

**MINUTES
CITY OF ORMOND BEACH
CITY COMMISSION
Downtown Master Plan Workshop**

August 07, 2019

5:30 p.m.

City Commission Conference Room

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bill Partington called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Present were Mayor Bill Partington, Commissioners Dwight Selby, Troy Kent, Susan Persis, and Rob Littleton, Ormond Beach MainStreet Director Julia Truilo, GAI Consultants Peter Sechler and Molly Stahl, City Manager Joyce Shanahan, Assistant City Manager Claire Whitley, Assistant City Attorney Scott McKee, and Planning Director Steven Spraker.

Overview

Ms. Joyce Shanahan, City Manager, explained one of the City Commission's goals listed on the 2019 Strategic Plan was to update the Downtown Community Redevelopment Area ("CRA") Master Plan, and noted the latest update was performed in 2006.

Mr. Steven Spraker, Planning Director, stated the purpose of the workshop was to determine if the goals of the Downtown Steering Committee and the public matched the goals of the Commission, and if not, to revise the plan and bring back a final document for approval. He stated the workshop agenda included an update of the CRA, a history of the plan, an outline of the processes used for the plan in 2019, five strategic initiatives founded by the Downtown Steering Committee, and nine strategic themes and priority ideas that formed the project.

The CRA and 2019 Update Process

Mr. Spraker reviewed a PowerPoint Presentation that displayed a map of the areas included in the CRA, a timeline of the history and formation of the master plan, and explained tax increments increases throughout the years. He discussed projects that were a part of that plan which the city were able to accomplish, noting the city did not accomplish everything originally included in the plan. He explained an item may be included in the master plan, but such inclusion did not commit the Commission to completing that item. He noted the CRA would expire in 2036, and the master plan was implemented to be a ten year plan; therefore, there would be a gap of five to seven years where the CRA master plan would need to be extended or a closing out plan of the area would be needed.

Mr. Spraker noted the Downtown Steering Committee consisted of individuals of various perspectives that worked with the city. He reviewed a PowerPoint Presentation that showed the 2019 update process for the master plan, and explained the city had sent out notices of the schedule to every property owner in the Downtown District, as well as to the taxing authorities. He stated the committee was seeking the Commission's policy direction before returning to taxing authorities, and would then return to the Commission for a final adoption before implementing the Downtown Master Plan.

CRA and Master Plan Themes

Mr. Peter Sechler, GAI Consultant, reviewed the locations of the CRA districts and the sub-districts located within each one. He stated the four listed districts chosen to be recognized: Gateway, Downtown, The Bridge, and Beachside. He noted the Granada Bridge was placed on the map due to the recognition it had received for becoming an icon of Ormond Beach. He discussed the CRA themes and listed each one: Sense of Place and Appearance, Arts and Culture, Recreation and Open Space, Transportation and Circulation, Residential Neighborhoods, Standards and Regulations, Ensuring the Vision, and Economic Development. He stated the committee went through and revalidated each original theme and added an additional one: Environmental Sustainability. He discussed the objectives for each theme in detail, noting goals that had already been accomplished, and ones that may be accomplished in the future.

Five Strategic Initiatives

Mr. Sechler discussed the five strategic initiatives that tied together multiple recommendations and priority ideas: focus on the Granada Bridge and the four corners parks; leveraging the potential of the City Hall, Ormond Beach Library, and church property; continuing work on walkability, parking, traffic calming, and mobility; expanding the program of coordinated events and district marketing; and exploring opportunities to attract key development types to Ormond Beach.

Mr. Sechler stated the committee took the major themes and action items that came from them and developed a set of projects the city could budget for. He noted they laid the projects out over time, calculating the projected TIF (tax increment financing) revenue generation based on three percent annualized growth. He noted the committee wanted to discuss the draft master plan with the Commission and see what they were interested in, what they believed was most important, and what they did not understand or agree with.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Littleton mentioned the important role the Granada Bridge had in downtown Ormond Beach. He noticed after reviewing the plan, there was a suggested proposal for a sidewalk easement that mentioned changing form based code would be necessary and he wanted to discuss the proposal.

