

2035 Leadership Group Meeting

Thursday, September 22, 2016 - 11:30 am

Minutes Summary

The following members were present: Diana Schwartz, Ruth Reed, Bob DuMond, Patrick Gilman and Clark Yandle

City Staff in Attendance: Gus Gianikas, David Boston, Lisa Walsh, Tye Chighizola, Peter Lee, Aubrey Hale and Carol McKeever

The meeting was called to order at 11:45 am.

I. Proof of Publication

Ms. McKeever stated that Public Notice # 0915161130 for the Ocala 2035 Leadership Group Meeting was posted on the City of Ocala website on September 9, 2016.

II. Midtown Master Plan

Mr. Lee gave a summary of the meetings held on October 4th and 5th with the MIG consultants. The discussions were about the challenges and advantages to the Midtown area. The disadvantages such as accessibility and connectivity issues were a big part of the conversations. Social services, homelessness and vagrancy are issues that need to be addressed as part of the master plan. It was agreed by all that art can be used as a great connector to pull people into the Midtown district and to help save the Tuscawilla Historic district. Affordable housing was seen as an important issue. The perceptions in both the Tuscawilla Historic District and the Wyomina District is that there are too many renters and also that there is not enough affordably priced housing for renters. Economic development and catalytic sites need to be discussed along with deciding how to deal with the industrial type uses in the area. Tuscawilla Park, local art were seen as assets to draw individuals. The zoning, affordable land pricing and the street grid pattern are all seen as assets that could be used to create opportunities for development. The Osceola trail is a powerful advantage to the zone which can be used as a connector to the park. There will be more intense talks about the catalytic development sites and how to prioritize the program to lead to success in the Midtown district.

The second meetings were going to be scheduled for October 4th and 5th but have been pushed back due to the death of one of the principles at MIG. The meetings have been rescheduled for November 9th and 10th. There will be four round table meetings which will be split between the two days. The focuses for the roundtables will be real estate & development; mobility & connectivity; cultural arts; and social services. The Midtown Steering committee meeting will take place on the first day. In the afternoon of the second day there will be a community gathering with four or five stations set up for the public. About 1, 200 postcards were sent out to mostly the neighborhood that surrounds the Midtown area. Invitations will also be sent to the 2035 Vision Leadership Group members too. There will be interactive popup activities and possibly a crossing demonstration to show how a pedestrian crossing would look at SR40 & Osceola Avenue. On November 10th around 6pm there will be a formal presentation by MIG. The bulk of the draft plan will be completed by the consultants after the second meetings. The third set of meetings will be held in January. Most likely in February, MIG will come back and present the Midtown Master Plan and submit it to city council for approval.

There was a short discussion regarding the lanes, median, sidewalks and parking ideas that could be implemented for the area around SR40 and Osceola Avenue.

Ms. Schwartz stated that a pipe dream of hers is the inclusion of some type of a higher education component. This catalytic event would bring all the sides together because having people in school would create a need for housing, retail and restaurants in the area. This could be done by collaborating with an existing school or bringing in a new school. Mr. DuMond stated that the all brick triangle building on 8th Street would be a great location for a school because it is two stories; however parking might be a problem but with the parking garage they could walk to the school. Maybe CF or another school could use the building.

Ms. Schwartz stated that the completion of the linear trail will eventually provide more accessibility for bikes and pedestrians. Mr. Lee added that development of the Midtown area would benefit the people visiting or working at the courthouse too. The closest area where they can get lunch right now is either downtown or SR200. Ms. Schwartz commented that another issue is that there are not a lot of opportunities for a business to open a restaurants in the Midtown area just now; however, we now have the chance to shape Midtown into the vision we decide to create.

Mr. Lee reiterated that this phase of the meeting will be geared toward implementing the 2035 Vision Plan and extended an invitation for everyone to come out and participate in the events planned for November 10.

III. Royal Oak

Mr. Chighizola stated that on Tuesday, city council entered into a contract with the new buyer of the Royal Oak property. There are some taxes issues, appraisals and environmental issues that need to be addressed but things are moving forward. After due diligence is finished the closing will probably take place next June. Once that is done, the existing facility is going to be demolished; then the cleanup process begins to turn the property back into a mixed use development in keeping with the West Ocala Development Plan. Royal is one of the key sites in that plan.

