
AGENDA
Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board
Wednesday, February 25, 2009 8:30 AM

Florida Community Design Center
300 East University Avenue
1st Floor Suite 110

- A. ROLL CALL**
- B. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**
- C. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** – Approval of the Minutes for the October 29, 2008 meeting and the December 17, 2008 workgroup.
- D. REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**
- E. COMMUNICATIONS**
 - 1. Chair’s Report**
 - 2. Staff Report – Information Items**

The communications section will be handled differently during these meetings. Instead of staff presenting each topic in sequence, members are given the opportunity to give comments or ask questions in an open format on any of the topics provided below:

CRA Mixed-Use Office Building at NW 5th Ave – Plans are progressing for the new CRA office space at the 802 NW 5th Avenue site. DAG architectural firm is compiling plans for the new building, which will include ground-level retail space and second-floor CRA office space. The project will be built in an environmentally sustainable manner, and the CRA is hopeful to achieve the highest LEED standard possible for the project.

University Avenue Medians – Garden World of Holiday was selected to provide construction services for refurbishing the existing roadway medians and a contract is expected to be in place soon. CRA staff has accepted a proposal from GRU for the installation of irrigation water supply lines. A preconstruction meeting will be scheduled for mid-February. The CRA will landscape the five West University Avenue medians and the single medians across from City Hall first. The three East University Avenue medians near the Gateway Project will be started after FDOT completes the resurfacing of the roadway later this year.

University Avenue Improvements – The improvements extend from NW 20th Terrace to the Eastside Gateway and consist of new waste receptacles, planters, and median landscaping upgrades. The CRA has obtained construction services for replacing all the broken and outdated waste receptacles and adding seating to an unsheltered bus stop near City Hall. A pilot test of two flower planters will be installed near Prange’s Florist. A pre-construction meeting and contractor mobilization date are scheduled for early February. Coordination is taking place with FDOT to ensure that all the improvements will be protected during the Avenue resurfacing to begin in the late fall.

Depot Park – Project Timeline Recap and Impact of Recent Changes: On March 17, 2008, CRA and GRU staff presented a status report on the park development and remediation timelines. The remediation will be permitted and implemented in two phases. Phase 1 is comprised of the Poole Roofing site, a portion of Depot Avenue, and the Depot Building site environs. Phase 2 extends from south of the Depot building environs and onto the former-CSX property. As of March 2008, the anticipated remedial strategy for the excavated, contaminated soils was thermal treatment using a specified source contractor. GRU anticipated beginning Phase 1 in September 2008 and moving into Phase 2 starting January 2009. The anticipated completion date for the Phase 2 park site remediation was October 2009.

In the summer of 2008, GRU tested contaminated soil samples to gather data related to the thermal treatment process. GRU concluded from the data that the high concentrations of contaminants in the soils were likely to increase the treatment cost and duration above original estimates and thus sought approval of the less costly

landfill disposal method instead. On November 6th, the City Commission approved the GRU recommendation to switch to landfill disposal. GRU presented a revised schedule beginning Phase 1 in July 2009 (10 months after the initial date) with a seamless transition into Phase 2 and then completion of all remedial work in February 2010. GRU proposed an alternative, expedited schedule that would require special approval from its funding partner, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), in order to move up the start date by three months. The FDEP does not usually expedite project initiation outside of an established procedure and thus the agency declined to approve the alternative process. The FDEP funding process will proceed along the normal protocol established by the agency that has been used at hundreds of similar sites statewide.

Given the changes to the cleanup process that occurred over the summer and fall, the remediation completion date is extended nominally 4 months (October 2009 vs. February 2010). The impacts to park improvements funding are as follows:

- Depot Avenue reconstruction funding of approximately \$3.5 million is set to expire in June 2009, approximately 3 months before the roadway remediation is to be completed. Steps are being taken to encumber these funds with construction contracts which will require a phased approach to construction.
- State and federal grants for park improvements of approximately \$511,000 are set to expire about the end of 2009. Grant extensions will be required; however, their approval is not guaranteed.
- The Cade Museum Foundation, which envisions investing significant resources in the park site to create a new museum, will see impacts to its capital campaign and construction schedule from delays in the site cleanup and the development of park amenities.
- Further schedule delays will postpone the utilization of other existing sources such as grant funding from St. Johns River Water Management District, bond proceeds, Wild Spaces Public Places proceeds, and UDAG funding. Delays in using these sources may prompt their redeployment to other projects.

