
AGENDA
Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board
Wednesday, February 27, 2008 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 December 19, 2007 meeting.

D. REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

E. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Chair's Report

2. Staff Report – Information Items

Downtown Parking Study – The selection committee has ranked the respondents. A final decision is anticipated for February, following oral presentations from the top candidates.

Gainesville Responsible Hospitality Partnership – GPD has released statistics relating to underage drinking violations for the 4th quarter of 2007. Three GRHP members, all located in the Downtown hospitality district, exceeded the Partnership's 12-violation maximum. Mojitos, Rehab, and Rue Bar have subsequently lost their "Responsible Vendor" status. These businesses may be eligible to rejoin the group if they reduce under-21 violations over the next quarter.

GRU Site Master Plan – Subsequent to the August 22nd public meeting, City, CRA, and GRU officials recognized that this project needed additional attention and retooling. After regrouping to assess the situation, progress on this project is again underway. Representatives from The University Financing Foundation met with City, GRU, and UF officials on February 7th. TUFF has significant experience in funding projects of this scope and magnitude (such as Technology Square at Georgia Tech), and will aid the CRA and the City and the process moves forward.

Hampton Inn/Lot 9 Redevelopment – Fencing, staging, and site-clearing work has begun. Onsite foundation work will commence by the end of the month. Pictures of on-going progress are attached as backup.

University Avenue Improvements

Bike racks have arrived. The remaining waste receptacles, planters, and benches are due to arrive the first week of February. Installation is planned for February and March. The roadway median designs (5 in CPUH, 3 in Eastside) are completed and work is underway to design irrigation systems.

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. Cade Museum (NB)

..Explanation

The family of the late Dr. Robert Cade is interested in creating a museum in Gainesville that will celebrate the spirit of scientific innovation. In January 2008, Ms. Phoebe Miles, daughter of Dr. Cade, addressed the SPROUT Task Force and explained the general museum concept. The museum would consist of exhibits to highlight scientific research and exploration in a fun, interactive way. The exhibits would be appropriate for people of all ages and children would receive due consideration. Dr. Cade collected vintage Studebaker automobiles and his collection is envisioned as providing additional interest toward the museum experience. The museum leadership has hired an architect, Gould-Evans Architects, Mr. Don Adams (a museum consultant) and an exhibit designer, Amaze, to begin preliminary development. A community design charrette is planned for March to gather input from the public.

One of the candidate locations being considered is the Depot Park site, which is in the Downtown Redevelopment Area. The Depot Park site would be an excellent choice for locating the museum. The park has convenient access to downtown, the University of Florida, and surrounding neighborhoods. In 2002, participants in a community design charrette created a conceptual park design consisting of manmade ponds and recreational/cultural amenities that would be an ideal context for the museum. In addition, transportation enhancements planned for South Main Street and Depot Avenue will improve public safety and aesthetics in the vicinity of the park. The combined features of the park and museum projects can potentially create significant possibilities and benefits for the community. If the park site is deemed by both the City and museum leadership as appropriate for the museum, construction would need to begin after the remediation of the coal tar contamination, currently in the permitting phase.

The SPROUT Task Force was very receptive to the museum as described by Ms. Miles and recommended that the City of Gainesville officially extend an invitation to the museum leadership to work with the City on this site. The City Commission subsequently adopted the recommendation of the Task Force and contacted the museum leadership by letter to offer assistance with the planning process.

.. Fiscal Note
None

..Recommendation
CRA Staff to Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board: 1) Receive update from CRA Staff

2. Porters Neighborhood Improvements (B)

..Explanation

Both long-term and short-term initiatives in Porters continue to progress. Survey work along key neighborhood corridors is complete, and engineering feasibility studies will soon be underway along SW 3rd Street. Similar engineering work may also occur along SW 5th Street, as well as SW 5th and 6th Avenues (this includes the roadway directly in front of the Porters Community Center) in the future. These feasibility studies will produce a catalog of information regarding potential Porters improvements, such as street resurfacing, curb and gutter installation, lighting upgrades, stormwater, utilities, sidewalks, streetscapes, etc. Once the engineering study is completed, Staff will be able to begin the design and implementation phase in the neighborhood. The engineering work will provide details regarding cost, timeline, and technical issues, associated with each of the proposed neighborhood improvements. This data will allow staff to prioritize, phase, coordinate, and budget for large-scale, long term projects in the most effective manner possible. Particularly of note, GRU has future plans to underground some major utility corridors running through the area. Due to tactical issues, these improvements must be coordinated around the timelines for the Depot Park excavation/environmental remediation and the proposed FDOT Main Street rebuilding project. However, the feasibility studies will help staff plan these activities in conjunction with current improvements to ensure that resources are allocated as efficiently as possible.

Progress continues with short-term initiatives as well. Staff has successfully collaborated with Public Works to address routine roadway maintenance issues such as the repair/replacement of damaged traffic signs, and the painting of speed bumps, stop lines, crosswalks, and center lines along neighborhood streets. City crews have already replaced and installed numerous traffic signs through the neighborhood and have re-striped center lines and speed bumps in the area. Additionally, CRA staff is coordinating with City staff and Advisory Boards in the Parks and Recreation Department in order to move forward with implementation of improvements and amenities at Lynch Park. The CRA plans to install a dog park area and floral garden at Lynch Park. These amenities will attract new users to the space and will inject liveliness and activity into a previously underutilized area.

