
AGENDA
Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board
Wednesday, October 31, 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. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Nomination for all offices is needed. The current Chair (Member Thomas) is eligible for re-election. The current Vice-Chair and Secretary (Members Castine and Giddings) are not eligible for re-election. Elections will follow nominations and the elected member will serve immediately.

- D. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** – Approval of the Minutes for the September 26, 2007 meeting.
- E. REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**
- F. COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Chair's Report

2. Staff Report – Information Items

- Scheduling of December 2007 meeting – The current scheduled meeting date is December 26, 2007 which is the day after Christmas.
- Gainesville Responsible Hospitality Partnership – On this Agenda.
- University Avenue Interim Improvements – CRA staff has submitted the improvements plans to FDOT for a Special Use Permit to install permanent streetscape equipment. Quotes for streetscape equipment have been obtained. Public Works is obtaining easements for bus shelters and benches along the right of way. Zamia Design Landscape Architecture has started the design of the roadway medians in CPUH and the Eastside District. Bellomo-Herbert has started work on streetscape standards revisions. Work is progressing on bus shelter re-designs.
- Bethel Garage – On this Agenda
- Porter's Neighborhood Improvements – On this Agenda
- 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.
- Downtown Farmer's Market – The market officially moved to the Plaza on October 17, 2007. The operation was very successful, drawing large crowds, media coverage, and increased visibility. At Staff's request, Public Works designated the 19 newly-striped spaces along SE 1st Avenue as market vendor parking. These spaces are restricted for use by market vendors on Wednesday afternoons. These spaces, which can accommodate roughly half of the vendors, are another important benefit of moving the Plaza. Prior to the move and CRA involvement, free parking was not available to market members.
- Interactive Fountains – On this Agenda
- Amendatory Budget – The 2008 amendatory budget was approved by the CRA at the September 17, 2007 meeting. As requested by DRAB, a copy of this budget is included for informational purposes as part of the agenda backup
- Lighting on SE 2nd – At the September 2007 meeting, DRAB considered the possibility of continuing the decorative lighting scheme along SW 2nd Avenue across Main Street to include medians in the vicinity of Union Street Station. At the time, Member McGurn had been in contact with Jonesville Lighting and suggested a cost estimate of \$2500. Staff has examined the issue further and has received an updated estimate of \$13,252.00.

G. OLD BUSINESS

1. Bethel Garage (B)

..Explanation

The Bethel Garage is an historic building located at the intersection of SE 1st Street and SE 1st Avenue, directly adjacent to the Downtown Plaza. Until September 2007, the building housed ticketing operations related to the RTS transfer station that was formerly located at the Plaza. However, the ticketing office (as well as the adjacent bus stop) has recently been relocated to the new RTS transfer facility at Depot Avenue. The CRA is therefore examining the redevelopment potential of the Bethel Station. The building's location in the heart of Downtown, proximity to other attractions, and prominent visibility contribute to a high redevelopment potential. For these reasons, the CRA has requested to be the lead agency in Bethel Station redevelopment. The City Commission approved this request on September 24, 2007.

The building is unique in design and is designated on the local historic register. As such, Staff does not anticipate or plan that redevelopment of the site will alter the external appearance of the Bethel structure. The interior of the structure will require significant changes. The building itself is quite small, and the interior space totals less than 500 square feet. Due to the size of the space, it is recommended that the site be redeveloped into a food service establishment. The structure's interior will require remodeling. Currently half of the interior space is occupied by two identical bathroom stalls. One bathroom will be removed and, along with the current office area, will be converted into a kitchen. Customers will be able to order food to take away, or to eat at outdoor seating provided under the building's front canopy, or in additional seating areas adjacent to and behind the building. The existing seating area to the rear of the Bethel Station will also receive new fixtures and this space will contribute additional seating area to support the new business. Staff has worked with a consultant to address the feasibility of redevelopment of the Bethel Station. According to the consultant, the building requires repairs to address the following issues: leaking roof, damaged ceiling tile, inadequate electrical system, inadequate air conditioning unit, deteriorating woodwork and exterior paint, deteriorating (adjacent) bus shelter. These repairs are necessary regardless of the end use for the building. In order to operate as a food service establishment, the Bethel Garage would require the following additional repairs: upgrading plumbing, connecting to gas utilities, providing food storage, removing one bathroom to accommodate food preparation space needs, providing adequate outdoor seating for customers, updating the layout of the patio in the rear of the building.

