

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 22, 2011**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner  
Joan LeBeau, Chief Planner  
David Hilston, Urban Design Manager  
Councilmember Elect Carolyn Freeland  
Gene Murtha, Alternate Board Member  
Teddy Shively, Alternate Board Member  
Bree Dillow, Alexis Maderal

**CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. Roll Call
  - Mr. Chalifoux welcomed Mr. Gene Murtha, recently appointed Alternate member of the Board. He then welcomed Councilmember Elect Carolyn Freeland to the meeting as well.
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting
  - 1. October 27, 2011

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Meeting of August 25, 2011
  - Ms. Sidebottom MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED approval of the August 25, 2011 minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Note: New Business was heard following Item A, Unfinished Business.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. CA-26-11 – 406 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Boulevard (information only)
  - Mr. Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner, announced the applicant proposed reconstruction of a portion of the existing covered front porch. He noted the structure housed the Blanchard House Museum and was located within the Trabue Woods Historic District. He concluded staff approved the application as the proposal would have no adverse impact on the architectural or historic character of the structure or district.
  - Mr. Chalifoux commented favorably on the structure's aesthetics.
- B. CA-27-11 – 520 East Olympia Avenue – Signage
  - Mr. Austin displayed an overhead depicting the proposed signage, as delineated in the agenda material, stating same was intended to advertise a new business, Home Instead

Senior Care. He noted the building was constructed circa 1925 and was listed on the Florida Master Site File (FMSF). He explained the request was to repaint an existing monument sign with the new business information. He concluded staff recommended approval of CA-27-11 as the proposed signage would not adversely impact the architectural or historic character of the structure or historic district.

- Ms. Lisby stated she believed this structure was owned by Mr. Paul Sullivan, adding the interior was beautiful.
  - Mr. Chalifoux called three times for anyone to speak on CA-27-11.
  - Ms. Lyons MOVED, Mr. Cote SECONDED to close the public hearing. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
  - Ms. Lisby commented this structure was one of the few which had been kept close to its original construction.
  - Ms. Lisby MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED approval of CA-27-11. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- C. CA-28-11 – 117 West Marion Avenue – Signage
- Mr. Austin displayed an overhead depicting the proposed signage, as delineated in the agenda material, stating same was intended to advertise a new business, In Your Face Cupcakes. He noted the building, constructed circa 1920, exhibited a Commercial Vernacular architectural style; however, the contrast between the more traditional alley façade and the more Art Deco Marion Avenue façade led one to suspect the latter’s details were added sometime after construction but prior to the 1987 historic resources survey. He explained the proposed signage consisted of window graphics, façade, projecting and directory signs facing the pedestrian alley running between Herald Court and Marion Avenue. He noted the proposed signage represented a fairly creative use given the building’s unique location and met the intent of Section 26-11.11, Creative Signs, of the City Code, which was to encourage signs of unique design and exhibited a high degree of thoughtfulness, imagination, inventiveness and spirit. He concluded staff recommended approval of CA-28-11 as the proposed signage would not adversely impact the architectural or historic character of the structure or historic district.
  - Ms. Lyons clarified the directory sign would be located in the alley as façade signage.
  - Mr. Bower confirmed the round projecting signs were bordered with blue neon, questioning the material on the interior of the sign.
  - Mr. Austin replied he believed it was a plastic composite material, noting it was not internally illuminated.
  - Ms. Lisby questioned the proposed height of the sign if measured from the sidewalk.