While a remediation schedule has been furnished to the CRA and City Commission, additional detail is needed to complete the timeline for the critical path regarding the Phase 2 remediation. Currently, the FDEP has approved only the Remedial Action Plan (RAP) for the Phase 1 site and the RAP MOD addressing landfill disposal for this phase. *The FDEP has not approved the RAP or landfill disposal for the Phase 2 Depot Park site.* At this time, no RAP is currently under active review by the FDEP. Before the Phase 2 Depot Park site can be initiated, the required approvals need to be obtained. While Phase 2 is not expected to begin until Phase 1 is finished around late 2009, CRA staff believes that approval of the Phase 2 RAP and landfill disposal should be obtained as soon as possible to minimize any potential delays that could possibly arise during regulatory review.

Bethel Station – At an upcoming meeting, the City Commission will consider leasing the Bethel Garage to the CRA. Should this lease agreement be approved, the CRA will proceed with issuing an RFP to attract new businesses that wish to locate at the Bethel site. The selected business will sublet the Bethel Garage from the CRA.

Lynch Park – Staff has met with stakeholder departments from the City of Gainesville and circulated the 90% plans for final review and comment. The landscape architect is now creating the finalized plans in order to bid the project for construction.

GRU Redevelopment – Staff has received a finalized document from Lord Aeck Sargent, which incorporates small changes made subsequent to the November presentation to the CRA board. Staff is currently formulating implementation strategies and steps to move forward.

Hampton Inn/Lot 9 Redevelopment – the hotel is on schedule to open in the early summer

Lot 10 Redevelopment – Staff is coordinating with the City of Gainesville purchasing department to issue this RFP. The document will be issued no later than the first week of March.

Porters Neighborhood Improvements – The CRA has received a utility design scheme from GRU and Cox Cable for SW 3rd St (Depot Ave – 400BLK); AT&T design is anticipated. Staff has received the 30%

construction documents and they are under review. Staff has identified ROW issues which will need to be addressed

CRA Streetscaping for Depot Ave – The CRA is coordinating with the Public Works Department to add CRA streetscaping materials to the Depot Ave Reconstruction project, to be bid this year. Streetscaping elements include brick sidewalks, crosswalks, and decorative lighting.

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. Downtown Parking Study (B)

..Explanation

As Downtown continues to redevelop, the demand for parking is expected to increase. An ample supply of parking and proper management of parking resources is important in ensuring the continued success of the central city. It is also important to understand that the public perception about parking resources is often just as influential to the success of redevelopment as is the actual data related to parking supply, demand, and use.

The CRA is attentive to issues related to parking resources, as parking infrastructure is an important component in attracting increased investment in urbanized areas. Successful redevelopment must attain a balance between accommodating a high demand for parking without sacrificing the human scale and people-oriented nature of the area. The CRA is working with parking consultants Rich & Associates in order to address parking issues in Downtown (a simultaneous study is also underway in the College Park/University Heights redevelopment area.) The parking study is not conceptual in nature; rather it utilizes hard data, parking supply and demand measurements, stakeholder information, and sophisticated modeling techniques to understand and plan for current and future parking needs. The study will enable the utilization of existing parking infrastructure to its fullest extent. Additionally, the study will provide insight regarding the placement, type, design, regulation, and management for any new facilities, if needed.

DRAB originally met with the parking consultants in October 2008. Following that meeting/public stakeholder session, the consultants conducted an in depth assessment of the Downtown parking inventory, and collected data related to parking supply, parking demand, and parking turnover rates. The consultants have completed a preliminary analysis of this data and have provided a draft preliminary findings report to Staff. A copy of this draft report is also attached as backup to this agenda. At the upcoming DRAB meeting, staff will go through the report’s findings with the advisory board and will receive input related to the draft report. Input from the CRA will be used to finalize this report, which will serve as the basis for understanding current conditions in downtown Gainesville. Future steps to the parking study will include additional meetings with stakeholders and an assessment of future parking demand as well as formulation of tools and strategies to provide for and manage parking resources in order to attain maximum efficiency and benefit.

..Fiscal Note

\$25,000 is currently budgeted in DRAB account #610-790-W229-5520 (Project Related Professional Services - Parking Study.) Parking consultant services within Downtown will be approximately \$24,000.

..Recommendation

CRA Staff to the Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board: 1) Hear presentation from Staff; and 2) provide input as necessary.

