

# **Ocala 2035 Vision Leadership Group Meeting**

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

Wednesday, February 28, 2018 - 11:30 am

## **Minutes Summary**

**The following members were present:** Ruth Reed, Paolo Mastroserio, Mary S. Rich, Robert DuMond, Michelle Partin, Ira Holmes, Clark Yandle and Gilberto Martinez

**The following members were absent:** Narvella Haynes, Ken Ausley, Fred Roberts, Steve Albright, Summer Gill, Todd Rudniansyn, Grant McMahan, Ed Plaster, Reginald Landers, Jr. and Patrick Gilman

**City Staff in Attendance:** David Boston, Senior Planner / GIS Analyst; Peter Lee, Planning Director; Charles Rich, Senior Projects Administrator; Melanie Gaboardi, Revitalization Strategies Director; Lisa Walsh, Economic Development Manager; Patricia Hitchcock, Planning & Zoning Manager; Nancy Smith, Senior Planner; Gus Gianikas, CRA Manager; Matrell Everett, Planner I; and Aubrey Hale, Urban Design Coordinator

**Citizens in Attendance:** Eric Borman, Partin Architecture; Angie Lester, The Boyd Group; Martha Zinn, North Magnolia Merchants Association; and Douglas J. Loudon, North Magnolia Merchants Association;

**The following items were distributed at the meeting:** none  
Mr. Boston called the meeting to order at 11:30 am.

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

Ms. McKeever stated that the public notice was posted on the City of Ocala's website on February 12, 2018.

### **Agenda Item #2: Approval of December 7, 2017 Minutes**

Ms. Partin made a motion to approve the December 7, 2017 minutes; Mr. DuMond seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

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

Mr. Boston said the Form-Based Code (FBC) has gone through a lot of public meetings including a City Council workshop. The feedback process has been going on for a few months now and so far all the comments from the public have been positive. The introduction of three ordinances will establish the form-based code. The first will create the FBC which is a new zoning district for the downtown area; the second is necessary to accommodate the implementation of the form-based code; and the third ordinance will actually add the FBC zone to the zoning map at the same time the zoning district is created. The FBC originated from the Vision Plan back in 2010 and was one of four building and site priority strategies identified by this committee. The FBC will take the focus off of use prohibitions and put more focus on the development environment including: adequate windows and floors on every side of the building; sidewalks throughout the downtown area; sites being appropriate and appealing to the historical character of the downtown area; and that streets are calibrated to mesh with the existing styles. The FBC is for the downtown area and it extends up to the railroad tracks in the North Magnolia and Midtown

areas; as far as Watula Avenue, Sanchez Avenue and Tuscahill Avenue; as far south as SE 10<sup>th</sup> Street, stopping just before the hospital district; and as far west as Pine Avenue in some areas. In the future, there is the potential for the FBC to be calibrated to fit the medium intensity special district areas, if the community determines they would like something similar. A public hearing at the Planning and Zoning Commission is scheduled on March 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm. Next up are two City Council public hearings; April 3<sup>rd</sup> is the introduction and April 17<sup>th</sup> is the second and final hearing where the code will be discussed, adopted and become effective.

Mr. Boston said the reason a business would want the FBC is because it emphasizes the form of the building rather than its use. As a result, any kind of configuration of the uses is allowed as long as the building location, height constraints and existing character surrounding the proposed development is respected. For example if a contractor wanted to build a one story building in a core downtown area surrounded by other one story buildings any of the following uses would be acceptable: retail above and residential below; office below and residential above; or retail below and office above. However, if a contractor wanted to construct a one-story building in a central downtown area that is surrounded with three-story buildings this would not be appropriate because it does not match the characteristics of the surrounding area. Mr. Lee said the aspiration of the plan is to help create public space. Ideally, the sidewalks would be wider and the public space would be well defined, usable and ready for activation. One of the directives in the Ocala 2035 Vision Plan is for an active urban area in the downtown that is well connected and not just for cars but for pedestrians and bikes. Building placement is the key component to realizing this goal. Mr. Boston noted that the FBC ensures consistency in development of the downtown so that it is attractive and draws people to the area. Downtown already has an eclectic style and the City is not trying to regulate its architectural design. A function of the FBC is to emphasize the fact that every street in the downtown area is important and to treat it as such. Included in the FBC is a use table; however, the table has been streamlined and condensed to simplify the development process. Some uses are prohibited or have conditions associated with them to allow a discretionary site review on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Lee commended Mr. Boston and Mr. Hale for their work over the last year and a half on the completion of the FBC.