Mr. Sechler stated he believed the priority of the plan was to focus on the themes and strategies, rather than the exact details, and noted the details acted as an illustration of activating the theme. He stated when the plan discussed sidewalk easements, it was referring to improving pedestrian walkability and sidewalk access, and noted in order to achieve that goal it would be beneficial to have more than the city's code's required five foot setback from the curb. He stated the committee believed it would be helpful to have wider sidewalks and encouraged the Commission to refine the form based code to allow a comfortable walking area. He questioned if there was a way to make subtle refinements to the code to provide a more walkable area, and stated the goal was to establish a particular number of feet that could be dedicated to a public accessible walkway. He discussed the possibility of using easements from existing and willing properties to construct a wider sidewalk, and noted if a property owner agreed to an easement to allow a sidewalk to come through their property, they would not lose development rights, but would agree to not build on the determined amount of feet agreed upon for the easement.

Commissioner Persis mentioned she had served on the Downtown Steering Committee and thanked Mr. Sechler for his hard work. She stated throughout the meetings one of the main focuses was improving the appearance of the Granada Bridge. She also discussed

the possibility of having underground utilities in the downtown area, and improving the look of parking on Main Street. She mentioned she would like to bring pub buses or bicycles to Ormond Beach; whereby, Commissioner Selby noted the City of Daytona Beach had recently approved hop cycles.

Mr. Sechler stated the idea of the Downtown Master Plan was to embrace and explore more options for micro-mobility including bike share programs, pub crawlers, and other options.

Mayor Partington mentioned Ms. Shanahan and MainStreet Director Ms. Julia Truilo had looked into the bike share programs for Ormond Beach, but had not found a plan that fit well for the city. He stated bike share programs were something staff could continue to look into. He noted he had repeatedly advocated for painting the bridge and mentioned the possibility of installing lighting as well, but explained the cost had prohibited the Commission from purchasing lighting for the bridge in prior years.

Ms. Shanahan noted the Florida Department of Transportation (“FDOT”) paid for the lighting of the Tampa Skyway Bridge and discussed the possibility of contacting FDOT to help fund lighting for the Granada Bridge as well.

Commissioner Persis mentioned the potential addition of a rooftop restaurant located within the Downtown District, and noted the public was fond of the idea.

Mayor Partington discussed a privately owned piece of property near City Hall that had been suggested to him to use as a location to install a restaurant with a dock. He stated due to the location, the city would not need permission granted from the State of Florida to build on the property, and instead it would be a project the Commission would approve after hearing input from Ormond Beach residents. He discussed the potential parking issues that may arise from the installation, and the parking problems that were taking place at City Hall and The Casements. He discussed the option of installing a one-level parking garage and the ability to charge for parking if the garage were approved. He reminded the Commission that no items would be voted upon during the workshop, and only discussion would be held.

Mr. Sechler stated during the 2006 master plan update, the community appeared to view the bridge as a divider and barrier within the city; however, he noted during recent committee meetings, discussion had changed and the bridge and riverfront access areas were focused on becoming the icon and center of Ormond Beach.

Commissioner Persis noted the bridge came up frequently during the committee meetings, as well as the idea of a parking garage due to the importance of getting people downtown. She mentioned if a parking garage were installed, an opportunity would be provided for the possible installation of an area on the top of the parking garage that could provide river-view access.

Mayor Partington noted how heavily-used the Granada Bridge was and believed it needed to be more attractive. He discussed improving Ormond Beach’s parks, and noted the city had plans to build a new restroom and bait shop in Cassen Park. He proposed instead of redoing the restroom and shop, to renovate the entire park to provide the best flow possible, as well as the most parking available, while including the view of the river and remaining accessible to boaters.

Mr. Sechler and Commissioner Persis agreed with Mayor Partington.

Commissioner Kent stated he appreciated the four corners parks and believed they were utilized often, but mentioned areas of the parks that could use improvement. He stated he was interested to hear what the committee thought of the church property the city had purchased. He noted he did not support a parking garage, and would rather expand parking in the Downtown District by purchasing nearby property lots. He believed a parking garage would help alleviate parking issues, but would bring unintended consequences as well. He believed the Granada Bridge was a positive thing and agreed it needed to be painted and have lighting installed, but noted how the cost of lighting affected the Commission's approval when it was last proposed. He reiterated he would like to discuss the church the city had purchased and the goals for the property.

