
MINUTES
Special Meeting
Fifth Avenue Pleasant Street Redevelopment Advisory Board
Tuesday, May 25, 2010
5:30 pm

Wilhelmina Johnson Center
321 NW 10th Street, Gainesville, FL 32601

A. ROLL CALL

Chair Dotty Faibisy called the meeting to order at 5:36 pm.

Members Present

Melanie Barr
Dotty Faibisy
Russ Ingram
Roberta Parks
Cesar Fernandez

Members Absent

Tim Jones

Staff Present

Greg Bradley
Kelly Fisher
Stephanie Seawright
Matt Dube
Malcolm Kiner
Anthony Lyons

Guests

Scherwin Henry
Nkwanda Jah
Oliver Jones
Katie Jones
George Tedford

B. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The Board unanimously passed the motion made by Member Ingram, seconded by Member Parks.

Recommendation: Adopt Agenda.

C. REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Nkwanda Jah, Fifth Avenue Arts festival, discussed the history of the festival, schedule of activities for this year's festival and request of sponsorship from the CRA FAPS Board. No action was needed as the Board had already appropriated monies for the festival.

D. OLD BUSINESS

1. FAPS Heritage Trail and A. Quinn Jones House Update

Introduction

In 2009, the Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency initiated the Legacy Project: Stories of Hope and Determination in the Fifth Avenue Pleasant Street (FAPS) Redevelopment Area. The project consists of two new cultural heritage projects: the A. Quinn Jones Heritage Center and Fifth Avenue Pleasant Street Heritage Trail. The overarching project theme is to tell the stories of the accomplishments and contributions made by people who lived in the FAPS area.

A. Quinn Jones Heritage Center

The Center will be housed in the former home of A. Quinn Jones, a ground breaking pioneer in education for the Southeastern United States, whose career was distinguished by his determination to provide quality education to all African-American children. While the Center is named for A. Quinn Jones, its focus extends beyond his legacy to address the accomplishments of other notable neighborhood residents as well. People such as Benjamin Childs, a trustee of African-American schools in Alachua County; Jesse Aaron, a self-taught sculptor who carved distinctive wood figures; and Thelma Jordan, the first woman principal at Lincoln High School, are representative of the powerful narratives envisioned at the core of the Center's mission.

The Heritage Trail

The A. Quinn Jones Heritage Center is the point of origin for the Legacy Project, orienting visitors to the overarching theme and preparing them for visiting the Heritage Trail. The Trail is a system of physical markers that weaves together the stories of accomplishment introduced at the A. Quinn Jones Center with notable neighborhood sites. The goal is that the stories will be enlivened by visiting sites such as the NW 5th Avenue commercial corridor and the site of Union Academy. The Trail has at its core compelling, personal stories communicated through a variety of creative media including audio and web content. Authenticity will be achieved using the words and

images of the neighborhood residents themselves. The CRA has begun gathering content and every effort will be made to ensure that its interpretation retains its original vividness and ability to inspire.

The CRA is currently developing a guiding framework for creating the content and design direction for the Heritage Trail and the A. Quinn Jones House. This framework, or interpretive plan, is necessary to ensure that the content has a clear purpose and creates a meaningful experience. To that end CRA staff interviewed and selected Synergy Design Group who specializes in developing trail and museum projects. The CRA and Synergy are now under contract to provide the project with a Mission Statement and Interpretive Master Plan that treats the Heritage Trail and A. Quinn Jones projects as a unified project.

Synergy has started this work and is anticipated to develop the plan over the next couple of months. The FAPS advisory board will receive opportunities to review the work as it progresses. Once the final plan is complete, the CRA will then develop designs for the trail markers and exhibits for the house museum.

The CRA is planning to apply for a Tourism Product Development Grant this summer to help fund construction of the Trail and Museum. The grant amount is up to \$25,000 and the application cycle opens in May. The CRA will include letters of support for the grant application from individuals and organizations

Nkwanda Jah of the Cultural Arts Coalition asked if the Wilhemina Johnson Center and/or the Fifth Avenue Arts Festival are notated on the trail. Staff stated that they would look into the addition of these items.