2. Downtown Community Plaza (NB)

..Explanation

In August, DRAB began an in-depth review of the Plaza utilizing tools and techniques identified by the Project for Public Spaces. At subsequent meetings, DRAB has continued analysis of the Plaza and has identified both positive and negative attributes associated with the civic square. The goal of this on-going exercise is to determine (and ultimately implement) strategies that will improve the health and vitality of this important public gathering place. Throughout this exercise, CRA will not be utilizing a “project approach” to improve the Plaza. In order to achieve lasting success, the Plaza improvement strategy must be place-driven, because the ultimate goal of this exercise is to create a usable place, not merely to create a design. Indeed, previous project-driven approaches have resulted in the insertion and deletion of a variety of design elements throughout the Plaza’s

lifetime, yet none of those efforts succeeded in solving underlying problems with the Plaza's functionality as a civic space.

As a first step in understanding the issues at play at the Plaza, DRAB examined various models and examples from similar spaces around the country and the world. This exercise was designed to provide a better understanding of the elements common to lively, well-used public spaces, as well as those elements shared by dysfunctional spaces. Once DRAB established a fundamental understanding of public spaces, the group next applied this generalized knowledge to local conditions at the Plaza. Assessment of the Plaza revealed serious issues with accessibility, activities, comfort, and sociability. Based on our earlier assessment of the elements that contribute to healthy/unhealthy public spaces, the group came to recognize that physical attributes of the Plaza contribute to the space's success during special concerts/events, but also to its dysfunction on a "regular" day-today basis.

The next step in the process is formulation of a mission/statement of goals for the Plaza, as well as a statement of the character of the place. This foundation will be essential before use-related planning activities can occur. The Plaza's form must support its function, so it is critical to first understand how the community will use the space, and to identify the desired activities at the Plaza. At the upcoming DRAB meeting, the advisory board can discuss goals and visions for the Plaza and its functionality. Subsequent to that understanding, the CRA can begin planning to provide the amenities necessary to support those desired activities.

..Fiscal Note

\$188,149.49 is budgeted in General Government account 332-M660-5190. The CRA is authorized to utilize these funds for Bethel and Plaza improvements.

..Recommendation

CRA Staff to the Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board: 1) Hear presentation from Staff, and provide input as necessary.

G. NEW BUSINES

1. FY2009 Amendatory Budget – Downtown (B)

..Explanation

On September 15, 2008, the CRA adopted the budget for FY2009. The Downtown budget was adopted with total revenues of \$1,392,645 which included projected Tax Increment revenues of \$1,342,088 and an additional \$50,557 as an un-appropriated trust fund balance as of June 30, 2008, the latest information available at that time.

In December 2008, the actual value of Tax Increment for FY2009 was determined to be \$1,311,417, a decrease of 2.29%. The un-appropriated fund balance as of September 30, 2008 was 84,273, an increase of 67%, bringing the actual Downtown FY09 revenues to 1,395,690, a total increase of \$3,045 or 0.22%.

Below are highlights of the changes in the Downtown FY2009 Amendatory Budget vs. the FY2009 Budget adopted on September 15, 2008:

Payroll and Operating Expenses

Changes in Debt Service / Tax Increment Recapture

Appropriation of unexpended TIF revenue based on FY2008 receipts

Payroll and Operating Expenses

During the original budgeting process, the City assumed that managers would receive one-time lump sum bonuses in lieu of annual pay increases. The adopted budget reflected this assumption. However, the City Commission later decided that managers would receive annual pay increases. Those increases are reflected in the Amendatory budget.

Additionally, the budget for contract services increased \$5,200 to cover temporary contractor help with file clean-up and organization. The Downtown portion of the increase is \$1,352.

These increases are offset by a decrease from staffing vacancies. The adopted budget assumed one new employee (CRA Finance Manager) would be onboard as of October 1, 2008. As of February 19, 2009, this position is still vacant.

Overall, the net of the proposed changes to the Downtown payroll and operating budget result is a decrease of \$6,062.

The operating & payroll expense to tax increment ratio is 18.83%, below the self-imposed limit of 25%.

Changes to Debt Services/Tax Increment Recapture Payments

Debt Service remained unchanged.

The Tax Increment Recapture payments were estimated to be \$292,323 based on 2008 actual payments. For FY09, the actual recapture payments will total \$226,083, a reduction of \$66,240 detailed as follows:

- Union Street Station – (\$66,240)

These amounts also include corrections (adjusted to account for correct millage rates) to the 2007 Tax Increment payments made in 2008. See handout for more details.

Appropriation of unexpended TIF revenue based on final FY2009 receipts

After the changes outlined above are accounted for, an additional \$73,994 remains available to appropriate to Downtown projects. See back-up for details.

..Fiscal Note

CRA staff will prepare a Budget Transaction Form to be executed by the City’s Budget and Finance Department.

..Recommendation

CRA Staff to the Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board: Approve FY09 Amendatory budget as described above.

H. REPORT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

I. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

J. PUBLIC COMMENT

K. ADJOURNMENT