In addition to work at the Bethel building, the overall site also requires attention and improvements. The area under the building's front canopy will serve as a seating patio and will require café-style tables and chairs. As previously mentioned, the patio area behind the building will also be used as a dining space. This area currently has table and chair fixtures, although this furniture will be replaced with new fixtures as part of the redevelopment process. (Examples of potential fixtures are included in the backup.) The rear patio will also receive new railing and/or landscaping. These features will visually help connect the patio with the Bethel eatery and will unify the site. Landscaping will provide some screening and privacy for customers, but will not fully block visibility into the Plaza, offering connection to the public park space. The final component of the Bethel site is the adjacent bus shelter along SE 1st Avenue. The shelter currently serves no specific purpose, as it is no longer used as an RTS bus stop, and is in need of some significant repair due to hard use and apparent vandalism over years. Staff has received an estimate of \$7,250 to remove and cap the water and electric lines and demolish the structure. There is also a possibility of removing only the horizontal components of the shelter while retaining the vertical features. Under this scenario, the former bus shelter could be transformed into stand that useful for Plaza events, such as the weekly farmer's market. While this scenario would likely not require removing and capping water and electric lines (a savings of \$1,500), it would likely necessitate repair of the shelter's roof, which has suffered from fire damage. Costs for demolition and removal of the horizontal components only are estimated at \$2,875 (roof repairs would require additional cost).

Along with the Bethel building and the extended site, the final component in this redevelopment project will be the new business operation that is brought in as a result of this redevelopment. As mentioned, food service is the anticipated use at the site. This use was selected for a variety of reasons, including the unique size limitations within the building, and the site's proximity and visibility to other Downtown attractions. Both Staff and the consultant and have concluded that a food service business will be able to best capitalize on existing market conditions and populations in the area (residents, visitors to the Downtown/Plaza, office workers, hotel guests, late night bar/nightclub patrons, etc). Additionally, the potential for outdoor seating or food products that customers could easily carry away with them would compensate for the small interior footprint of the Bethel building. Finally, a

restaurant/café is allowed by right under the site's current zoning classification, Central City District. (However, special permit may be required for outdoor seating.)

Based on information gathered by Staff and the consultant, it is believed that the renovations and improvements (including café tables and chairs) to the Bethel building and site will cost approximately \$100,000. Currently the City has \$188,149.49 set aside in account 332-790-M660-5190. This account is dedicated to Plaza improvements. The CRA is not responsible for this account. Staff recommends requesting the CRA Board to request the City Commission authorize the use of funding from this account for Bethel redevelopment. If this funding is approved, Staff will hire an architect to move forward with the interior remodel. Staff will also work with DRAB to formulate a final, detailed redevelopment plan for City Commission approval. In addition to redevelopment at the Bethel Station, Staff will also explore the potential for other Plaza improvements that may compliment this project.

.. Fiscal Note

\$188,149.49 is budgeted in account 332-790-M660-5190 for Plaza improvements. The CRA is not responsible for this account.

..Recommendation

DRAB to CRA Board: request that the City Commission authorize the use of funding from account 332-790-M660-5190 for Bethel redevelopment.

2. Porters Neighborhood Improvements (B)

..Explanation

The CRA continues to approach Porters neighborhood improvements with dual strategies embracing both long-term and short-term goals. Staff is happy to report continued progress on both fronts. Long-term goals for Porters involve large-scale infrastructure upgrades, potentially including such items as street repair/resurfacing, lighting, installation of curb/gutter, sidewalks, drainage upgrades, and utility improvements. The first step towards implementing these large-scale goals is complete. Detailed neighborhood surveys have been cataloged along the major neighborhood corridors of SW 3rd Street, SW 5th Street, SW 4th Avenue, and SW 5th Avenue. Using the information provided in the surveys, and with help from Public Works, Staff is finalizing the scope for the engineering feasibility studies to be implemented along SW 3rd Street and SW 5th Street. The feasibility studies will commence as soon as possible and are estimated to have a combined cost of roughly \$30,000. The studies will analyze the potential for the large-scale improvements listed above. The end result will produce a catalog of information regarding potential Porters improvements. Once the engineering study is completed, Staff will be able to begin the design and implementation phase in the neighborhood. The engineering study 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. At Staff's request, Public Works crews have been at work in the neighborhood addressing routine roadway maintenance such as the repair/replacement of damaged traffic signs, and the painting of speed bumps, stop lines, crosswalks, and center lines along neighborhood streets. Crews have also replaced numerous traffic signs throughout the area. So far, traffic signs have been replaced at the intersections of SW 5th Ave & Sw 2nd Street, and SW 7th Ave and 4th Street. Signs have also been replaced at every intersection along Depot from Main Street to SW 6th Street, as well as along SW 5th Terrace and along SW 5th Avenue. Roadway striping and speed bump painting has occurred throughout SW 5th Avenue, 5th Terrace, and 3rd Street. Additional work is anticipated as funding associated with the new fiscal year becomes available. Staff would like to thank the Public Works road crews for their hard work in the neighborhood.