Staff apprised the Board that letters of support were due on June 21st. A template will be provided those wishing to show support for this grant opportunity.

2. 2010 FAPS Façade Grant Program

The FAPS Façade Grant Program is a competitive, matching grant program that is designed to encourage reinvestment in building facades, specifically those located on highly visible target corridors within the district. Applicants must commit to expending (at a minimum) a cash match equal to the grants funds sought in the application. Repairs/upgrades to the façade must be visible at all times from the building's exterior, and maintenance items are not eligible for grant funds. Each storefront is eligible for up to \$5,000 in reimbursable grant funds; buildings with multiple store fronts are eligible for up to \$10,000. The first application cycle for the 2010 FAPS façade program has concluded. The CRA received two applications from within the Fifth Avenue Pleasant Street Redevelopment Area. Both projects are located along target corridors within the FAPS district: one project is at 321 NW 8th Ave, another is at 502 NW 4th Street. Staff has reviewed both applications; a brief summary of each application and of Staff's findings follows below (projects are listed in no particular order). Copies of the FAPS Façade Grant Program and all application materials, including visual aids, are included in the backup. Original color copies of all application materials will be available for inspection at the CRA office.

The Board passed the motion made by Member Ingram, seconded by Member Fernandez. **Members Parks voted nay and Member Barr declared a conflict interest.**

Recommendation: Award reimbursable grant awards for \$9,810 to Pleasant Street Historic Society for the Smith-Griffin House at 321 NW 8th.

The Board unanimously passed the motion made by Member Ingram, seconded by Member Parks.

Recommendation: Award reimbursable grant awards for \$1,168.75 to Clevern & Barbara Sharpe for façade work at 502 NW 4th Street

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. NDC Economic Development Finance Study (B)

Since its inception, the CRA's programs, incentives, and outreach have been primarily focused on real estate development and public improvements as the preferred tools to help alleviate slum and blight in CRA areas. To date, direct assistance to businesses, excluding real estate developers, has been limited to façade grant and paint programs. Neither the CRA nor the City currently have more traditional economic development finance programs and incentives that are focused on alleviating slum and blight through economic investment in new business and job

creation. As the real estate market has shifted and new private development has stalled, CRA staff has experienced an increase in inquiries from non-real estate businesses requesting assistance. It has become increasingly more challenging to effectively respond to these requests as the existing programs and incentives are focused on real estate, not business assistance.

In response to these factors, the CRA contracted with the National Development Council (NDC) in November 2009, to conduct a study and analysis related to Economic Development Finance resources. NDC is the oldest national non-profit community and economic development organization in the U.S. It was founded in 1969 with one purpose: increasing the flow of capital for investment, jobs and community development to underserved urban and rural areas. NDC is one of the recognized leaders in the nation in the area of Economic Development.

The project was structured in two phases: 1) Current State/As-Is Assessment Phase and 2) Recommendations Phase. NDC presented its findings from the as-is phase and will bring recommendations during the March 2010 meeting.

There was much discussion and questions surrounding these proposed programs. Staff apprised the members that the Pre-development fund was still in the conceptual stage and they will probably need to attain outside help. The Jobs Grant tool will be a good marketing tool for the CRA and its economic development programs. Commissioner Henry asked that when talking about the Leveraging Fund program had the CRA considered the Community Block Grant Fund administered by the City of Gainesville. Staff said that they will look into it.

Commissioner Henry inquired as to whether there is a business plan portion section to the SBA 7A and 504 programs. Staff stated that there was but that it is overseen more so by the lender than the CRA. Member Fernandez inquired as to whether the City would add additional stipulations to the 504 program. Staff answered that there would be no need as the eligibility is pretty basic.

F. REPORT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

G. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

H. PUBLIC COMMENT

I. ADJOURNMENT – 7:19 pm