The Ocala Tree Commission will be working with the FBC using a street by street pattern. After the Osceola Trak is finished, staff plans to go street by street until all of the downtown core streets are finished.

Mr. Boston acknowledged that the FBC is much better based on the public's review and their feedback.

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

Mr. Boston stated as a part of the road diet project, micro-surfacing is being applied to NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Silver Springs Boulevard north up to Bonnie Heath Boulevard. Micro-surfacing will extend the life of the road for approximately 10 years. Implementation of the road diet will consist of reducing the road from four lanes to two lanes in most places; restriping the road; adding in some parallel parking spots on the west side next to Tuscahill Park; adding some left turn lanes; and installing missing crosswalks. The hope is that these changes will make this a much safer roadway. Mr. Lee said this project came about from the Midtown Master Plan. Traffic on NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue has been flat for 20 years and it probably will not change much five years from now. Parking is needed for the Tuscahill area. There were two rounds of community meetings and changes were made to the plans for the road as a result of those meetings. The majority of the neighbors are in favor of the project but there will be an adjustment period

for everyone to get used to the new road pattern. Mr. Dumond and Ms. Lester inquired about travel across Bonnie Heath Boulevard, moving from north to south. Mr. Boston replied the lane on NW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue indicates that it is a right turn only; but you can go straight or turn right. Restriping will not impact the north side of Bonnie Heath Boulevard. However, the south will be impacted because there will only be one through lane. The Engineering Department is aware of the situation and will address the problem soon. Committee members suggested the City add lighting, traffic calming devices and an overpass on NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue as well. Mr. Lee said traffic will be slowed down with the changes that are being implemented. Mr. Hale clarified that this is just the first phase of the plan; additional improvements will be completed later. Mr. Boston stated no decision has been reached as to how long the restriping is slated to stay in place before hardscaping work is started but a time period of 3 to 5 years has been discussed and is the most likely conclusion.

**Agenda Item #5: Future Land Use / Zoning Inconsistency Ordinances**

Mr. Boston reported that staff is in the early stages of drafting ordinances for future land use and zoning inconsistency ordinances. The City is making these changes because there are some areas in which the zoning does not match with the land use classification. In cases where the land use and zoning are inconsistent with one another, essentially nothing can be done with the property except to continue the existing use unless either the land use classification or the zoning district is changed to make them compatible with each other. Staff is going through a process to determine the properties that have zoning inconsistencies. Then a study of each individual property will be made to determine what strategy is best for each site on a case-by-case basis. Staff will work with the property owners to facilitate any necessary operational changes to eliminate inconsistencies.

Staff also discovered some land use and zoning inconsistencies in the North Magnolia area while going through the process of updating the North Magnolia Plan. Some of the land use and zoning classifications are not appropriate for many of the properties and it seems to be causing a lot of problems for the property owners. A land use change in some of these cases might be the most appropriate action; however, this may not be the most appropriate action for all properties. A zoning change might be the more appropriate action in some cases. One land use classification that is a relatively easy fix is the Public land use classification so staff has started working on a draft ordinance. This classification is only applied to properties that are owned by some type of government entity and the public land use says the only zoning district allowed for these properties is GU (governmental). The problem is that some of the properties have a different zoning district which makes them incompatible. More ordinances will be drafted in the future to fix the rest of the land use and zoning inconsistencies. Mr. Lee advised that some of the inconsistencies may affect the implementation of the Ocala 2035 Vision Plan because some areas along corridors might be inappropriately assigned Neighborhood land use; the Medium Intensity land use also probably warrants a second look to make sure they are capable of handling changes the City envisions. Along Martin L. King, Jr. Avenue and SR40, in West Ocala, changes are also needed to address what is envisioned. There are a few other places which will need a closer look to ensure that moving forward the zoning and land use designations are appropriate. Changes will be positive for the majority of the affected areas because it will assist with land assembling and lead to possible redevelopment of sites.