Another issue on Staff's short-term list of initiatives is the Porters Oaks fence. The fence is in poor condition and is both an eyesore and a potential security hazard (as it blocks the view of "eyes on the street"). Additionally, the fence is situated along Depot Avenue and visually functions as a gateway to the area. Due to the prominence of the structure and its current condition, this feature presents a negative image of the neighborhood to the surrounding community. Staff will replace this fence with a more attractive and safe fencing structure, likely a combination of metal and stone/brick materials. At Staff's request, the City's surveyor has examined the fence and determined that

the fence is partially on a City-owned lot, partially on the right-of-ways for Depot and SW 2nd Street, and partially on Porter's Oaks common space, which presents some challenges. Staff is currently working with other City staff, as well as Porters Oaks residents to develop a strategy for fence removal and replacement. Replacing this fence would provide a more appealing and welcoming "face" to the neighborhood and will complement the new homes that the Housing Division is building at the intersection of SW 3rd Street and Depot Avenue. According to the surveyor, the existing fence stretches for 1,065 linear feet. Staff anticipates replacing the fence with an aluminum structure similar to those found at City parks. The cost would be \$31 per foot, or \$33,015 to replace the entire length of the structure as it exists today. Staff will continue to meet with the neighborhood at the Porters Oaks Property Owners Association to provide information and receive recommendations and feedback from residents.

In addition to CRA-initiated activities in the area, the City's Housing Division is also planning a major project in the neighborhood. Housing will build five single family homes on a City-owned lot situated at the intersection of Depot and SW 3rd Street. One additional home will also be built directly across from these five houses, on SW 8th Avenue. All of these homes will be sold for homeownership. CRA staff intends to build off the synergy of this project and our own initiatives. With the removal/replacement of the Porters Oaks fence and the construction of new, high quality homes by the Housing Division, the "face" that Porters presents to Depot Avenue will drastically change. Staff would like to focus on this area in order to ensure that the final transformation has maximum impact. Staff's goals include sidewalks, decorative lighting and streetscaping along the entrance to the neighborhood at Depot and SW 3rd Street. The goal is to create an inviting, high-quality entrance to the neighborhood. Staff anticipates moving forward on this project using the technical information provided by the survey and feasibility assessment of SW 3rd Street. The engineering feasibility study will be underway while Housing gears up for groundbreaking.

.. 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.

..Recommendation

Receive update from Staff

3. Interactive Fountains (B)

..Explanation

At the July 16th, 2007 meeting, the CRA Board discussed urban water features, particularly the potential for an interactive water feature located at the Plaza or some other public space Downtown. The CRA Board referred this item to Staff to research and review. Staff sought input from DRAB at the September 2007 meeting. At that meeting, DRAB requested that Staff provide additional information regarding health risks associated with interactive fountains. Articles regarding such issues are attached as backup.

.. Fiscal Note

None.

..Recommendation

Provide input to Staff regarding water features.

H. NEW BUSINES

1. Gainesville Responsible Hospitality Partnership (B)

..Explanation

Hospitality is a valued and important aspect of the social and cultural activities for visitors and residents in many communities. In Gainesville, the local hospitality industry of restaurants, hotels, bars, and nightclubs is a major contributor to the economy. There are over 30 bars located in the Downtown CRA district and more than a dozen bars located along University Avenue in CPUH. These businesses have a strong impact on the community. They contribute to the vitality and liveliness of the Downtown and College Park/University Heights districts, and are credited with keeping "feet on the street" during evenings and weekends. However, due to the nature of products

and services provided by the hospitality industry, both hosts and guests share a responsibility in protecting the health, safety, and well-being of patrons as well as the surrounding community. The CRA aims to foster healthy and vibrant urban neighborhoods, and therefore also has a vested interest in supporting responsible hospitality. Successful redevelopment occurs not only through enhancing a district's physical environment, but also in improving the general perception conveyed by that place. Promoting responsible hospitality helps the CRA achieve both these goals and helps encourage increased investment and redevelopment in hospitality zones and the surrounding community.

