
AGENDA
Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board
Wednesday, December 19, 2007 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 31, 2007 meeting.

D. REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Lt. Wayne Ash, Gainesville Police Department

E. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Chair's Report

2. Staff Report – Information Items

- Gainesville Responsible Hospitality Partnership -The GRHP currently has thirty-two (32) bar/restaurant members.
- University Avenue Interim Improvements – The maintenance agreement is still in progress. The equipment order is moving forward and additional coordination is being made with the Public Works Department. The order has not yet been placed and is pending finalization of purchasing documents. The equipment consists of the following items: DRAB - 5 benches, 2 planters, 21 trash receptacles, 2 receptacle covers, and 2 receptacle liners.
- GRU Master Plan – Subsequent to the August 22nd public meeting, City, CRA, and GRU officials recognized that this project needed additional attention and retooling. As result, they have decided to pursue the Master Plan with the help of a different consulting team. Staff will keep DRAB abreast of progress as a new consultant is hired and the project moves forward.

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. CRA Streetscape Design and Technical Standards Revisions (B)

..Explanation

The CRA Streetscape Design and Technical Standards were originally prepared by Bellomo-Herbert in 2003 to unify streetscape reconstruction throughout the redevelopment districts by specifying items such as paving patterns, street furniture, and landscaping from a common palette of materials. The streetscape standards have been implemented in such places as SW 2nd Avenue in the Downtown District, on West University Avenue in the College Park University Heights District, and at the new Wal-Mart Supercenter in the Eastside District. Observation of the constructed streetscapes prompted staff to consider revisions to the standards to improve the quality of the design and materials used in future projects. Staff explained the need for revising the standards to the four advisory boards, and in May 2007, the CRA authorized the expenditure of \$8,000 for Bellomo-Herbert and Company to perform the revisions. The Downtown Redevelopment District contributed \$2,000 toward this effort.

The revisions include switching concrete pavers for clay brick pavers, changing accessible curb ramp designs to match Public Works specifications, changing paving patterns, resolving conflicts where two different streets intersect, and general improvements to the document's organization.

In each of the four redevelopment districts, the main corridors are organized into various categories according to the uses that adjoin them. These main corridors are the roadways that will receive particular emphasis through the implementation of the streetscape standards. Minor neighborhood streets that are primarily residential in nature are not identified for receiving the streetscape standards. In the Downtown District, University Avenue and South Main Street are designated "Primary Corridors." In the core of downtown several streets are designated "Commercial Core", which are urbanized streets with a predominantly commercial character. Clusters of streets north of

University Avenue, west of 3rd Street, and south of 4th Avenue are designated "Mixed Use" for their mix of residential, office, and retail uses.

To assure that consistency in streetscape construction is attained, Bellomo-Herbert advised CRA staff that the CRA request that the City incorporate the streetscape standards into the Gainesville Land Development Code. The mechanism for implementation would be to require the developer of a redevelopment site or any publicly funded project located on any one of the designated streets in the standards, not just CRA-funded projects, to enhance the streetscape. The type of redevelopment that would be required to construct the standards still needs to be defined. The change to the Land Development Code would need to pass legal review and adoption of an ordinance by the City Commission.

CRA staff has reviewed the draft revisions and changes have been identified on the document. The proposed changes will need to be reviewed and approved by each advisory board prior to submittal to Bellomo-Herbert. A final review will be made prior submittal to the CRA for formal approval.

.. Fiscal Note

Fiscal note: Each of the four redevelopment districts has received a staff report on this project and budgeted \$2,000 in the 2006-2007 amendatory budget for the Bellomo-Herbert and Company contract.

..Recommendation

1) CRA Staff to DRAB: Review the draft streetscape standards revisions and approve changes for submittal to the consultant, Bellomo-Herbert; and 2) DRAB to CRA: Request that CRA request the City Commission to refer the CRA Streetscape Design and Technical Standards to the Gainesville Plan Board for incorporation into the Gainesville Land Development Code by ordinance of the City of Gainesville.

2. Porters Neighborhood Improvements (NB)

..Explanation

Staff continues to move forward with projects in the Porters Neighborhood. Planning continues to remove the Porters Oaks fence and replace it with a safer, more attractive structure. Based on internal review and meetings with the Porters Oaks property-owners association, Staff is investigating the potential to install a decorative wooden fence to replace the existing structure. The proposed fence will be designed to reflect the historic character of Porters, which is one of the City's original neighborhoods. The fence will also be crafted out of high quality materials, such as pressure treated wood; so as to avoid the decay that has marred the existing structure.

