available.
- Mr. Austin replied he would research Mr. Crispin's files for those documents.
- Ms. Schmidt commented another suitable location existed on Henry Street near the dog park and History Park, stating same was empty with the exception of grass and large trees.
- Ms. MacGibbon responded she understood the dog park would be relocated. She asked if the Maud/Henry Streets triangle would be suitable for the above mentioned memorial garden.
- Mr. Austin replied placing the garden in either location was not inappropriate but rather potential development must be kept in mind. He stated the City had other unimproved or under-improved park lands which may be more visible such as City owned parcels along East Marion Avenue, including the oldest portion of Laishley Park.
- Ms. MacGibbon countered same would constitute a garden within a park as opposed to a stand alone garden, the latter being more desirable because of the automatic impact.

Note: Ms. Maxey left the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

- Ms. Lisby interjected there may be a problem with some of the above mentioned sites because of existing eagle's nests.
- Ms. MacGibbon summarized by asking if the Board wished to move forward on the idea of a Harry Goulding memorial hibiscus garden.
- Consensus of the Board was approval of same.

Note: Ms. Maxey returned to the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Mr. Chalifoux thanked members for their warm reception, stating he looked forward to serving on this Board.
- Ms. Maxey commented she had expressed the idea for a hibiscus ball as a fundraiser for historical projects, questioning members' feelings regarding same.
- Ms. MacGibbon responded she had not yet researched the funding aspect.
- Ms. Schmidt commented she traveled to Germany often and utilized parking garages, stating three to four front spaces were reserved for female drivers at night in the interest of safety. She suggested same be considered for the City's parking garage.
- Ms. MacGibbon announced Ms. Schmidt had presented City Council with aesthetic improvements for the public restrooms at the interactive fountain in Laishley Park, stating she would be the artist in charge.
- Ms. Lisby announced the downtown trolley had changed ownership to Mr. Greg Marrapodi and had a regular marketing program and was thus being used more frequently.
- Mr. Chalifoux recalled a discussion at a recent City Council Meeting relative to allowing horse drawn carriages and pedi-cabs.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Ms. Dianne Bettmann reiterated she had submitted an application for the remaining vacancy on the Board, stating she would work diligently if appointed.

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting Adjourned: 10:14 a.m.

Dawn MacGibbon, Chairman

Mary Kelly, Recording Secretary