In recognition of the issues and challenges inherent with hospitality districts, local business owners, with support from the CRA, the City, the University of Florida, and citizen leaders, have formed the Gainesville Responsible Hospitality Partnership (GRHP). CRA staff provides coordination and support to this voluntary coalition of local hospitality businesses. The group also includes representatives from other affected groups such as GPD, the UF student body, UF faculty and staff, and City and CRA representatives. GRHP business members include 28 bars and restaurants: The Swamp Restaurant, Calico Jacks, Gator City, XS, Grog House, The Copper Monkey, Fat Tuesday, Market Street Pub, Bar One, That Bar, Jewells, JP Gators, Italian Quarter Bistro & Lounge, Gators Dockside, The Bank, Rue Bar, Mojitos, 8 Seconds, Speakeasy, Brophy's Irish Pub, Coffee Culture, 1982 Bar, Rehab, Whiskey Room, Plasma Lounge, Mother's Pub & Grill, Dragonfly Sushi, and Dragonfly Rolls-n-Bowls. These members constitute a little less than half of the Midtown bars and 1/3 of the Downtown bars, as well as some establishments located outside of a CRA district. In addition to these businesses, membership also includes INsite Magazine, Burkhardt Sales & Services (a local Budweiser distributor), and Scan Technology (manufacturer of ID verification devices.) GRHP members aim to foster an atmosphere within Gainesville's hospitality districts that is safe and inviting. The group strives to provide support to the hospitality industry as well as the surrounding community so that everyone can enjoy and benefit from the activity that these businesses contribute to Downtown and Midtown. Additionally, an important tie-in to this mission relates to public health and safety. GRHP members have pledged to be proactive in efforts to create a safe, respectful environment in Gainesville's hospitality zones. GRHP is a self-regulating body, and if any member establishment accumulates more than 12 arrests for underage drinking within a 3-month period, GRHP membership will be terminated. A business may regain membership eligibility after a 3-month period in which no more than 12 arrests for possession under 21 are accrued.

The Partnership is comprised of a diverse group of businesses, and as such, membership duties are structured to be flexible and convenient in order to accommodate the often unconventional schedules of workers in the hospitality industry. Membership is free of charge and the group holds monthly meetings where attendance is strongly encouraged, though not mandatory. The only requirement for GRHP members is adherence to responsible hospitality practices and compliance with the Gainesville Responsible Vendor Covenant. In order to join GRHP, a bar, restaurant, nightclub, hotel or other hospitality-related business would simply need to sign the Responsible Vendor Covenant (attached as backup). The covenant is very straightforward; the policies described in the document are likely already practiced by responsible members of the hospitality community. Businesses who sign the covenant agree to follow all laws related to the sale and consumption of alcohol: members will not serve alcohol to anyone who is under the age of 21 or who is already visibly intoxicated. Members will create an atmosphere that is enjoyable for their patrons, and that facilitates positive and respectful social interaction. Businesses will promote or provide responsible beverage service training to their employees and will maintain control of the environment within their establishment (GRHP and GPD provide such training every fall.) Whenever possible, members will also offer low-alcohol content drink options, provide food, and encourage the consumption of food along with alcoholic beverages. Members will also offer low/no-cost non-alcoholic drinks for designated drivers.

Members receive a window decal affirming GRHP affiliation, so that patrons and community members can recognize which businesses support responsible hospitality goals. Members will also benefit from a complimentary special notice in INsite Magazine, which, beginning in November, will identify all GRHP members. Members receive additional free advertising in the form of GRHP publicity campaigns. However, probably the biggest incentive to join is related to GRHP's partnership with UF student groups. In the past, the UF Greek community has pledged support for GRHP, promising to host official events only at GRHP establishments. Included in the agenda backup is a letter of support from last year's Panhellenic Council and Interfraternity Council presidents. GRHP is currently in the process of receiving feedback from these student partners in order to update the Greek support letter with signatures from the new officers. GRHP is also working with other Greek groups on campus, and soon hopes to have the support of non-PH/IFC Greek organizations as well. Additionally, UF Student Government has also expressed support for GRHP.

The Responsible Hospitality Partnership has made substantial progress in recent months. Recently, along with GPD, GRHP hosted a nationally broadcasted webinar highlighting the innovative, nontraditional techniques used to

fight crime and promote safety within the Downtown and College Park/University Heights hospitality zones. The webinar was a big success and was well attended by a diverse group of participants from around the world. In addition to such efforts, GRHP has also been working to increase local awareness of GRHP and to sign new members. Thanks to hardworking intern Ashley Arthur, a UF graduate student studying public health and high-risk drinking, GRHP membership is increasing at an unprecedented rate. Ashley has done a lot of footwork at all hours of the day and night visiting bars and restaurants many times over in an attempt to sign new members. Her main obstacle has been reaching the correct owner or manager at each establishment. Often these businesses keep unconventional hours and it has been very difficult to make contact and get GRHP information to upper-level management. Thanks to GPD assistance, Ashley has been able to make her rounds with GPD officers as they patrol during the late-night bar hours. This strategy has increased her opportunities to make contact with owners and managers, and also helps her avoid paying cover charges as she visits different establishments on GRHP business. In the coming weeks, Ashley may also be joined by UF fraternity brothers as she visits businesses to solicit new GRHP members. These students want to show local businesses that they support the goals of GRHP.

- I. **REPORT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE**
- J. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENT**
- K. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
- L. **ADJOURNMENT**