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Leadership Group Meeting Minutes

03/26/15

Leadership Group Meeting, Thursday, March 26, 2015, Customer Service Center Training Room, 2nd Floor.

Chair Paolo Mastroserio called the meeting to order at 11:45 am. In attendance were Mr. Mastroserio, Robert DuMond, Gilberto Martinez, Ruth Reed, Ed Plaster, Summer Gill, and Fred Roberts, Jr.. Staff present included Tye Chighizola, Mike Daniels, Peter Lee, and Lisa Walsh.

I. Approval of 01/22/15 Meeting Minutes (Moved to beginning of agenda)

Mr. Fred Roberts moved to approve, and there was a second. The January meeting minutes were approved unanimously without changes.

II. Downtown ITN

Mike Daniels presented a map of sites that the City issued an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) for in early March. Initially, there were 5 sites, but Council decided to do the Public Market site in house, so the remaining sites included the Concord lot, the old Chamber lot, the Sprint lot, and the lot south of the CEP, where the water tank is now.

Mr. Lee explained that the kickoff meeting for the Public Market was this afternoon, and that the City has no intention of running the market. Operating the market will most likely be the purview of the Downtown Business Alliance and/or the CEP.

The vision is to have the market under cover and be operated 3 to 4 days per week. There may be pop-up retail, food trucks, tents, umbrellas and tables or kiosks. Connectivity to downtown is key, and the linear park will achieve this. The CEP will be involved in getting startups there and then moved into brick and mortar sites. Physical improvements will begin very soon.

Mr. Daniels noted that the largest project of these sites would be the parking garage. Staff is considering how the structure will impact the street, and so getting a balance between function and design is critical.

Mr. McMahon expressed his opinion that we didn't need a garage because there is no problem with finding parking in downtown. Mr. Roberts and Mr. Daniels explained that increasing the intensity within the City core precipitates increased development. If

more development is permitted, then parking will be an increasing problem and many developers won't build unless they have dedicated access to parking.

III. West Ocala CRA

Mr. Lee explained that there are actually three grant programs being taken to Council on April 7. The West Ocala grant is for revitalization and ADA accessibility. The total available is \$50,000, with the City matching 75% up to \$15,000. All grant applications should be submitted by June 12 and the projects are to be completed by September 30.

These grants help to implement the Gibbs Retail Study. Some retailers have left the area because the condition of buildings may not be suitable for retail or restaurants. The grants are intended to assist with improving that situation.

The other grants are CRA based and funded with \$150,000 each. The Proposed Retail Attraction, Retention & Expansion Grant will be the same matching level, up to \$30,000, and cover improvements to visible spaces within businesses.

The Upper Floor Mixed Use Improvement Program has the same match level, up to \$50,000, and will cover improvements above the first floor that facilitate utilization of the space for office, retail or residential uses.

Mr. McMahon asked whether the grant funds could be used to connect buildings via upper floors. It was acknowledged that building design would make it difficult to find connecting points.

Mr. DuMond asked what the noise level was around the Starbucks building. It was agreed that the downtown is not that noisy.

Mr. Plaster brought up possible issues with stairwells being fire rated, and elevators being provided.

The grants can assist with design services.

Mr. Chighizola noted that the West Ocala CRA creation will now require a joint meeting with the City and County, and he would appreciate if the group would come to the meeting to lend support.

Mr. Daniels stated that review boards for the distribution of the grant money would be needed. The boards should consist of people from various community groups such as the West Ocala Steering Committee, Governor's West Ocala Neighborhood Revitalization Committee, the Downtown Business Alliance, and the CRA boards.

IV. *Water/Sewer Territorial Service Area*
Not discussed.

V. *Transportation Impact Fees*

Mr. Daniels described how Marion County had suspended transportation impact fees in 2010, but was now considering re-instating them. The impact fee study has been updated. This update includes reducing the benefit districts from 4 to 2. Whereas the current districts divide the county into quadrants, the new districts are essentially east and west of I-75. One reason for this is to be able to use funds from both districts to pay for large projects, such as interchange improvements. The County is taking input for the next 30 days. City staff is commenting that there should be language in how the money is used to fund multi-modal projects in addition to roadway projects. We may also look at discounting fees within certain areas of the city to encourage development there. Added category for small business/retail. Included in the study is a comparison of fees for Marion and other counties. Marion fees are significantly higher than others. Implementation of the fee will probably be discounted in some manner. If implemented, the time frame most likely be January 1, 2016.

Some discussion of how impact fees affect development decisions among members.

VI. *SR40 Downtown Median Project*

This FDOT project was presented by Mr. Daniels. He displayed a construction drawing showing the medians on SR40 between Pine Avenue and SW 1st Avenue. FDOT proposes extending the stacking lane for left turns from SR40 to southbound Pine Avenue, removing the stop light at SW 2nd Avenue, and adding left turn lanes at SW 1st Avenue.

Mr. Lee suggested the problem of stacking vehicles in the left turn lane onto Pine could be solved by changing the signal timing rather than revising the medians. The objective in any downtown is not to move vehicles through faster. Congestion within a downtown area is a desired factor.

Mr. Mastroserio left the meeting at 12:40pm.

Mr. Roberts stated that decreasing access to the Post Office Tire Service business could be seen as a taking because of possible adverse effects on that business.

FDOT is taking public comment in a meeting to be held on April 9, 2015, at 6pm, in the IHMC building.

VII. SE Block at SR40 and Pine Avenue

Circle K Corporation met with staff to present a proposed fuel station that would use the entire block located at the southeast corner of SR40 and Pine Avenue. Mr. Lee and Mr. Daniels displayed the concept plan submitted to staff at the meeting. Staff comments began with the need for a Special Exception to this use in this zoning district, which they would not support. Further comments included describing what could be changed in the design to support the goals of the Place Based Code area in the downtown.

Leadership group members pointed out that the FDOT median project, if completed as proposed, would further impede access to the proposed fuel station. Mr. Roberts stated that he was OK with the fuel station use, but that it would need increased architectural standards.

V. Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Daniels listed coming meetings that the Leadership Group may be interested in:
Trinity Lane, April 7, 2015, 4pm, City Council
Neighborhood Walmart, April 7 Introduction & April 21 Final, City Council
Downtown Grants, April 7, 2015, 4pm, City Council
SR40 Median Project, April 9. 2015, 6pm, IHMC

VI. Questions/Comments

Mr. Roberts adjourned the meeting at 1:07pm. The next scheduled meeting will be May 28, 2015.