- Mr. Austin confirmed same would adhere to City Code.
  - Ms. Lisby asked if the sign colors would be visible after dark.
  - Mr. Austin replied he believed so due to the neon tubing.
  - Ms. Lyons commented negatively on the neon tubing, stating there were no other locations with same in the downtown area.
  - Mr. Austin recalled the former Turtle Club had utilized neon tubing. He reiterated staff felt the neon tubing was external and only intended to illuminate the sign.
  - Mr. Chalifoux called three times for anyone to speak on CA-28-11.
  - Mr. Cote MOVED, Ms. Lisby SECONDED to close the public hearing. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
  - Mr. Chalifoux stated he had no objection to the neon tubing, pointing out same was a mainstay back in the 1940s.
  - Ms. Lisby complimented the proprietor on her creative marketing skills.
  - Mr. Bower clarified graphics would be painted on both sides of the projecting sign.
  - Discussion ensued with regard to window signage details.
  - At the request of the Board, Ms. Bree Dillow, applicant, confirmed the projecting signage would not have the complete logo, as delineated in the agenda material, specifically the tattoo of a cupcake and cross bones would be eliminated.
  - Ms. Lisby MOVED, Mr. Bower SECONDED approval of CA-28-11. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- D. CA-29-11 - 321 Taylor Street - Signage
- Mr. Austin displayed an overhead depicting the proposed signage, as delineated in the agenda material, stating same was intended to advertise Morales Cuban Food. He noted the building was constructed circa 1914 as a single family home and was listed as a contributing structure within the National Register Historic District (NRHD). He explained the proposed signage consisted of ground and façade signs facing Taylor Street, noting same had been reviewed under the provisions of Section 26-11.11, Creative Signs, of the City Code as the proposed ground sign did not meet the 1 foot maximum above grade requirement. He concluded staff recommended approval of CA-29-11 as the proposed signage would not adversely impact the architectural or historic character of the structure or historic district.
  - Ms. Sidebottom asked what business had been at this location previously.
  - Mr. Austin replied he believed the previous occupant was the Geri's Country Café.
  - Mr. Alexis Maderal, applicant, offered to answer any questions.
  - Ms. Lyons commented the sign was very beautiful.
  - Mr. Austin mentioned this business was previously located in Tucker's Grade.

- Mr. Bower stated he believed the sign fit with the building's appearance.
- Ms. Lisby MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED approval of CA-29-11. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- E. CA-30-11 – Sea Grape Gallery – Signage
  - Mr. Austin displayed an overhead depicting the proposed signage, as delineated in the agenda material, for Sea Grape Gallery, stating the subject location was constructed circa 1952 as a commercial structure which formed part of the traditional “main street” of Punta Gorda. He explained the proposed signage consisted of a façade sign and associated mural facing the rear alley and was visible from Herald Court. He noted the proposed signage had been reviewed by staff under the provisions of Section 26-11.11, Creative Signs, of the City Code as the proposed mural carried a commercial message and therefore did not meet the maximum size requirements for façade signs. He concluded staff recommended approval of CA-30-11 as the proposed signage would not adversely impact the architectural or historic character of the structure or historic district.
  - Ms. Lisby confirmed the proposed mural would face the parking lot.
  - Ms. Sidebottom commented favorably on the proposal.
  - Mr. Chalifoux called three times for anyone to speak on CA-30-11.
  - Mr. Cote MOVED, Ms. Lisby SECONDED to close the public hearing. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
  - Ms. Lyons asked if the mural would include colors.
  - Mr. Austin replied he believed so.
  - Ms. Lyons MOVED, Ms. Sidebottom SECONDED approval of CA-30-11. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**Note: Item A was heard following Approval of Minutes.**

- A. CA-25-11 – 306 West Marion Avenue – Signage
  - Mr. Austin reminded members CA-25-11 had been reviewed at their previous meeting, providing a detailed review of same, as delineated in their August 25, 2011 meeting minutes. He announced the revised content would be more neutral than originally proposed, displaying an original artist's rendering to the Board.
  - Mr. Chalifoux called three times for anyone to speak on CA-25-11.
  - Mr. Cote MOVED, Ms. Lisby SECONDED to close the public hearing. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
  - Ms. Lyons and Mr. Bower commented the signage was much improved.

- Mr. Cote MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED approval of CA-25-11. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Note: Items B and C were heard following New Business.**

**B. Fund Raising Account Balance**

- Mr. Chalifoux reported a current balance of \$220. He expressed appreciation regarding Councilmember Rachel Keesling's contribution.

**C. Historical Society Update**

- Ms. Lisby announced the Quednau/Hindman house was relocated successfully to the History Park on September 17, 2011. She stated a number of bystanders expressed disapproval of "the City paying for the relocation," pointing out the City paid nothing for same. She continued bystanders also questioned why such a "dilapidated structure would be placed in the History Park," asserting they had been advised the home would be rehabilitated, which was the purpose of the History Park. She then stated a fashion show was planned for October 2, 2011, with volunteer models, adding the Perfect Caper had offered their venue, including lunch, at a cost of \$25. She advised a model train display was planned at the Train Depot from Thanksgiving to January 1, 2012, in an effort to replicate snowy downtown cities.
- Mr. Chalifoux commended Mr. Bower's Sun Herald newspaper article from the previous day, stating he looked forward to the next installments.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