A major issue on Staff's "short-term list" of neighborhood initiatives is the Porters Oaks fence. The fence has long been recognized for its deteriorated condition, serving as both an eyesore and a potential security hazard (as it blocks the view of "eyes on the street"). Prominently situated along Depot Avenue, the fence visually functions as a gateway to the area. As such, it presents a negative image of the neighborhood to the surrounding community and serves to counteract reinvestment efforts within Porters. In order to address and improve the many negative issues associated with the fence, the CRA is removing the old structure and constructing a high quality, site-built fence in its place. The concept for the new fence was finalized after numerous meetings with the Porters Oaks Homeowners Association. Residents provided input related on various fence designs and

stressed the importance that the final product reflect the contextual surroundings and not appear too institutional for a residential neighborhood. Based on this information, Staff and Porters Oaks residents worked together to achieve a fence design that reflects the historic, residential character of the Porters neighborhood. Work on the fence project began the first week of February, with fence crews onsite beginning the demolition and removal of the old structure. The new fence will replace the existing section along Depot Avenue, and will be constructed by skilled workers onsite. (In the future, the CRA may pursue similar treatment to the portion of the fence along SW 2nd Street.) The fence will be constructed from pressure treated wood and the design will be both attractive and durable. Through collaboration with the Porters Oaks Homeowners Association, the fencing project has also provided an opportunity for a neighborhood garden on a small City-owned lot that was formerly blocked in by the fencing structure. CRA and City staff have been working with neighborhood residents to use this space to establish a community vegetable garden. Residents are excited for this opportunity and anticipate bringing their excess produce to the farmers market that is planned for the Cotton Club site.

In addition to CRA-initiated activities in the area, the City's Housing Division is also planning a major project in the neighborhood: the construction of six new homes to be sold for homeownership. This project, known as Depot Gardens, is located at Depot Avenue and SW 3rd Street, directly adjacent to Porters Oaks. The development, in conjunction with the CRA's fence replacement efforts, will greatly improve the visual impact of the area. In order to maximize the synergy between the two projects, CRA Staff is communicating with Housing in order to ensure continuity between the new Porters Oaks fence and the adjacent future fencing that Housing will install as part of the Depot Gardens project. Additionally, CRA Staff would like to link these "short term" improvements with the larger scale engineering efforts also underway in the neighborhood. Using the information that will be provided through the on-going engineering assessment of SW 3rd Street, Staff hopes to provide sidewalks, decorative lighting and streetscaping along the entrance to Porters at Depot and SW 3rd Street. The goal is to create an inviting, attractive neighborhood entrance that showcases the on-going reinvestment in the area.

.. Fiscal Note

Removal and replacement of the Depot Avenue section of the Porters Oaks fence will cost approximately \$10,000. Porters Neighborhood improvements (account # 610-790-W231-5520) were approved in the 2007 budget in the amount of \$80,000, and \$131,502.29 was approved in the 2008 budget.

..Recommendation

CRA Staff to Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board: 1) Receive update from CRA Staff

G. NEW BUSINES

1. **FY2008 Downtown Second Amendatory Budget (B)**

..Explanation

Each year when the annual increment comes in the CRA adopts an amendatory budget to appropriate unanticipated funds. This is an opportunity for adjustments to the budget and the addition of special projects that were not anticipated when the budget was prepared. This year the Downtown increment was \$1,193,054, which is \$143,452, more than anticipated. This figure accounts for 26% of the total TIF received for all four (4) CRA districts. There is a decrease in Payroll Expenses due to the recent reorganization of the CRA and anticipation of the CRA office being staffed 100% by March 1, 2008. A savings of \$12,693.66 from October 1, 2007 through March 1, 2008 in Payroll Expenses was recognized due to positions that were budgeted for but not yet filled. Operating Expenses were also reduced by 7% due to the percentage of TIF that the Downtown Redevelopment Area contributes to the overall TIF (26%). Funds totaling \$6,240 are being requested for office redesign, new desks, computers and software for the new personnel.

Non-appropriated TIF funds in the amount of \$153,026.99 are available for projects in the Downtown Redevelopment Area. Staff recommends the following distribution of available funds: 1) The City's Legal Department has requested a total of \$25,514.91 in additional funding for the attorney's that the CRA currently utilizes. Downtown's portion totals \$6,633.88; 2) Budget an additional \$1,955.47 for the annual Union Street payment which has increased due to the increase in property values; and 3) the remaining funds of \$144,437.64, to be placed in the Porter's Neighborhood account (610-790-W231-5520).

..Fiscal note
As described above.

..Recommendation:
CRA Staff to the Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board: Adopt the second amendatory budget for FY2008 as presented.

H. REPORT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

I. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

J. PUBLIC COMMENT

K. ADJOURNMENT