

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING  
MARCH 26, 2009**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Julia Moore

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner

**CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. Roll Call
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting - April 23, 2009
- C. Last Scheduled Meeting - February 26, 2009
  - Ms. MacGibbon welcomed Ms. Lisby to the Board, noting she was recently appointed by City Council.
- D. Election of Officers (continued from February 26, 2009)
  - Mr. Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner, opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.
  - Ms. Miller-Houck NOMINATED Ms. MacGibbon for Chairman.
  - As there were no other nominations, Ms. MacGibbon was appointed Chairman by acclamation.
  - Ms. MacGibbon then opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman.
  - Ms. Schmidt NOMINATED Ms. Miller-Houck for Vice Chairman.
  - As there were no other nominations, Ms. Miller-Houck was appointed Vice Chairman by acclamation.
- E. Recommendation of HPAB Representative for the Revitalization Committee (continued from February 26, 2009)
  - Ms. MacGibbon explained former member Mr. Larry Sandles had been the Board's representative on the Revitalization Committee; however, a new representative must be appointed as Mr. Sandles was no longer a member, asking if anyone wished to volunteer.
  - Ms. Lisby offered to serve as the representative.
  - Ms. MacGibbon confirmed staff would advise City Council of the Board's recommendation and request their confirmation of same.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Meeting of February 26, 2009
- Ms. Schmidt MOVED, Ms. Miller-Houck SECONDED approval of the February 26, 2009 minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- B. Historic Punta Gorda Neighborhood Meeting of February 7, 2009 (facilitator's notes, information only, no approval required)
- Ms. MacGibbon apologized, stating there were some issues which had not been covered at the Neighborhood Meeting. She explained the meeting had flowed along with what residents/neighbors wished to discuss.
  - Mr. Austin responded the agenda was lengthy, adding a fair number of people had attended who had specific topics they wished to discuss.
  - Ms. MacGibbon agreed it had been important to let residents "drive" the meeting. She then confirmed Police Chief Butch Arenal conducted a neighborhood safety meeting.
  - Ms. Miller-Houck stated the meeting was very informative and well attended.
  - Mr. Austin commented Chief Arenal was extremely cognizant of all City issues, stating community policing was very important to him.

## NEW BUSINESS

- A. Certificates of Appropriateness
1. HPAB Review
- a. CA-08-09 - 236 Tamiami Trail - Signage
- Mr. Austin drew members' attention to a rendering of signage proposed for Gregg's Automotive on the corner of U.S. 41 North and Marion Avenue, as delineated in the agenda material, stating staff had worked with the sign architect on this project. He confirmed the signs were within size requirements and met all provisions of City Code. He mentioned the business owner, Mr. Gregg Marrapodi, had worked diligently on rehabilitating this garage, which was heavily damaged by Hurricane Charley in August 2004.
  - Ms. Miller-Houck and Ms. MacGibbon commented favorably on the sign.
  - Ms. Lisby asked if this would represent the end of storm recovery for the site.
  - Mr. Austin replied affirmatively. He mentioned the ground sign at this location had been removed; thus, the site would have only façade signs.
  - Ms. Schmidt MOVED, Ms. Miller-Houck SECONDED approval of CA-08-09. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Information Only
  - a. CA-06-09 - 307 Taylor Street - Concrete Slab & Wood Fencing around Dumpster
    - Mr. Austin provided a brief description of this request, which was approved administratively and was being presented to the Board for informational purposes.
    - Ms. Lisby questioned the dumpster's proposed location.
    - Mr. Austin replied it would remain in the parking lot on the corner of Taylor Street and Olympia Avenue.
  - b. CA-07-09 - 211 Harvey Street - Pool Rail
    - Mr. Austin stated CA-06-09 was also approved administratively by staff, adding the rail was installed for safety reasons.

#### OLD BUSINESS

- Ms. MacGibbon questioned the status of the entranceway sign as discussed at the Board's previous meeting.
- Mr. Austin replied he was unsure at this point in time, stating the Revitalization Committee recommended the sign be placed on U.S. 41 South and be made part of the overall Harborwalk design. He noted the Revitalization Committee also suggested the sign be placed over U.S. 41 at the Bridge; however, the permitting for same would be significantly more complicated and costly.
- Ms. MacGibbon commented it was difficult to obtain permitting for even temporary banners which spanned a Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) right-of-way (ROW).
- Mr. Austin stated staff was discussing the possibility of an easement on the Event Center site for placement of the sign with the hope of providing more visibility.
- Ms. MacGibbon asked if City Council and/or the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) had conducted a final review of the sign.
- Mr. Austin replied they had not.
- Ms. MacGibbon asked if Main Street Punta Gorda (MSPG) and Team Punta Gorda (TPG) had submitted their recommendations.
- Mr. Austin replied he did not believe so.
- Ms. Miller-Houck expressed concern in that the current composition of City Council seemed to be less concerned with design, which the Board felt was lacking in the entranceway sign. She confirmed members agreed they wished to revisit the sign issue.
- Ms. MacGibbon clarified the Board wished to return to the original concept of an entranceway into the National Register District (NRD) and to incorporate the large hibiscus sculpture and "City of Hibiscus" into same.