In addition to the short-term improvements, such as the fence, Staff also continues to pursue long-term, large scale infrastructure improvements in the area. On December 10th, CRA and Public Works staff met to review the completed surveys for SW 3rd and SW 5th Streets. Based on the information contained in these surveys, and input from Public Works, Staff is finalizing the scope of work for the Porters engineering feasibility study. The feasibility study will provide Staff with detailed information regarding potential improvements to the area, and once complete, will also Staff to budget, schedule, and coordinate infrastructure upgrades in a timely and cost-efficient fashion.

Finally, Staff is also examining improvements at Lynch Park. At the December CRA meeting, the Board will consider DRAB's recommendation to install an off-leash dog facility on a portion of Lynch Park. The facility will be roughly 1 acre in size, which is comparable to the dog area in Northeast Park. This size is also in keeping with design standards recommended by the American Kennel Club. The dog area will require fencing around the facility's perimeter, including a double gate area in order to prevent dogs from accidentally escaping. Staff is also proposing two benches, a waste receptacle, and a water spigot for pet hydration. The cost estimate for these features is roughly \$12,000. Staff hopes that improvements to the park will provide a reason for citizens to visit the park and use the space for recreation purposes, as it is intended. By returning the space to productive activity and use, Staff hopes to reduce crime and loitering in the area. Reinvestment at Lynch Park will have additional benefits to Porters because the park visually serves as a gateway to Porters for travelers coming from the central business district. Revitalization at the park will therefore highlight on-going efforts in Porters and will encourage additional investment in the area.

.. Fiscal Note

Porters Neighborhood improvements were approved in the 2007 budget in the amount of \$80,000 in account # 610-790-W231-5520. An additional, \$131,502.29 has been approved in the 2008 budget. Staff estimates that the cost

for the engineering feasibility study will not exceed \$30,000. Additionally, it is anticipated that the cost to replace the entirety Porters Oaks fence will be approximately \$33,000. Estimates to construct an off-leash area in Lynch Park are approximately \$12,000.

..Recommendation

1) Receive update from Staff; and 2) Take action as needed

G. NEW BUSINES

1. 2007 Downtown Existing Commercial Building Façade Grant Program (B)

..Explanation

The Downtown Existing Commercial Building 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 application cycle for the 2007 Downtown façade program concluded on November 2nd. The CRA received four applications from within the Downtown Redevelopment Area. All four projects are located along target corridors within the Downtown: one project is on W University Avenue, another is on SE 1st Avenue, and two are located on S. Main Street. Staff has reviewed all four applications; a brief summary of each application and of Staff's findings follows below (projects are listed in no particular order). Copies of the Downtown 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 December 19th, 2007 DRAB meeting.

An application was submitted by Steve Nichtberger, the owner of a commercial building located at 211 W University Avenue. This building (located between 8 Seconds and Silver Q) was formerly home to Flashbacks Recycled Fashions; however Mr. Nichtberger has relocated that shop and is currently renovating the building in order to accommodate a new business, the Motel Bar. According to the applicant, the Motel Bar will target a much older audience than many of the existing nightclubs in the area, and is specifically aimed at attracting professionals living in and around Downtown. The applicant believes that the proposed façade design will reflect this clientele. Façade improvements include removal of existing plate glass windows on both the lower and upper stories, which will correct a Code deficiency. As indicated by backup material, demolition of the protruding window features will transform an existing entry alcove in to a large, two-story porch area. The applicant has stated that he hopes to use this space for outdoor dining/patio. The refurbished façade also includes installation of new windows and doors as well as new lighting and paint. Existing concrete block columns along the building's perimeter will be resurfaced with a stacked stone material. First and second floor porches will be defined and will include new railings. The lower floor railing will be aluminum and the upper floor railing will be a reclaimed 1890's wrought iron fixture salvaged from New Orleans. According to the application, the total cost of the proposed work is \$11,598. After a thorough review, Staff awarded 27 of 42 possible points to this project. This sum is one point higher than the applicant's self-evaluation. Staff found that the applicant did not claim paint work when scoring his project, however support materials show that such work will be preformed.