Staff has also put out a Request for Proposal and are meeting again today with a builder to discuss formal housing. There are two parcels, A & B; most of the activity and contamination is on Parcel B. Prices are being checked so that this parcel can be cleaned up. One of the big things that staff will be trying to do is to get the Brownfields Grant now that we have a specific target area in which to utilize the grant funding. This grant will also help a lot other properties in West Ocala. Eventually there will be an opportunity to apply for and get the Cleanup Grant too. Although there is a lot of work to do and a lot of steps in the process things are looking good and we are moving in the right direction. The zoning for the property will eventually change from Industrial zoning to Mixed Use zoning. Other properties will be acquired in the West Ocala area over the next couple of months or years whenever lands become available for purchase. The Royal Oak property is not a part of the West Ocala CRA but staff is going to attempt to amend that so that CRA funds can be used in the future for some redevelopment opportunities. The Leadership Group and the Ocala Steering Committee will be presented with redevelopment ideas as staff receives them from the applicants. The city wants to stick close to the prospects that have been outlined in the West Ocala Plan but also open it up for other development such as Institutional or Recreational zoning uses. The name will also be changed in order to try to give the project a rebirth.

Ms. Reed thanked everyone that was involved with the Royal Oak project. She explained how & why she got involved in the project and outlined the steps involved in the progression of Royal

Oak. Mr. Chighizola stated that the Royal Oak plant ceased production between 2008 and 2010 after facing some sanctions from the Department of Environmental Protection. The owner sold the property last year.

IV. SR40 & US 27 Corridors

Mr. Chighizola commented that the corridors are a part of the vision in the community plan and the CRA. The meetings and maps for SR40 & US 27 corridors started last August. A one year tour was taken at the beginning of September to look at the successes and future changes needed in both corridors. There has been a significant amount of progress made but there is still a lot of work to be done. There is an abundant amount of potential, especially on the SR40 corridor near I-75 which is starting to get a lot of development hits. It looks like there will be some opportunities ranging from simple demolitions to redevelopment to new roadways. On US 27, there are some thrilling things coming like the Rural King. Their final plans are being approved and hopefully the building will be underway by this fall. SR40 is definitely our number one priority with the West Ocala CRA. There is good news with the CRA because the numbers came in higher than what was estimated; therefore, the city is receiving over \$150,000 for FY 2017. Staff is putting together the East & West Ocala CRA advisory committees which will address issues concerning their corridors including CRA plans and the Estella Byrd Wellness Center. Mr. Chighizola explained that the different dots on the maps symbolized different things such as open or closed code enforcement cases, city owned properties, potential demolitions and retail sites.

Mr. DuMond asked for an update on Village Green. Mr. Chighizola stated that city staff went on a tour of Village Green and people were amazed at the issues in this area. The owner was taken the Code Enforcement Board and found guilty. There has not been a significant amount of progress on the site. The fines are still running and are at about \$150,000 for a three or four month period. People are still living there. The city is trying to get the vacant units removed from the site. The city does not want to foreclose on the property; they want the property owner held responsible for his property and to bring it into compliance as required by law. The normal process is to let the fines run and then put a lien on the property. This a private matter with no Federal agencies involved in the matter. Once a unit becomes vacant or abandoned, without electricity or water for more than a year then the owner cannot rent it out to anyone else; they become nonconforming structures and can be removed from the location.

Mr. Lee stated that the city is working with the owners but they still have quite a bit of problems out there. They had several violations. The open pool situation has been taken care of as well as the abandoned vehicles. There is some junk & debris and building violations that they are working to bring into compliance. The number one priority is for the safety of the citizens. There is a plan for each unit and the owner is in the process of following those plans in order to make each unit safe. However, this will take quite a bit of time for all of the approximately 138 units to be completed. This is a touchy issue and the renter has to invite the city in to their unit in order for us to try to help them. There is an illusion by the tenants that they may get evicted if they talk to city staff. There are no roads but they are ruts that can be used to move between the units. The situation is not good for anyone; the tenants and the city are both in a hard position but we are doing our best to try to get the violations remedied.

V. Upcoming Projects

a. Winding Oaks Farm

Mr. Boston explained that this site is located off of SR200 south of Heathbrook. The annexation is voluntary. Mr. Chighizola commented that this is the only remaining farm on SR200 near 60th Avenue located across from the mobile home park. The property consists of about 1, 000 acres. The owner is retiring and wants to get out of the horse business. Mr.

