

# Ocala 2035 Vision Leadership Group Meeting

Citizen Service Center  
Second Floor – Training Room  
201 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Ocala, Florida

Thursday, December 7, 2017 - 11:30 am

## Minutes Summary

**The following members were present:** Ruth Reed, Gilberto Martinez, Robert DuMond, Patrick Gilman, Fred Roberts, Todd Rudniansyn, Summer Gill, Paolo Mastroserio – arrived 11:45 am, and Mary S. Rich – arrived 11:50 am

**The following members were absent:** Narvella Haynes, Ken Ausley, Clark Yandle, Steve Albright, Ira Holmes, Grant McMahon, Ed Plaster, Michelle Partin and Reginald Landers, Jr.

**City Staff in Attendance:** Tye Chighizola, Growth Management Director; David Boston, Senior Planner / GIS Analyst; Nancy Smith, Senior Planner; Gus Gianikas, CRA Manager; Matrell Everett, Planner I; Charles Rich, Senior Projects Administrator; and Laurie Whitaker, Reinvestment Manager

**Citizens in Attendance:** none

**The following items were distributed at the meeting:** none

Mr. Boston called the meeting to order at 11:43 am.

### **Agenda Item #1: Proof of Publication**

Ms. McKeever stated that the public notice was posted on the City of Ocala's website on November 9, 2017.

Chairman Mastroserio arrived and assumed duties as Chairman.

### **Agenda Item #2: Approval of August 24, 2017 Minutes**

Mr. Gilman made a motion to approve the August 24, 2017 minutes; Mr. Martinez seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

### **Agenda Item #3: Form-based Code Public Review Draft**

Mr. Boston stated the latest refined version of this code was sent out to the members via email. A presentation and a series of meetings will be held with various groups including this group, CEP and Main Street. Community meetings will take place on January 18<sup>th</sup> at noon and at 5:30 pm. Several displays will be setup and there will be a presentation and a discussion session at each meeting to get feedback from the public. Staff will meet with council in a workshop scheduled for December 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss the form-based code, the fire station site, and the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Road diet. Mr. Boston provided an overview of the Form-based code and emphasized the code is tailored to downtown zoning and to be used for preserving the historic character of Ocala's core. The urban and suburban areas will remain separated to protect the property owner's investments. In addition, the development review process has been simplified. Mr. Boston explained the foundation for the code started because of an explicit recommendation from the Ocala 2035 Vision Plan. Next, a recommendation was incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. Followed by recommendations from both the West Ocala

Community Plan and the Midtown Master Plan. Mr. Boston reviewed the eleven development standards and the design standards which includes architecture and building requirements. And further explained that a new addition is the inclusion of an adjustment process. This can be used by developers to request approval for a project that may not meet the required standards in the code. There was a short discussion regarding residential units, accessibility requirements, thresh hold standards, and signage criteria in the form based code. Mr. Boston stated as it stands right now the City Planning office will approve the adjustment requests. Mr. Rudnianyn suggested that the adjustments be reviewed by the Downtown CRA members or a designated subjective group of citizens in order for the reviews to be truly impartial. Mr. Boston stated this is an interesting suggestion and staff would look into maybe doing something like this. Mr. Boston emphasized this code is a draft and asked the members to provide feedback by bringing any concerns to the attention of the planners.

**Agenda Item #4: NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Road Diet**

Mr. Boston advised the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue road diet project should be starting soon. The plan is to reduce the existing four lane to a two lane road. Bike lanes, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and medians will be added later on. Only the restriping of the road from SR40 to Bonnie Heath Boulevard will be completed right now. The City feels like the road is unsafe because the chassis is too large. Travel patterns are way under capacity even though it picks up sometimes during the special events in the Tusawilla Park area. Mr. Chighizola stated that FDOT is working on the SR40 road diet but it will not impact the capacity of the roadway. Mr. Boston announced two community meetings will be held at the Discovery Science Center on January 11<sup>th</sup> at noon and 6 pm. Multiple copies of the designs showing the restriping and the proposed side street & the west side parallel parking will be on display. Mr. Chighizola explained if the City sees that the two lanes are not effective, the changes can be undone before the medians are put in.

