



Find your place

## Leadership Group Meeting Minutes

05/28/15

### Leadership Group Meeting, Thursday, May 28, 2015, Customer Service Center Training Room, 2nd Floor.

Chair called the meeting to order at 11:34 am. In attendance were Robert DuMond, Steve Albright, Clark Yandle, Ruth Reed, Ed Plaster, Summer Gill, Fred Roberts, Jr., and Gilberto Martinez. Staff present included Tye Chighizola, Mike Daniels, Greg Slay, Peter Lee, and Kyle Rodriguez.

#### *I. INTRODUCTION*

The meeting began by having all new members introduce themselves.

Peter Lee brought up current issues that the Leadership Committee has faced along with ways to reengage the group.

Many different group members felt that the original spark and excitement of the group had faded away and that the group was not being informed enough about different projects that related to the Ocala 2035 Vision. It was agreed that the staff will create a better way of communicating to keep the Leadership members up-to-date with projects and decisions.

Members also suggested:

- Bringing in City Council Members
- Going over goals that have already been accomplished
- Working to reach out to other organizations
- Having more frequent Leadership meetings

#### *II. Current Projects*

Mr. Lee began to discuss current projects that the city is working on. One of the first projects is reviewing businesses in the Magnolia Business District and creating maps to help identify where empty buildings are located. Ms. Reed asked if there was any way to obtain these maps and to receive updates from Lisa Walsh. Mr. Lee said they could be made available after they were finished being created.

Mike Daniels explained that the city was moving forward with a downtown parking garage for the downtown area. City Council opened pre-bid proposals on June 8<sup>th</sup>, being due on June 19<sup>th</sup>. The 400 space parking garage is currently scheduled for completion around June 2017.

The West Ocala Building Revitalization Grant Program is accepting applications until July 10<sup>th</sup>. The grant is for businesses in the West Ocala Neighborhood or CRA area, with a focus on the major corridors into the city. A lot of effort has been put into outreach, including going door-to-door, a newspaper article, and billboards throughout the city.

Ms. Reed asked what attendance was like at the monthly West Ocala Steering Committee Meetings. Mr. Daniels answered 5 or 6 people, but is working on new strategies to bring more people to the meetings, including making it a recap for anyone who missed the monthly Governor's West meeting. Mr. Lee stated that he is planning on attending more community meetings to talk about the West Ocala Grant Programs.

City Council hosted a transportation workshop to look at current traffic issues. Some of the biggest topics were SR 40 median modifications, which would restrict access to some locations, and pedestrian safety, due to the high number of crashes. They also looked at the possibility of two-waying Magnolia and 1<sup>st</sup>. There were concerns about the expensive of this and there would be a loss of parking spaces. They seemed in favor of two-waying between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> street, but there are safety concerns with people turning left onto Pine Ave. A main goal of the project is to also improve pedestrian walkways.

Mr. Slay gave a presentation about median modifications and new restrictions. There is currently some opposition by local businesses. FDOT is currently looking at closing off the opening that exists on SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and extending the turn towards SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and removing the light that is currently at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, adding an east bound left hand turn onto Pine.

Mr. Yandle asked about the project to ensure there would be a left hand turn on SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Mr. Slay assured that there would be a left turn at this street and discussed that FDOT was also looking considering long-term issues in case the parcel bordering this road did ever develop.

Ms. Reed asked how they would be stopping people from turning at SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Mr. Slay explained that there would be a raised concrete barrier preventing drivers from turning.

This project is moving forward and construction should start in September or October, with construction lasting between six and nine months.

Mr. Daniels stated that City Council did discuss a jurisdictional transfer, making SR 40 a city road. A big concern for this, however, was the cost of maintaining the roadway.

Mr. Martinez brought up the fact that the committee has discussed restricting SR 40, asking if the city would then be able to restrict more traffic flow. Mr. Slay said that it could.

Mr. Dumond asked about what green space would be changed in the SR40 restrictions. Mr. Slay discussed that some grass strips may be eliminated to widen sidewalks and narrowing the lanes to 10'6", to help with restrictions. Curb lines will stay the same, but the medians will be widened so that green space can be added. Several median spaces are still too small for landscape, so the median will be concrete.

Mr. Dumond also stated that the electric billboards throughout the city are a huge improvement and that the committee should show people some of these positive things that Ocala 2035 has done to make things easier moving forward.

Discussion began about the two-waying of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> streets. Mr. Plaster talked about possible issues with large postal vehicles having difficulties getting to the post office if the streets were two-wayed. Ms. Gill discussed that many drivers already use this as a two-way street, being one of the most dangerous intersections.

Mr. Yandle wanted to learn more about the left turn lane onto 1<sup>st</sup> and how FDOT was going to get involved. Mr. Slay said that he thought it would be a good idea to come back another day to do a full presentation on the SR40 Corridor Plan which will be finished next month. There are currently 2 proposals, the first would be a left turn at Magnolia and the other would be at 401. One of the biggest things to come out of the Ocala 2035 Vision was that SR40 was a physical barrier for pedestrians and by making one of these changes, the issue would be lessened.

Another street that has also been discussed to be two-wayed is 1<sup>st</sup> Street next to the courthouse, but the council showed little interested in this project. Mr. Lee said that two-waying Magnolia and 1<sup>st</sup> may be a possibility, but it could be phased due to expenses and parking.

Mr. Yandle was surprised that there wasn't any dialogue in the transportation workshop about moving SR40 up to 492. He asked Mr. Lee if he thought this change would make the road easier to operate. Mr. Lee said that he thought it would, making a lot of the things discussed possible.

The approval of minutes were tabled to the next meeting.

## VI. *Questions/Comments*

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