**A. City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan – Historic Element**

- Ms. Joan LeBeau, Chief Planner, reported work on the Historic Element was moving forward, adding a rough draft would be available for the Board's review at their next meeting. She opined public meetings on the Historic Element would prove to be an excellent way in which to educate the public.
- Ms. Lisby requested the public meetings be scheduled to allow attendance by those who worked during the day.
- Ms. LeBeau agreed.
- Mr. David Hilston, Chief Planner, then announced the ordinance which proposed establishment of a relocation fund had been denied by City Council the previous day; however, he believed the intent of the ordinance had become clear after a lengthy discussion. He explained staff would make a list of structures which were worthy of becoming local landmarks for the Board's review, stating that list would then be presented to City Council as a request for protection as suggested under the ordinance.

- Mr. Chalifoux stated he had been discouraged by the direction in which City Council's discussion was moving, adding staff was now tasked with compiling the required information at a faster pace. He pointed out the Board had asked City Council to finance the cost of having the FMSF updated, as had been recommended by this Board for the past two years, for inclusion in the Strategic Plan. He noted the cost of \$20,000 qualified for matching funds from the State. He asserted he had suggested a budget reduction could be attained through elimination of the street sweeper in the Historic District, saving approximately \$80,000 annually and thus freeing budgeted funds for the update. He noted Councilmembers Albers indicated the FMSF update was reasonable but poorly timed nor did he feel any positive movement on the Board's recommendation would be realized in the current fiscal year.

#### **COMMITTEE/BOARD COMMENTS**

- Ms. Sidebottom commented on the importance of the City's history; however, it was discouraging to see the Board's recommendations constantly overridden. She offered her personal assistance to staff upon returning to the area from an upcoming trip.
- Ms. Lyons expressed surprise some Councilmembers did not seem to understand the ordinance nor did they feel history was important.
- Ms. Beauford-Johnson announced the Blanchard House would hold their open house on September 24, 2011, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Mr. Cote voiced support of the Board's efforts as well as its frustrations, particularly with regard to the recently denied ordinance.
- Ms. Lisby expressed her support of Mr. Chalifoux, stating he was not alone.
- Mr. Bower commented every survey revealed the public's love of the City's history; however, Punta Gorda's historic homes continued to be destroyed.
- Mr. Chalifoux then announced Team Punta Gorda (TPG) had requested a letter of support from the Board for an award from the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).
- Mr. Murtha explained DAR provided a rather prestigious award for groups who had performed significant community work, adding TPG had been nominated. He clarified letters from organizations throughout the community were needed.
- Consensus of the Board was to have Mr. Chalifoux issue a letter of support.
- Ms. Lisby suggested the letter include TPG's efforts toward beautification of the downtown. She mentioned TPG had offered their support in the past with regard to grant writing for the PGHS.

- Mr. Chalifoux reminded members Main Street Punta Gorda (MSPG) was being dissolved; however, incentive funds remained available. He suggested the Board seek funding for the award program.
- Consensus of the Board was to authorize Mr. Chalifoux to make application for same.
- Mr. Chalifoux then announced the next joint meeting was scheduled for December 14, 2011, at the Mid-County Library in Port Charlotte, Florida.

#### **CITIZENS COMMENTS**

- Mr. Murtha commented on an ongoing initiative to provide assistance to Mr. Vernon Peeples through TPG for preservation of his historic collection, inviting members to the third planning meeting on October 12, 2011, at 2:00 p.m., in the Laishley Park Marina Community Room.
- Mr. Chalifoux asked Mr. Murtha if he would like a permanent space on the Board's agenda.
- Mr. Murtha replied affirmatively.
- Councilmember Elect Freeland congratulated the Board for their hard work on Punta Gorda's historic districts. She urged members to continue working and forwarding recommendations to City Council.
- Mr. Austin stated according to Main Street National, 50% of all historic structures demolished in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were demolished for parking lots. He pointed out parking lots not associated with buildings carried absolutely no taxable value. He asserted Punta Gorda without its history would simply be another Cape Coral. He pointed out the City's history enhanced property values and advanced the quality of life.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

- Meeting Adjourned: 9:40 a.m.

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John Chalifoux, Chairman

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Mary Kelly, Recording Secretary