**Agenda Item #5: Ocala / Marion County Home Matters Report**

Mr. Boston explained the Home Matters Report for Ocala and Marion County was developed by the Florida Housing Coalition (FHC). The gaps, the needs and the available housing in both the City and the County were studied to determine the housing situations and develop the report. The general conclusions are that there is an affordable housing shortage in both the City and the County. But our problem is a little different than what a lot of bigger cities tend to have because our housing is more affordable than a denser city. Plus, our incomes are also lower and so the gap turns out to be farther down on the price point scale. In short, the City has a pretty substantial affordable housing gap. The County hosted a summit meeting for the FHC not too long ago in order to go over the results of the Home Matters Report. City and County staff members, along with other stakeholders, attended the meeting. At this meeting, the attendees split up into committees to work out tactics that could be used to address the housing issues in our communities. Another objective was to try to figure out how to ensure that a sustainable housing situation is put in place for the City of Ocala and all of Marion County. Since that meeting both governments are moving forward to develop strategies that will allow for the implementation of the recommendations from the FHC as quickly as possible. This will be an ongoing course of action. If you have not had a chance to read the report, please review it when you get a chance and send us your feedback.

Ms. Whitaker added that four subcommittees have been established: construction, finance, local government policy and legislative. All subcommittees will report back to the Affordable Housing Committee so that some of the recommendations in the Home Matters Report can be implemented as soon as possible. Also, if anyone is interested in sitting on any of the committees, please contact David Boston or Laurie Whitaker.

**Agenda Item #6: Midtown Catalytic Sites**

Mr. Boston stated the Midtown Master Plan was completed and adopted earlier this year. A Letter of Interest (LOI) offer went out seeking developers to partner with the City on some of the City owned catalytic sites identified in Midtown. Now the City is in the negotiation phase of the process and Developer's Agreements are being drafted. Responses have been received for the development of the Fire Station site and the TPO site which is across the street from City Hall. In accordance with what the City requested in the LIO, some type of residential townhouse configuration is the proposed use for TPO and some sort of mixed use & rehab development is being considered at the Fire Station. This is very encouraging because the Midtown Master Plan was only adopted a short time ago and staff is already seeing positive responses from the market.

**Agenda Item #7: Proposed RaceTrac on SR40 / Pine**

Mr. Chighizola stated RaceTrac got the approval from City Council to waive the one year waiting period to appear before the Board of Adjustment (BOA) to request a Special Exception. The case will be heard at the December 18<sup>th</sup> BOA meeting. The developers have incorporated some building design changes, added pedestrian improvements, Wayfinding signage and canopy modifications; therefore, staff is recommending approval of the project. The building will be located just to the North of Starbucks. There will no curb cuts on SR40 just a right in on Pine Avenue. The main access for the trucks will be on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Mr. Martinez declared this as a great opportunity to see some significant outside investment. Also, it is a way to addresses some of the substantial problems on the site with a very noteworthy end user committed to the success of the project. This is an important area and a great opportunity for the City.

**Agenda Item #8: Upcoming Meetings**

Mr. Boston reviewed the upcoming meetings listed in the power point presentation.

**Agenda Item #9: Comments / Questions**

There was a short discussion regarding the ability of the fire trucks to move in and around the City during emergencies. Mr. Gilman suggested putting up signage or having blinking lights at the new fire station location to notify citizens that fire trucks will be coming out because the lights are not sequenced and traffic bottlenecks in some areas. Mr. Boston indicated this was a great idea and stated there are a lot of different things the City can do to address this issue.

There was a short discussion about increasing the speed limit to 45 mph on the stretch from Trinity Catholic to Highway 475.

Mr. Rich conveyed that right now the underground water and electric is being installed for the downtown hotel. The parking lot will stay open until the first part of January. Mr. Chighizola added construction on the hotel is scheduled to start in January.

The committee agreed by consensus to adjourn the meeting.

Chairman Mastroserio adjourned the meeting at 1:05 pm.