Mr. Sechler believed the community desired to improve the appearance of the Granada Bridge, and stated the bridge could be viewed as a problem or an opportunity. He reiterated the importance the bridge had on the city and the projects that could help promote the bridge to become the iconic center of Ormond Beach. He stated the parks on the four corners of the bridge could use improvements as well and discussed potential projects which included adding more shaded seating, playground equipment, and other ideas.

Commissioner Kent discussed a visit to Fortunato Park, and agreed improvements could be made to the parks.

Mr. Sechler stated when the committee looked at the Downtown District overall, there was an overwhelming desire from project participants to examine all opportunities for development in a serious way. He stated the committee favored the City Hall and Ormond Beach Library location in the center of downtown, and noted the desire for a waterfront restaurant in the district as well. He discussed the Church and nearby land, which he suggested could accommodate parking, and noted the idea of giving the property a new use and integrating it into the Downtown District. He discussed conversations that had taken place regarding the City Hall complex, and noted there were members who were interested in seeing partial development of the complex, and others who wanted to keep the complex the same. He questioned the purpose of the giant archway that connected City Hall and the Ormond Beach Library, and mentioned losing the architectural piece in hopes of making the parking lot more visually and physically accessible and integrated with the rest of the complex and plaza. He stated the next step was to make serious inquiries on the discussed properties so an informed decision could be made. He discussed highest and best use from an economic point of view and what provided the most funds, but noted the highest and best use in this decision should come from a community stand point. He stated the city needed to agree to leverage the potential of the City Hall, library, and church site.

Mayor Partington discussed parking garages, and stated a one-level garage could be built in a way that was attractive and discussed examples that provided support for his statement. He stated he was not willing to install multiple stories, but would support a one level garage to provide safer parking, noting the current parking at The Casements was dangerous and a parking garage may help alleviate that issue.

Mr. Sechler believed all possible solutions to alleviate the parking issues needed to be considered. He noted if the city were to install a one-level deck parking garage the price per car was less than the price per car on a multi-level deck garage.

Commissioner Kent stated while he did believe there were suitable and well maintained parking garages, he had not had a positive experience at one. He addressed parking issues at The Casements, noting they were problematic and agreed the problems needed to be resolved.

Mayor Partington asked Mr. Sechler if there had been a poll conducted regarding moving City Hall and the Ormond Beach Library; whereby, Mr. Sechler stated there was not, but people were passionate about the value of the downtown library and City Hall.

Mr. Sechler noted the Commission should consider examining all properties and options to relocate within the Downtown District, and the possible reconfiguration and development opportunities that may arise from moving City Hall and the library.

Commissioner Kent stated he preferred City Hall and the library to stay where they were currently located.

Mr. Sechler reiterated there was a passion from citizens for having City Hall and the library located downtown, and noted if the locations stayed the same there were still enhancements to the existing area that could provide a more multiuse and multifunctional property.

Commissioner Kent discussed the renovations of Andy Romano Beachfront Park and compared the unobstructed view the park displayed of the water to City Hall, which did not display a waterfront view. He discussed the Ormond Beach Elementary School parking lot problems and how they may be alleviated by purchasing additional nearby property and moving parking for City Hall employees, so citizens could utilize the City Hall parking lot instead.

Commissioner Persis stated the committee had discussed reconfiguring the parking lot.

Mayor Partington stated moving City Hall and the library were not an option for him and believed that decision would have consequences; whereby, Commissioner Kent agreed.