Emiliano's Café, located at 7 SE 1st Avenue, also submitted a façade grant application. According to application materials, the café's storefront is in need of a "facelift." The owner of the building has provided a letter granting Emiliano's permission to make façade improvements to the structure. Proposed façade improvements include new, custom doors (which will correct a Code deficiency), as well as powerwashing and repair/replacement of woodwork. (The application materials document various instances where beadboard and wood molding require maintenance and/or repair.) The project scope also includes new paint; however the color scheme for the façade (red, blue, and natural wood) will not be altered. Application materials indicate that the overall cost for the project will be roughly \$11,911.71. When reviewing this project, Staff concluded that the proposed work for the Emiliano's façade improvements is largely maintenance related. Staff also felt that while the proposed façade improvements are worthwhile, the visual impact between the "before" and "after" scenarios will be fairly minimal, and may go unnoticed by the general public. After evaluating the project, Staff awarded 16 points to Emiliano's.

The third application was submitted by Richard Yoh, owner of a property located at 502 S. Main Street. This property is directly south of Lynch Park and was formerly the site of automobile-related uses and the Imported Auto

Center business. The applicant has stated that he will no longer operate automobile uses at the property and plans to convert the site into restaurant and office space. The proposed façade improvements, estimated at \$57,169.37, are related to this effort. Mr. Yoh plans to act as his own contractor, and proposed work on the façade includes new paint (in a series of tonal grays), signage, windows, doors, and awnings. Due to the scale of the project and the building's current condition and location, this project was awarded full points for its capacity to transform the building's appearance from "worst" to "best". The project will also return a vacant building to use, attract restaurant and/or office occupants, correct code deficiencies, and remove window coverings. Staff awarded Mr. Yoh's application 31 points, which is six points less than the applicant claimed in the self-evaluation. The six points were deducted for various repairs and upgrades that were claimed on the application, but not documented in support materials.

The final application was submitted by Chris Fillie for façade improvements to a building containing three storefronts located at 433, 435, and 437 S Main Street. The owner of the building has provided a letter granting Mr. Fillie permission to make façade improvements to the structure. According to application materials, the façade renovation will cost approximately \$26,550. The project scope includes new windows, doors, awnings, lighting, and a fresh coat of paint in a "spring mint" and "hot apple spice" color palate. Additionally, the renovation will encompass the removal of a significant amount of cladding and old wiring. With these elements removed, the building will receive repairs to masonry and woodwork that will restore detail work and the structure's historic façade. The proposed work will also correct Code deficiencies, refurbish formerly vacant storefronts, and attract occupants (including a new art gallery). The project fronts S Main Street, which is a target location within the façade grant program. Due to the building's current condition, and the scope of work and level of detail provided in the application, the project was awarded full points for a "worst" to "best" transformation. The project summary included with the application was very thorough and detailed. The application materials include specific information regarding the proposed façade improvements, including building elevations that depict the vision for the finished product. The "before" and "after" visual aids provided by the applicant indicate that the refinished structure will be unrecognizable from its current condition once the proposed façade work is complete. Staff review awarded 41 points to this project, one point less than the applicant's self-assessed score. This point was deducted because signage work, although claimed in the application, was not documented in plans or price quotes.

Staff evaluation of the four applications ranked the projects in the following order: #1) Fillie – 41 points, #2) Yoh – 31 points, #3) Nichtberger – 28 points, and #4) Emiliano's – 16 points. The overall budget for the Downtown façade grant program is \$20,000, and Staff aimed to work within this budget to fund all four projects, as all of the applications support Downtown businesses and beautification. Based on the merits of each project as well as Façade Grant budget considerations, Staff recommends the following awards: \$9,500 to the Fillie project (this building contains multiple storefronts and qualifies for maximum program funding levels); \$5,000 grant to the Yoh building; \$4500 to the Nichtberger building; and \$1000 to the Emiliano's project.

..Fiscal Note

The CRA has budgeted \$20,000 for façade grants in fiscal year 2008, which began October 1, 2007.

..Recommendation

1) Review façade grant application materials; and 2) Award reimbursable grant awards as follows; all projects must be completed within 12 months to qualify for grant award: \$9,500 to Chris Fillie for façade work 433-437 S Main Street; \$5,000 to Richard Yoh for façade work at 502 S Main Street (proof of a licensed contractor will be required prior to the release of funding); \$4,500 to Steve Nichtberger for façade work at 211 W University Avenue; and \$1,500 to Ali de Paz/Emiliano's Café for façade work at 7 SE 1st Avenue.

H. REPORT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

I. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

J. PUBLIC COMMENT

K. ADJOURNMENT