



City of Tarpon Springs, Florida

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RENEA VINCENT, AICP
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MEETING MINUTES

PROJECT: Planning & Redevelopment Focus Group

DATE/TIME: October 13, 2009 @ 6:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Multi-purpose Room, Tarpon Springs Public Library

SUBJECT: Lemon Street / Safford Avenue Conceptual Plans

PRESENT:

Ted Frantzis	Cindy Comstock	Beverly Kurpinski	Randal Currelly
Cyndi Tarapani	Michaeljohn Targakis	Roger Lacy	Marlene Gravitz
Siobhan Nehin	Rodney Chatman	Sue Thomas	Joseph Pianese
Joe Muzio	Matt King	Chris Alahouzos	Robin Saenger
Renea Vincent	Cindy Wilson	David Banther	Linda Herring
Susan Hutton	Kathryn Peters	Bill Vinson	Annie Dabbs
Gerald Goen	Barbara Schnipper	Beverly Billiris	George Billiris
Steve Lindhorst	David Conner	Scott Swearengen	

At the October 13, 2009 meeting, the Planning & Redevelopment Focus Group (PRDFG) discussed the following:

Introductions - All persons present introduced themselves and told a little about why this effort is important to them. City staff introduced Scott Swearengen who discussed his role in the process and how the 5 projects are inter-related. David Conner was introduced and discussed his design approach to the Lemon Street and Safford Avenue projects.

Lemon Street Design Concept - David Conner gave an outline of the project in terms of Phase One - Design, which includes an analysis of the existing conditions along the project corridor. Phase Two - Bidding & Construction of the project, and Phase Three - Operations and Maintenance. David then discussed the current status of the project. He touched on his literature review including the Downtown Development Action Plan (DDAP), the CRA Plan, the Multimodal Transportation District (MMTD) Resource Document, and the Historic Resources Survey recently completed by Janus Research, Inc. The group suggested that David also read the 2004 Walkability Report prepared by Dan Burden. David indicated that he is in the preliminary conceptual design phase of the project and is eager to receive feedback on the proposed concepts. David then identified the project limits and explained that because the City received a federal earmark, FDOT is required to administer these funds through the Local Agency Program (LAP) process. He further stated that the design standards are a little more flexible because this project is not on a state road. The existing conditions were discussed in further detail including the amount of right-of-way, pavement width, parking configuration, and utility line locations. David then went into explaining the

design philosophy behind the Garden Arts Concept. The primary goal of this concept is to balance the landscape and pedestrian amenities with the amount of on-street parking. This concept included many sustainable solutions such as maximizing water retention, minimizing irrigation requirements, and the utilization of low energy lighting. He showed pictures of "Green Streets" that have these sustainable features that could be applied along Lemon Street. He felt that this concept could make Lemon Street a destination which would attract the type of visitors and private sector investment the City is looking for. He explained that each travel lane would be marked with a "sharrow" that alerts drivers to bicyclists sharing the roadway with cars. He felt that this street has the characteristics that make this concept very attractive. He then presented a three-dimensional rendering of the block between Pinellas Avenue and Safford Avenue. He explained that this is a conceptual rendering that gives a visual representation of the application of the Garden Arts concept. There was discussion from the group about the location of overhead utilities along the corridor and the ways that they could be relocated or eliminated. The group discussed the need to extend the eastern project boundary to Disston Avenue and staff said the area between Levis Avenue and Disston Avenue is outside of the CRA and that is why it was not included. Staff further stated that this area will be evaluated and could be added to the project if additional funds are found to pay for the design and construction along this area of Lemon Street. The group asked David to further explain the "sharrow" and what other cities are using them. David and Scott indicated that the "sharrow" is a fairly new idea and is being used in the western United States. The group asked if a corresponding roadway sign is necessary because too many signs tend to clutter the road and make it unattractive. It was stated by the consultant that a corresponding roadway sign may not be necessary. David then presented the Traditional Urban Street Concept. The design philosophy behind this concept was to maximize on-street parking, maximize pedestrian walk widths, plant trees in large sidewalk cut-outs, and accommodate roadway drainage through planted islands. He stated that this concept currently exists on South Pinellas Avenue, Tarpon Avenue, and Orange Street and would be expanded to this area. The group discussed the lack of parking in the area and the need to create as many parking spaces as possible to help current and future businesses. The group also discussed the need for a parking garage and how that should be included in the Special Area Plans. A possible location for a parking garage could be in the downtown and in the area between the downtown and the Sponge Docks. The group also discussed the lack of the proper signage in the area to direct visitors to places of interest. The group discussed other places that are similar to Tarpon Springs including Naperville, Illinois and how a parking garage is critical to the economic health of a downtown. David then invited the group to view a scroll plot of both concepts that shows the amenities along the entire corridor. This was done with everyone standing around a large table and discussing the concept plans. David was asked specifically about the current angled parking in front of the library and why it was not included in the proposed concepts. David stated that angled parking is not the preferred treatment because it consumes too much right-of-way which limits the amount of sidewalk and landscaping that can be incorporated into the plan and it would be a safety hazard to have cars backing out into oncoming traffic. The group then returned to their seats and discussed their support for the 2 concepts and what they liked about each particular concept. David asked the group to show their support by raising their hands and about ½ the group supported the Garden Arts and ½ the group supported the Traditional Urban Street. David made a suggestion to try and blend both concepts in the form of a hybrid and the group supported this idea. The group discussed if the roadway would be split at Safford Avenue with one concept applied to the west of Safford Avenue and the other concept applied to the east of Safford Avenue. Once this was settled, the group took a 5 minute break.

Safford Avenue Design Concept - David gave an overview of the project boundaries which extend from Tarpon Avenue to Live Oak Street. He stated that the project budget is approximately \$300,000 and there is no federal money or FDOT involvement in this project. Any modifications to the Pinellas Trail must be approved by Pinellas County. He then went over the existing conditions and he highlighted the fact that there is limited opportunity for improvements in the current cross section, there are missing sections of sidewalk, and there is a need for a retaining wall and

drainage improvements adjacent to the public housing development. He showed several photographs of the corridor which supported this. The conceptual plan for Safford Avenue provides

for the following; areas for additional tree planting by reducing the trail width to 10 feet, to redirect pedestrians to improved sidewalks on either side of the trail, reduce the drive lanes to 11 feet, replace the vertical curb with a mountable curb, construct a gateway park at Live Oak Street, and restore the stormwater ponds at Live Oak Street to enhance the entry to the downtown. He also talked about the walking path for pedestrians could be constructed from a rubberized material. He then presented a three-dimensional rendering of the block between Tarpon Avenue and Orange Street. He explained that this is a conceptual rendering that gives a visual representation of the application of the design concept. There was discussion from the group about the City-owned property at the southeast corner of Safford Avenue and Live Oak Street which could be used as a visitor's center or a public park. There was consensus from the participants to move forward with refining the conceptual design and further explore separating the pedestrians from the bicyclists by directing the pedestrians to sidewalks adjacent to the Safford Avenue roadway.

The next meeting will be held on November 10, 2009 at the Tarpon Springs Public Library.