Boston explained that according to the proposal which has been submitted right now, the property near SR200 will be commercial with drug stores & auto dealerships; other mixed use retail stores; and approximately 300 acres zoned agricultural to function as a horse farm. Mr. Chighizola remarked that everything to the east of where the new road is going which connects through Heathbrook to the flyover behind Kohl's will not have any zoning at this point.

Mr. Boston clarified that the proposed land use is low intensity for the whole place. The applicants have not submitted anything yet but they are considering single family detached residential with some multi-family residential in the future and more residential in the agricultural zoning later on. Mr. Chighizola informed everyone that Low Intensity Land Use allows for a maximum of 18 homes per acre and a minimum of three homes per acre. Mr. Boston added that at some time in the future, they will submit a conceptual plan to start the process to apply for a Planned Development (PD) zoning classification for the area to the west. Staff would like for the back area to remain a Neighborhood land use classification. Mr. Boston stated that they did discuss keeping the Neighborhood land use with the applicant but his attorney is not in favor of it at this point. The Neighborhood land use may possibly end up on the east side instead. Mr. Chighizola stated that it is likely for two story housing in there but most likely it will be similar to the Heathbrook layout.

Mr. Boston indicated that as required for all PD's, the applicant will be required to submit a PD design guidelines book. It will require them to list out all the permitted land uses; state where the land uses will be situated on the site; improve the sign guidelines; submit design guidelines; and basically flush out their ideas in more detail. The owner indicated that they would be able to get this book completed within a one month or so timeframe. After that staff will review it; then it will probably go to the Planning & Zoning Commission for approval in November; and possibly to city council for approval the second week in December. Mr. Chighizola explained that it would be good if staff presented the project at the October Leadership Group meeting so that the members could review, vote and provide a recommendation. There will most likely be some opposition to the plan but maybe not as much as Red Oak and Ocala Stud. The good news in their favor is that the owner will most likely keep the horse farm operating for several more years. The commercial businesses that are being vetted are consistent with keeping the farm at this location. Audi and Mercedes are a couple of prospective companies that might occupy a commercial space on this site.

Mr. Boston stated that the traffic impact methodology has been submitted for 137 acres. Mr. Hale stated that they are going through the first review process right now. There are some intersections that need to be addressed because they are already failing. Mr. Chighizola commented that this is going to be a four lane road and part of the bypass system which will go all the way down to Marion Oaks. The road will be completed in three phases and eventually connect into the road for Liberty Middle School. In due course, 95th Street will also become a four lane road. This motorway will take a lot of traffic off of SR200 especially 60th Avenue. The intersection at 60th Avenue and SR200 is a really a bad intersection. So this highway will relieve some of that traffic and get people into the city without them having to drive on SR200. Mr. Lee stated that the existing 49th Street in the Marion Oaks area will become a four lane highway after the 60th Avenue four lane is completed and connects into 475. However, part of 49th Street is already a four-lane street which goes all the way through Marion Oaks. The new roadway will have a greenway, a bike trail and a Sunbelt. It will go past the school and the library then the four lane will end. Mr. Boston concluded that this project is in the very early stages.

b. Anderson Columbia Special Exception

Mr. Hale stated that the owner has submitted for a special exception but the nature of the special exception is contingent upon resolving an open code enforcement issue. In 1999, the company was approved for an asphalt plant and storage yard business with an M-3 zoning and Employment Center land use. The site plan limited a small area for the storage. However, it was discovered that over the course of time a few things on the site plan were not completed even though a final site inspection was finalized; it was discovered that some landscape buffers were not built as required in the original site plan. In 2015, the applicants purchased the property to the west, approximately 10.86 acres, and recently started using that space for excess storage of materials. The applicant is not proposing any extra outdoor manufacturing just additional storage areas.

Mr. Chighizola stated that outdoor manufacturing was a permitted use in the M-3 zone during this time. However, shortly after that the ordinance was changed so that any new or existing M-3 zone would be required to obtain a special exception.