**Agenda Item #6: PUD/PD Consolidation**

Mr. Boston explained that PUD and PD designations are being consolidated into a single PD district because there is no need to have two designations anymore. The PUD zoning has been around for the past 20 years. It was the first zoning district that allowed staff to look at an area and comprehensively design it in such a way that it facilitated a mix of uses. Primarily, the PUD zoning district was geared toward mixed uses with a heavier residential component and they typically followed the subdivision

process for zoning classification. The PD zoning district was added later and it is a little bit more flexible in terms of the configuration of uses that are allowed in a development. The developer can have pretty much any mix of uses as long as they're compatible with the area; appropriate access is maintained; the design is comprehensive; and certain other locational requirements are met. All the PUDs established before this ordinance goes into effect will stay in place. The action of consolidating these two districts will simplify the development process; eliminate duplication of districts; and reduce the number of zoning districts in the zoning code. There are others zoning classifications that need to be addressed but this is the first and easiest one to address. Staff is trying to determine if the City can legally eliminate PUD 5, PUD 6, PUD 7, and PUD 8, etc. zoning districts on the zoning map.

**Agenda Item #7: North Magnolia CRA Plan Update**

Mr. Gianikas explained that staff is working with the North Magnolia CRA Advisory Committee (NMCAC) to update the North Magnolia CRA plan. The current plan was adopted in late 1998 or 1999. A strategic planning process and community meetings are being used to obtain input for updating the plan. Three of the seven NMCAC members, Mr. Clark Yandle, Mr. Douglas Loudon and Ms. Martha Zinn are here today to discuss the plan. Four community meetings are scheduled; three have already taken place and the plan will be finalized next Thursday at the last meeting. The strategic planning process is being used to identify important issues in the neighborhood. A couple of issues were identified and prioritized at last night's meeting. One issue is access into the North Magnolia area. Although Highway 441 is on the west boundary of the CRA, it is heavily traveled, and really difficult to get to North Magnolia Avenue from Highway 441 unless you use 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The Committee has been trying to have SR40 redesigned so that east bound traffic can turn left onto NE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. This has been talked about for years but nothing has happened because SR40 is not in the CRA nor is it a City road; it belongs to the State of Florida. It has been identified as a very important issue that needs to be addressed with FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation). The Committee is going to get more involved in pressuring the Marion County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) to complete this project because it is long overdue.

Mr. Gianikas explained that even more important than the accessibility is looking at how the City's Land Development Regulations impact redevelopment of the area. A large part of the North Magnolia CRA is designated as part of the downtown core which makes the area north of the railroad tracks at NE/NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street the same as downtown. However, according to most of the input staff received at the meetings this classification does not properly reflect the character of the area because North Magnolia is not downtown. It is a light industrial/general business area and the neighborhood wants the future land use classifications, zoning districts and development regulations to accurately reflect that character. In the past this area was the center of town but now the population geographic center is probably SR200 and I-75. North Magnolia is an older area with small lots and its development pattern is different from other areas in the City because most of it was developed before the zoning code was created. At last night's meeting, the most important issue was that the community stressed the fact that they want the land use to reflect the character of the area because they feel it is negatively affecting property uses/development. Mr. Yandle said the neighborhood has struggled with trying to show that they are a developed commercial light industrial neighborhood because of small lots, traffic patterns, and a lack of access from the south on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Now that Tusawilla Avenue is closed there is no way for citizens to get to the North Magnolia area from SR40. The North Magnolia community was developed before all of the zoning and code restrictions were put into place. Mr. Yandle commented that they have their own niche, their own way in which they conduct business, and they do not like the requirement for walls to hide inventory. It is the community's opinion that many of the things being considered for our neighborhood are totally unnecessary. He said the neighborhood vehemently

disagrees with suggestions that chain link fencing, lighting and block walls or screens hide products needed by the businesses; this is not the character of the neighborhood. North Magnolia is developed and doing fine as it is. He expressed appreciation to the City for everything they have done for the CRA. He has been a part of planning in the past and I looks forward to working with the City in the future, but the City and the NMCAC have dropped the ball on some things. The City of Ocala has never gotten excited about giving the North Magnolia corridor access on NE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The NMCAC has not been able to convince the City of how important it is to have this access. This access is just as important to the Midtown as it is for the North Magnolia area. This has to be done and the Committee has done everything they know to do as a Committee. Mr. Boston said staff has consistently heard comments regarding land use and zoning at every North Magnolia meeting. A lot of the problems they are having in terms of regulations ultimately stems from that High Intensity Central Core land use classification. There were little zoning fixes made to try and fix some of these issues. In the case of North Magnolia, there are a lot of areas that are zoned B-4, B-5 or M-1 and those zoning districts are all inconsistent with that High Intensity Central Core land use classification. Some fixes provided for owners to meet certain requirements and then they could continue operating within the zoning district. What staff has been hearing from the meetings is not only are those requirements inconsistent but the reason that we have those requirements in the first place is because of the land use classification and that ultimately that land use classification itself is inappropriate for the North Magnolia area. The land use classification item has been mentioned probably the most from these meetings and it is something that staff is going to have to take a hard look at and determine if this land use is incompatible. If it is, then staff needs to determine the best land use classifications for the future. Even though there are a few complications, there can be a resolution. North Magnolia is a specialized district and the City has to embrace the fact that it is a mixture of light industrial, some retail, some wholesale and then figure out what is the best tool to make sure that the City acknowledges and meets the needs of the existing businesses. The 2035 Vision Plan has this long aspirational view of what could happen and it cut out the middle piece and concentrated on the area around NE 14<sup>th</sup> Street because there was a potential for anchor businesses that would create a lot of spinoff, but that has not happened. Mr. Boston added that when staff gets into researching this they might find that the whole district cannot use one land use classification but maybe there are two that apply in different areas. The City will be more than happy to work with the NMCAC to implement changes because it takes a cooperative effort to make positive changes. Mr. Boston announced there are several projects in the works that will hopefully bring a lot more residential housing in the downtown area.

**Agenda Item #8: Open Pavilion Engagement Center**

Mr. Hale stated this has been a work in progress for about a year and a half. The intent of the open pavilion is to provide an area which will allow the homeless to congregate for meals and receive services for housing, job and health related needs. Right now there is a mix of services and some public feedings in parking lots while the homeless migrate throughout the area. The City can address this by partnering with Interfaith to navigate individuals to the open pavilion where they will have a safe place to eat, shower and get some help. Phase 1 is essentially a 30 x 80 foot pavilion which will be located on Interfaith's warehouse site. The pavilion will be near the soup kitchen which is located just to the north between NW 1<sup>st</sup> Street and NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The homeless will be able to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner from the soup kitchen. It will be a day shelter with a small office in one portion of the building to house case managers and on-site security. Enhanced lighting, street lighting and crosswalks will be provided. There will be Wi-Fi, cell phone charging stations, lockers, bathrooms and showering facilities. The case managers will connect individuals to services for housing and medical treatment if necessary. Interfaith will manage the shelter. The City will build the pavilion. Primary funding will come from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) along with some funding from the City. The amount

budgeted for the project right now is \$589,000. However, the true cost will not be known until bids are submitted to Procurement and then the architect and engineer can create cost estimates. Other site improvements will have to be completed including additional drainage, parking and lighting, and upgrades to the perimeter fencing. Phase 2 will include additional offices for more case managers, or optional restrooms and shower facilities, or storage space; it depends on what is needed later on. Toiletries and sundry items will be provided through donations. Some of the janitorial services will be handled by the City. Ms. Gaboardi said staff is in the process of negotiating a contract which states that Interfaith will have physical access and responsibility for the facility. The City will provide sanitation; temporary on-site unarmed security, possibly plain clothes; utilities; janitorial services; and paper products and soap. Shampoo and towels will be provided through some other source. Mr. Lee said that the hope is that this facility spurs some collaboration amongst providers in the City and the County. Ms. Gaboardi said staff has heard that the legislature is going to provide more support for affordable housing. Staff is in the process of drafting an RFP (Request for Proposal) for the construction of affordable housing. If housing services are utilized by the homeless it would meet a primary goal to eradicate homelessness by putting people in housing appropriate for their situations. Ms. Rich pointed out that jobs are necessary to pay the rent or mortgage for the apartment or home. Ms. Gaboardi explained that some of the homeless will never be able to work but already have an income. The problem for them is that people are stealing their money because they have nowhere to keep it. They lack the means to provide the first month's rent, last month's rent and the security deposit to move into a home or to store their valuables. Plus, there is a lack of housing services available in the community. Mr. Lee said the City also lacks affordable housing and services that are well coordinated. The pavilion provides step one in getting the kind of collaboration the City and County needs. Ms. Gaboardi expressed that the use of CDBG funds allows for the creation of a public facility with a dedicated funding source. The \$400,000 cannot be shifted for use to another project because the City had to meet one of the national objectives required by CDBG in order to get the funding for the open pavilion. Staff is also looking into a way to provide some type of postal boxes to be used by the homeless. The pavilion will also provide a safe, secure and sanitary place for churches and other organizations to dispense food or goods. The feedings in the parking lot on Thursday nights are scary because there is not much lighting; there is no place to wash your hands; and no appropriate trash receptacles. In addition, every time a public feeding is done in a parking lot the City has to clean up afterwards. Committee members agreed that this is a wonderful project that will prove to be a great resource to help the entire community.

**Agenda Item #9: City Wide / Friends Recycling Site Plan**

Ms. Hitchcock explained that staff is reviewing a site plan from Friends Recycling for a recycling center that will be located on NW 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Recyclable materials will be brought in and sorted in a building and then shipped out the same day to a recyclable material processor. Garbage is not allowed because this is only for recyclable products. Parking was discussed with the applicant when staff held the site plan review meeting. The applicant has requested that operations on site be categorized as a trucking terminal business and because of this request the site plan is required to be presented to the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission so they can determine the number of parking spaces needed for the site. The P&Z meeting is being held on March 12<sup>th</sup>. The recycling center is an allowed use in the M-1 zoning so staff is reviewing it per the City's code requirements. Mr. Lee noted that if garbage trucks are seen going in and out of the site that is a problem because this is intended only for recycling. The access points are the existing Friends Recycling driveway on NW 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The trucks will come in, go to the building and dump their load, then go back out using the same road. The residents should have buffering from the sounds because of the way the building is designed and the direction it is facing. There is an existing berm on 31<sup>st</sup> Street and buffering is also being installed behind the drainage retention areas to screen the building from view in case the buffer along the street is taken away when the street is widened at some

future date. There should be no odors because the building is going to be cleaned on a daily basis and nothing will be stored on site. Ms. Hitchcock confirmed that the site plan was approved in 2016.

**Agenda Item #10: Upcoming Meetings**

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

**Agenda Item #11: Open Floor**

Ms. Reed made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Rich seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

Mr. Boston adjourned the meeting at 1:16 pm.