Commissioner Selby thanked consultants and the committee for their hard work. He agreed the Granada Bridge could be re-painted, but favored LED up-lighting and believed it would be the best option, noting the colors of the LED lighting could be changed based on seasons. He stated while he is sensitive to cost, he believed the price for LED lighting had dropped over the years, and urged the Commission to consider that option again. He noted one big theme for the Downtown District was facilitating more downtown residents, and noted if more residents lived downtown, businesses would thrive and traffic would diminish. He listed Ormond Beach's assets: the library, which is owned by the city and leased through the county; the Church property; the police station and parking lot; City Hall; and the riverfront land that runs from Bailey Riverbridge Gardens Park to the Ormond Beach Yacht Club. He noted within the riverfront land there was one building and riverfront piece that was owned by the Ormond Beach Historical Society ("Historical Society"), but believed if the city worked with the Historical Society and connected the land, the result would be a positive outcome. He noted to his knowledge, excluding Mr. Ike Leary's bait shop, there were no commercial businesses on the intercostal waterway in Ormond Beach and there was only one restaurant on the water which was not located inside a hotel. He stated there should be more options to eat and drink on the water for visitors and residents.

Mr. Sechler noted the communities he observed in Florida that made waterfront experiences accessible became enlivened in the quality of experience. He stated regarding the bridge, the committee believed an additional high impact in addition to the LED lighting would be painting the surface of the bridge. He noted the width of the automobile, bike, and pedestrian lanes, and mentioned repainting the areas. He stated up-lighting at night, and the painted color on the surface of the bridge during the day, were the two most significant things that could be done to improve the bridge.

Commissioner Selby stated he favored the idea, and also approved of the district names "Downtown" and "Beachside" but noted he did not prefer the name "Gateway" because he did not perceive the suggested portion of the CRA to be a gateway, and instead favored the name "Uptown". He noted through his observation of the plan, the location seemed to be a duller area for the CRA.

Mr. Sechler mentioned he was pleased with the name "Uptown" but explained the reasoning behind naming the district "Gateway" was to explain what it was, and what it did. He noted the district acted as a gateway into the city and was the first thing visitors saw upon entering Ormond Beach; whereby, Commissioner Selby corrected that U.S. 1 was also a main entrance into the city.

Mr. Sechler stated if a name was decided and the district was noticed as an important area, he was happy with the outcome. He mentioned proposed ideas to update the sidewalk and painting the bike lanes as potential projects for the district. He discussed properties and opportunity sites within the area, and stated the committee was happy to update the plan to reflect the name change of the district to "Uptown".

Commissioner Selby discussed the possibility of adding concessions to the four corners throughout the parks and noted stand up paddle boards as an example. He stated he served on the River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization ("TPO") and had heard the request from citizens to add a bike trail on the east side of the bridge, but explained due to pedestrian walkways there was not a way to add that. He noted the Commission should discuss potential options to accommodate a trail.

Mr. Sechler stated due to the gray paint on the Granada Bridge, there were ways to reapportion the lanes and add additional lanes through painting the surface of the bridge different colors. He noted if the community decided they wanted to engage FDOT on the bridge, there were solutions as well.

Mayor Partington noted the progress of the master plan from 2006 to the present day and credited the progress to the hard work by city residents, staff, MainStreet, and volunteers. He praised MainStreet's Technical Design Committee for their impressive work, and discussed his approval of Ormond Beach's CRA projects. He mentioned Commissioner Selby's property that had been previously neglected, and noted through the CRA grant, the property was thriving. He noted his desire for the CRA district to extend towards Seminole Avenue.

Commissioner Selby thanked Mayor Partington for the comment on his property. He asked about sidewalk easements potentially being installed on the front of one of his properties; whereby, Mr. Spraker stated redevelopment on existing sites could start immediately.

Commissioner Selby questioned if a decision had been made to change the name of the district from "Gateway" to "Uptown"; whereby, it had not yet been decided.

Commissioner Kent asked if there would be signs displaying the names of the districts; whereby, Mr. Spraker stated they could integrate signs if the Commission desired them, and noted the city was working with MainStreet on branding for the districts.

Commissioner Kent discussed his disapproval for the numerous signs on Granada Boulevard and did not wish for more signs.

Mr. Spraker explained banners could be displayed on flag poles instead of signs.

Mayor Partington stated he approved of renaming the district to "Uptown", or approved of MainStreet deliberating on a new name.

Commissioner Kent stated he believed they should explain the names of the districts more thoroughly, once the names were approved.

Commissioner Persis and Commissioner Selby discussed the district name "Gateway" and the location of the district within the CRA.

II. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Transcribed by: Cassidi Ritz