- Ms. Lisby asked how the proposed sign fit in with branding the City, stating she felt it detracted from same.
- Ms. MacGibbon commented the hibiscus was planned to be part of the Wayfinding System and should thus be incorporated into branding.
- Ms. Schmidt asked how the original idea was lost.
- Mr. Austin replied he had first tried to take the hibiscus sculpture and design a sign around same; however, in light of the sculpture's size, the sign would have been massive.
- Ms. MacGibbon countered she had never seen a rendering which incorporated the sculpture. She commented on the number of elements of the sign, i.e., the City seal, pineapples, hibiscus, etc.
- Ms. Schmidt added the proposed site would be crowded as well.
- Mr. Austin agreed due to the Indian sculpture, the Freeman House and extensive landscaping.
- Ms. MacGibbon recalled a proposal to construct the sign where the Government Center parking lot was now located.
- Mr. Austin explained his rendering had depicted the sign straddling the retention pond, one corner being as close to the parking lot and U.S. 41 as possible and the other corner inside the retention pond so it could be tilted for maximum visibility.
- Ms. MacGibbon clarified all of the above was no longer being considered, including elimination of the "City of Hibiscus" and the hibiscus seal. She reiterated her concern in that the sign was originally proposed to welcome visitors to the NRD and the City of Hibiscus and to announce Punta Gorda's historical element, asking if same had been discussed by City Council.
- Mr. Austin replied it had not, stating he understood the sign was intended to be a gateway into Punta Gorda but should utilize historic elements and incorporate the City's branding.
- Ms. Lisby expressed concern in that so much activity in Punta Gorda should be relative to the City's historic background.
- Ms. MacGibbon asked Mr. Austin to provide members with a copy of the sign's original rendering as described above. She asked when recommendations from MSPG and TPG were due.
- Mr. Austin expressed uncertainty regarding same.
- Discussion ensued with regard to the Board's desire for the sign's appearance.
- Consensus of the Board was to recommend the City utilize the original rendering as the proposed sign was overly busy and should be more simple and elegant.

- Ms. MacGibbon then commented on the MSPG Resource Team Report, as delineated in the agenda material, confirming members had been provided with copies. She mentioned branding was discussed in the Report. She recalled the Board had planned to issue a letter to MSPG regarding their concerns, particularly there was no involvement by a preservationist as well as the branding issue. She explained if MSPG chose to become involved in branding, it must be historically true and accurate. She noted she had drafted a letter, requesting a discussion of same at their next meeting.
- Ms. Miller-Houck asked if the City anticipated receipt of any Federal stimulus funding.
- Mr. Austin replied only for Phase 1 of the Linear Park, which was a shovel ready project. He confirmed FDOT was certainly looking for surface enhancement projects such as landscaping, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and similar types of improvements, including historic preservation projects on National Register listed, public structures.
- Ms. MacGibbon asked if the Wayfinding System would be considered a surface enhancement project.
- Mr. Austin replied affirmatively.
- Ms. Miller-Houck commented progress was being made with regard to connection of various projects.
- Ms. MacGibbon agreed the Harborwalk, Wayfinding System and Linear Park were all coming to fruition.
- Ms. Miller-Houck MOVED, Ms. Schmidt SECONDED to request Mr. Austin look into obtaining stimulus funds for the Wayfinding System. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

A. Punta Gorda Historical Society, Inc.

- Ms. Lisby announced an art gallery had recently opened in the Trabue Cottage. She expressed uncertainty with regard to when the Price House would be ready for a Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.), estimating work was approximately 75% complete. She mentioned much of the work was done with grant funding. She advised a new museum was set up in the cigar cottage, providing a detailed description of same. She stated there would be "Think Thursday" projects each month in the History Park. She reported the new museum in the Train Depot was almost ready. She announced a fundraiser dinner was scheduled for March 29, 2009, at the Women's Club. She concluded the citizens of Punta Gorda were interested in the City's history.
- Ms. MacGibbon agreed, reminding members of their discussions regarding chess tournaments in Hector House Plaza. She pointed out chess tournaments would not be cost prohibitive but would still be of great interest to the community.

- Ms. Schmidt MOVED, Ms. Miller-Houck SECONDED to recommend staff look into bringing back the historic chess games and creating an area for same at the Hector House Plaza. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- B. Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Status Report
  - Mr. Austin announced the CRA Project Status Report was available on-line.
- C. City of Punta Gorda Parks & Recreation Master Plan Charrette
  - Ms. MacGibbon stated she was unable to access any detailed information on the master plan.
  - Mr. Austin responded the finished product of the public workshop was a series of graphic design products and a PowerPoint presentation. He explained staff was writing the actual master plan.
  - Ms. MacGibbon asked when the report would be available.
  - Mr. Austin replied the master plan would be drafted over the next few months, presented to the City's advisory boards and eventually City Council.
  - Ms. Schmidt recalled a book she had lent to staff regarding the creation of beautiful parks throughout the world, asking if same was available.
  - Mr. Austin replied he was unsure, confirming he would attempt to locate the book.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

- Ms. Schmidt commented the new City's web site was presented at a recent meeting, recommending more color be added.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- Meeting Adjourned: 9:35 a.m.

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Dawn MacGibbon, Chairman

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Mary Kelly, Recording Secretary