Mr. Hale explained that in order to bring the site into compliance with the code, the applicant will have to go through the site plan review process and get a special exception to allow for the expansion of the use onto the additional 10.86 acres. Some of the issues that have been identified and need to be addressed are: (1) the requirement for the proposed seven foot high, 120-foot long landscape berm along the western edge of Martin Luther King Avenue; (2) better identification of the locations of the proposed ponds and storage material sites; and (3) come into compliance with the requirements of the 1999 site plan. There are several options on how the city can handle these issues which include requiring a major site plan or complying with the original site plan and then submit an additional site plan for the expansion. The city will also require that the owners maintain the 60-foot wide front buffer with a tree lined edge off of NW 22nd Street; enhance landscaping along Martin Luther King Avenue; set a maximum height for the storage piles; and adjust the sizes of the stormwater ponds because of the use expansion. This was supposed to go before the Board of Adjustment (BOA) on September 19th but postponed it in order to get additional information. Staff needs to meet with the applicant and the city engineer as well. The results from those meetings and the responses we get back will determine when the project will go forward to the BOA; hopefully, the case will be presented at the October or November meeting.

Mr. Chighizola stated that the difference between the Anderson Columbia property and the Royal Oak property is that Royal Oak is in a Special District & is assigned as Community Plan district which is not compatible with M-3; however, the Anderson Columbia site and the acreage that runs all the way over to the Humane Society is in the Employment Center which the M-3 is compatible.

Mr. Lee stated that the city has had long discussions about the Anderson Columbia area and the West Ocala area including consultations about the Employment Center zoning. Mr. Chighizola remarked that Phoenix Wood Products was interested in bringing the lumber mill back to life by using it to assemble pallets. However, it did not work out because there was contamination on the site so they went to another location. At this point it is unknown but there might be contamination with the asphalt plant at Anderson Columbia. As a part of the special exception research, this issue will be addressed by looking at DEP reports and other information to determine if there is contamination such as leeching at this location.

Mr. Lee stated that there are concerns about air quality and noise. The reason the plant needs so much storage is because it is an asphalt processing plant and they are batching asphalt which requires heat to mix up the asphalt, rock and dirt materials which they use on a daily basis.

Ms. Reed stated that when the machine malfunctions there is a horrible vibrating sound which can be heard all the way to the Royal Oak area. A couple years ago the city and I checked this out by going to the site and we were told that the reason for the noise is due to a malfunction of a machine that is used to load the rail cars with the material for repairing the roads. This place is somewhat similar to Royal Oak without the smoke. The hours have changed because we got onto them about the noise so they no longer do the work at night just during the daytime. Mr. Hale stated that when he was out there taking pictures the only thing he saw was asphalt and limestone. Mr. DuMond remarked that he believes they will bring in millings and also the ingredients to make asphalt which are then trucked out.

Mr. Lee stated that they now have spread out all over the site and are not working in the original location which was approved by the city in the 1999 site plan. Mr. Hale stated that there is a code enforcement case open which cites them for modifying a site without a site plan and for not being in compliance with the existing site plan. They are scheduled to go before the Code Enforcement Board in December.

Mr. Lee used Google Earth to show pictures of the site from 1995, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2015.

Mr. Hale commented that the applicant will have to go through a major site plan review. Also, when the applicant and the city engineer meet with our staff we will discuss various issues such as landscaping and site inspections. They cannot expand unless the special exception is approved.

VI. Upcoming Meetings

City Council Meeting on October 4th at 4pm – Introduction of Foxwood annexation and several rezoning cases and the Introduction of the Office, Government and Institutional Signage Ordinance

City Council Meeting on October 18th at 4pm – The PD case, Approval of the Foxwood Annexation and approval of the Office, Government and Institutional Signage Ordinance

Ocala Historic Preservation Advisory Board Meeting on October 6th at 4pm;

Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting on October 10th at 5:30pm – Three medical marijuana ordinances. Mr. Chighizola stated that Florida State approved five licenses to allow businesses to set up dispensaries for people who have severe cancer or illnesses. If the amendment passes in November it will allow anyone with chronic pain to get marijuana. Growers are not allowed in the state. The businesses can only sell vapors, oils or creams; nothing that can be smoked or eaten. The first marijuana dispensary opened up in Tallahassee and soon there will be one in Gainesville; and

Board of Adjustment Meeting on October 17th at 5:30 pm.

VII. Approval of 8/25/16 Minutes – The minutes were not addressed.

VIII. Final Comments – None

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm.