

**MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT
AREA BOARD MINUTES**

January 11, 2011

There was a meeting of the Midtown Redevelopment Area Board held Tuesday, January 11, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Commission Chambers at 301 South Ridgewood Avenue, Daytona Beach, Florida:

Board Members

Ms. Johnnie Ponder (Chair)
Mr. Hemis Ivey (Vice-Chair) (arrived 6:25 pm; excused 8:00 pm)
Ms. Shirley Benjamin
Ms. Patricia Heard
Mr. John Huger (arrived 6:53 pm)
Mr. Ken McGee
Ms. Denise McMillon

Board Members Absent

Mr. John McGhee II

Staff Members Present

Ms. Carrie Lathan, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Reed Berger, Redevelopment Director
Mr. Charles Bryant, Project Manager
Mr. Denzil Sykes, Code Enforcement
Lieutenant Jim Newcomb, Police Department
Ms. Cathleen Olson, Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

Ms. Ponder called the meeting to order at 6:13 pm.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Olson called the roll and noted members present as stated above.

3. Approval of Minutes: November 9, 2010

Mr. Ivey expressed concern with the statement that Midtown was requesting to be excluded from the site plan review process aspect of the Land Development Code rewrites.

Ms. Lathan stated that the request for exclusion only referred to the site plan amendment process, not the overall LDC amendment process.

Mr. Ivey emphasized the need for clarity in what had been meant.

Ms. Heard recommended listening to the audio of the meeting to ensure clarity.

Board Action

Ms. Ponder made a motion to continue the approval of the minutes from November 9, 2010 pending review. The motion was unanimously approved (8-0).

4. Staff Report

(a) Police Department Report

Lt. Jim Newcomb introduced himself on behalf of the Police Department, noting that Cpt. Capri could not be present at the meeting. He outlined criminal statistics of the past month, highlighting an overall decrease in criminal activity, with 150 arrests being made, primarily narcotics-related, and noted a 2% increase in residential thefts and burglaries, primarily by copper thieves.

Ms. Benjamin noted concern regarding a flea market that was taking place on the vacant lot at the corner of Haynes Street and Orange Avenue.

Lt. Newcomb stated that the owner of the property had died and the lot was now in a family trust with no one directly responsible. He stated that the Police Department had been trying to contact the new owner.

Ms. Ponder asked if the Police Department was aware of problems at the Citgo gas station.

Lt. Newcomb acknowledged problems at the gas stations, stating that it had been cited for eight or nine Code Enforcement violations, but noted that the owner was cooperating and had removed paraphernalia from the property.

(b) Code Enforcement

Mr. Denzil Sykes introduced himself on behalf of Code Enforcement and noted ongoing CodeStat meetings to work together with the Police Department, stating that CodeStat reports would be available for the next meeting. He also noted that Code Enforcement cases were available to view on the City website. He acknowledged problems with the lot at Haynes Street and Orange Avenue but reiterated that with the property was in family trust and without an owner present, there was nobody to hold responsible for the property.

Ms. Heard asked if taxes had been paid on the property.

Mr. Sykes stated that he was not sure.

Ms. Heard also noted concerns with barbecues on Mary McLeod-Bethune Boulevard.

Mr. Sykes stated that Code was working to address problems involving barbecues, signs, and alcohol vendors on MMB. He also stated that a fallen tree at 804 Magnolia was being taken care of and noted that the vacant lot at George Engram and N. Lincoln was now City-owned.

Mr. Ivey stated that the problems at Haynes Street and Orange Avenue were very bad and would likely worsen. He also noted concern with drug activity at the car stereo installation business that the Board had previously approved. He emphasized the need for the Board to be careful of the community in considering what projects to approve.

Ms. Benjamin asked who installed the portable bathrooms at Haynes Street and Orange Avenue.

Mr. Sykes stated that he did not know.

Ms. Heard stated that the bathrooms had been removed and noted that anyone could rent portable bathrooms, not just the owner of a property.

Ms. McMillon stated that over a thousand cars traveled the Orange Avenue artery and questioned why the City had not taken action to address the serious problem of the market on such a busy thoroughfare.

Ms. Heard asked for updates regarding the car washes.

Mr. Sykes stated that Code was working to address the car washes at Orange Avenue and MLK and at Magnolia Avenue and MLK, stating that the owners were cooperating to address water collection issues.

5. Midtown Master Plan

Mr. Craig Huffman, 1127 Morningside Court, Tallahassee, outlined the discussions from the December 14 Phase II Midtown Master Plan workshop, illustrating the process used to determine support of different proposed concepts using colored dots to code positive or negative opinions of each concept. He stated that two projects received the most community support: the concept of a Central Park west of Bethune-Cookman University, with a grocery store and pharmacy at the intersection of ISB and MLK, with an emphasis on retaining viable properties when developing public space; and the Town Square concept,

which could start small and grow incrementally, culminating in a cohesive identity of Midtown and maintaining the historic character.

Ms. Ponder expressed concern with interfering with the ability to drive and park in Midtown in the Town Square concept.

Mr. Huffman emphasized that the intent was not to interfere with automotive traffic in Midtown, but rather to slow traffic and provide space for people to park and walk around the area.

Mr. Ivey emphasized the need to get work started on the Master Plan.

Mr. Huffman acknowledged the need to begin work and stated that small projects could begin in the initial stages of the larger Midtown plans. He emphasized the need to update Midtown zoning to ensure its compatibility with the vision for Midtown, and stated that FAMU needed to know what the Board specifically wanted to avoid including in a new zoning overlay. He outlined possible individual projects, highlighting a retail/entertainment center at ISB and Nova Road; a Town Center Square at MLK and Orange Avenue; and a mixed-use circle south of George Engram. He emphasized the need to respect the historical status of the Dickerson Center, and noted the general community opinion that Midtown did not want the new BCU athletic field. He stated that the overall intent was to take the best features of each concept and apply them realistically, emphasizing the willingness of FAMU to combine both concepts and come up with other ideas.

Mr. McGee expressed his appreciation that FAMU considered the character of the Midtown community and the pedestrian aspect of the area, and noted the need for more documentation to assist in presenting the needs of Midtown to the City Commission.

Mr. Huffman noted the need for a workshop with the Board focused on the plan.

Ms. Ponder expressed her support for the concept of a community garden.

Mr. Huffman asked if the Board would be willing to give a vote indicating its opinion on a general direction at the February Midtown meeting, noting that it would not necessitate a decision set in stone.

Mr. Bryant asked that Mr. Huffman send him an email with more detail as to the kind of direction requested.

Mr. Huffman agreed and emphasized the need to know if the Board had strong feelings for or against any of the concepts or projects proposed, noting that the Board's input and community input would contribute to LDC rewrites customized for Midtown in Phase III over the summer.

Mr. McGee asked if Midtown could use overlays in the LDC rewrite process.

Mr. Huffman affirmed that he envisioned a customized overlay for Midtown.

Ms. Ponder suggested Tuesday, January 25 at 4:00pm for a workshop to discuss the direction of the Midtown Master Plan.

Mr. Berger stated that he would confirm the date and time with all Board members and notice the meeting.

Mr. Huger noted that he might be unable to arrive until closer to 5:00pm.

6. LDC Rewrites

Mr. Berger stated that there had been no change in status from the November meetings.

Mr. Ivey expressed concern that Module I had been completed without Clarion coming to consult the Board and ask for input, emphasizing the lack of Midtown representation in the rewrite process.

Ms. Ponder stated that Midtown did not have adequate policies and procedures in place, making it difficult for Clarion to work effectively in the area.

Mr. Ivey expressed concern with a lack of communication between Clarion and the community.

Ms. Ponder emphasized the need to be vocal with any dissatisfaction.

Mr. Ivey noted that it had been 13 years since the inception of the Midtown Redevelopment Area and questioned what progress had been made.

Ms. McMillon noted that all contact information given to Clarion had been provided by the City.

Mr. Berger noted that public meetings had been held to obtain input from community members.

Mr. Ivey emphasized the need to include the Board and the community more in LDC discussions.

Mr. Berger stated that he would pass on Board concerns to the Clarion team. He noted that while Module I of the rewrite process was complete, it was not finalized and could be revisited and amended.

7. **Economic Incentives**

Mr. Berger noted incentive programs developed in Del Ray Beach, such as a loan interest subsidy, encouraging a dialogue with Del Ray Beach to consider programs Midtown may want to adopt.

Ms. Ponder emphasized the need to focus on non-matching incentive programs more than matching programs.

8. **Redevelopment Project Updates**

Mr. Bryant provided an outline for the Board of current Redevelopment projects, noting demolitions at 703 MLK on November 19 and 345 Jefferson Street on November 23; impending demolitions at 208 Garden Street, 556 Wallace Street, and 551 Oak Street; and possible demolitions in the 600 block of Division Street, 638 MLK, 640 MLK, and 642 MLK. He also stated that there were steady improvements on the Ganious Funeral Home project and highlighted Christmas decorations on MMB and around the other Redevelopment areas, and noted that the Parade in the Park had been a success.

Ms. Ponder asked if Christmas decorations were added to each year.

Mr. Bryant stating that this year there were wreaths and each year the decorations were better. He stated that Florida Power & Light was still not allowing the light poles on MLK to be used for decorations.

Ms. Ponder recommended attempting to start decoration efforts earlier the following holiday season.

Ms. Benjamin noted that there had been no decorations from Martin Luther King along ISB and questioned why it was all centered on MMB.

Ms. Heard reiterated that it was not permitted to use FPL light poles on MLK and concurred with the need to start decoration plans earlier to maximize the possibilities.

Mr. Bryant noted that there was impending construction on MLK, factoring into the decision to avoid attempting to construct poles for decoration and lighting only to have to remove them in the near future.

Ms. Benjamin requested updates concerning new stop signs.

Ms. Ponder requested updates concerning new banners and asked when the paint project would begin

Mr. Bryant stated that he was working on both projects to obtain new stop signs and new banners.

Mr. Berger stated that the paint project should be approved at the March 2 meeting.

Ms. Heard asked about the holiday trees around the Dickerson Center.

Mr. Bryant stated that trees had been put up in the past but were torn up by outside entities. He also noted the opening of the Busy Bee Too Café and Cold Street Station as examples of new urban delis.

Mr. Huger asked if the City tried to purchase properties that had been demolished.

Mr. Bryant stated that the City put liens on property and often recommended trying to purchase problem properties.

Ms. Heard asked for updates on the property on Division and Live Oak.

Mr. Bryant stated that there were many Code issues on the property and noted that it was being monitored by the Police Department.

Mr. Huger asked for updates on the Masonic Lodge.

Mr. Bryant stated that the Masonic Lodge had applied for a grant but needed additional documentation from the City; they would be trying to get all documentation to get relevant information and get approved through the City.

Ms. McMillon asked for updates on the Midtown sign on Orange Avenue and MLK.

Mr. Bryant stated that he was working with the contractor to improve street signs and stop signs.

9. Public Comments

Mr. John Nicholson, 413 N. Grandview, stated that he had just returned from School Board meetings in Deland regarding adjusting the school board zonings; he stated that School Board representatives had said that they had met with the African-American Advisory Committee, but noted that he had been unaware of such a committee. He stated that five school zones had been consolidated into one, and 27 school "islands" had been consolidated into 10, emphasizing his concern on the effect that that would have on the Midtown school zoning and the Midtown youth education.

Ms. McMillon expressed concern about frequent scheduling of meetings around holidays.

Mr. Bryant stated his concern regarding a bright and ambitious 16 year old youth battling cancer, noting that the Orlando Magic was going to sponsor a meet-and-greet for the youth.

10. Board Comments

Ms. Benjamin reiterated her encouragement for the young man to which Mr. Bryant had referred.

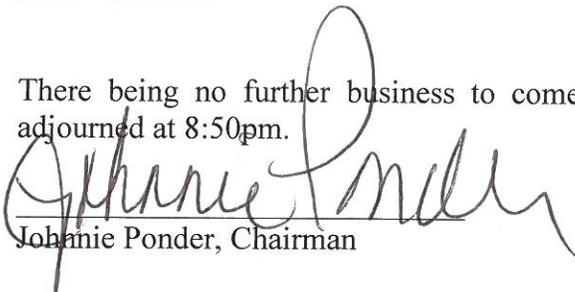
Ms. Heard wished the Board a Happy New Year and noted a banquet for the BCU football team on the following Saturday night, as well as a banquet for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the following Thursday.

Mr. Bryant noted a breakfast at the Dickerson Center the following Monday.

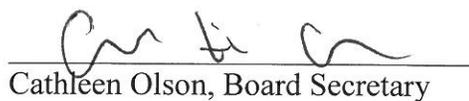
Ms. Ponder noted an error in the minutes confusing Board members absent with Staff members absent.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.



Johnnie Ponder, Chairman



Cathleen Olson, Board Secretary