

**MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT
AREA BOARD MINUTES**

February 8, 2011

There was a meeting of the Midtown Redevelopment Area Board held Tuesday, February 8, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, City Hall at 301 South Ridgewood Avenue, Daytona Beach, Florida. The following people were present:

Board Members

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

Board Members Absent

Mr. John Huger

Staff Members Present

Mr. Reed Berger, Redevelopment Director
Ms. Ben Gross, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Charles Bryant, Project Manager
Mr. Denzil Sykes, Code Enforcement
Chief Michael Chitwood, Police Department
Captain Craig Capri, Police Department
Ms. Cathleen Olson, Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

Ms. Ponder called the meeting to order at 6:19 pm.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Approval of Minutes: November 9, 2010 and January 11, 2011

Mr. Ivey asked if the questions concerning the November 9, 2010 minutes had been resolved.

Mr. Bryant stated that he had listened to the meeting audio and verified the minutes.

Board Action

Ms. Heard made a motion to approve the minutes of November 9, 2010. Mr. Ivey seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously (5-0).

Mr. Ivey made a motion to approve the minutes of January 11, 2011. Ms. McMillon seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously (5-0).

4. Staff Report

(a) Police Department Report

Cpt. Capri outlined crime statistics for the preceding period, noting an overall decrease of part-one crimes in the district and a decrease in every major crime category. He noted a recent peak in car breaks but stated that those numbers had decreased since the last period and highlighted arrests made earlier in the day. He stated that the Police Department would have officers on Mary McLeod-Bethune during Bike Week, and noted that the Midtown foot detail was making a difference, expressing his appreciation for the funding.

Ms. Ponder asked about the hours of the Midtown foot detail.

Cpt. Capri stated that the hours fluctuated somewhat based on crime trends. He updated the Board on the problematic CITGO station, stating that the Police Department had obtained the owner's cooperation and had subsequently seen a nearly complete drop in car break and robbery incidents at the property, but noted a drug paraphernalia violation. He also noted that drug problems on Derbyshire and Essex were under investigation.

Ms. Heard noted that the people who had formerly congregated on Third Street had moved a few streets down.

Cpt. Capri updated the Board on the property on the corner of Haynes Street and Orange Avenue, stating that the owner had been cited and the property had been cleaned up, and the loitering had dispersed.

Mr. Ivey noted a dangerous issue with people loitering in the dark around Lincoln Street

Mr. McGee asked for the location of the problem CITGO station.

Cpt. Capri stated that the CITGO was located on Martin Luther King, Jr. and International Speedway Boulevard.

Mr. McGee stated the importance of developing pedestrian areas, and emphasized the need for safety, such as lighting, wider sidewalks, and overall security.

Chief Chitwood stated that the same problem existed on the Beachside, noting that it was impossible to “arrest our way out” and emphasized the need for economic development leading to increased home ownership.

Mr. McGee asked if Midtown could count on Police Department help in future potential property development.

Chief Chitwood stated that the Police Department would absolutely try to help business and residential development, noting the need to work on the problem of excessive taxes and permit fees.

Ms. McMillon noted problems with Midtown streetscaping with cars parking on grass and destroying it. She asked if cars were allowed to straddle the sidewalk.

Cpt. Capri stated that while cars could not straddle the sidewalk, they were permitted to park on the grass.

Ms. McMillon questioned why the City was putting money into streetscape projects when the cars were destroying it.

Mr. Berger stated that a curb was installed to define where parking was prohibited but noted that it was very difficult to enforce all the time. He stated that most people in the area were on board with the project, but there remained a few people causing problems.

Chief Chitwood noted the Catch-22 that existed between issuing parking tickets and an overall lack of adequate parking.

Ms. McMillon noted parking issues with the mosques on Caroline.

Cpt. Capri stated that he would speak mosque-goers, noting that they were receptive to working with Police to alleviate issues.

Ms. Heard expressed concern with Bike Week parking issues on Green Street.

Mr. Ivey emphasized the need to separate parking problems from criminal activity during Bike Street.

Cpt. Capri stated that towing cars would be a last resort in handling parking problems.

Ms. Shirley Benjamin asked for updates on El Dorado.

Cpt. Capri stated that an active investigation was underway on the property.

Chief Chitwood stated that \$2 million in funding had been granted from President Obama, outlining plans to emphasize more rehabilitation in juvenile crime, while the previous administration had cut juvenile crime funding. He outlined plans to implement an ankle monitoring system at the cost of \$7.50 a day, in comparison with the several hundred dollar cost of incarceration, with officers able to monitor activity from the office, and emphasized that nonviolent juvenile offenders should not be incarcerated. He stated that four juveniles had been on the ankle monitor program for week with no incidents reported. He outlined long-range plans to implement more monitors while expanding services such as tutoring and mentoring for juveniles.

Ms. Ponder asked for updates regarding the amnesty program.

Chief Chitwood outlined the amnesty program, in which nonviolent offenders could come to a church and take care of their legal cases, such as through probation or a fine, and then get their driver's license reinstated on the premises, in order to facilitate finding employment.

Ms. Ponder asked for updates about community policing.

Chief Chitwood stated that his plan was to hire eight more foot officers through the funding from President Obama, but eight officers had been laid off at the time of rebudgeting, so after hiring those officers back, there was no net gain of Police manpower, and noted further manpower cuts due to budget cuts the following year. He summed up the community policing philosophy in that if there was a problem in the community, that problem needed to be dealt with and solved.

Ms. McMillon asked if the budget cuts were in line with the number of residents of Daytona Beach.

Chief Chitwood stated that it was impractical to judge the number of Police officers as a function of population, noting that Daytona Beach relied more heavily on its Police Department as other places of equitable populations.

Ms. Benjamin emphasized the need for juveniles to have access to Social Services and asked about the Weed & Seed funds.

Chief Chitwood stated that the Weed & Seed Program had been ended by the Department of Justice.

(b) Code Enforcement

Mr. Sykes stated that he had located the owner of the property on Haynes Street and Orange Avenue and stated that the lot was nearly cleared, but noted that while

there was little traffic remaining on the lot, some of the activity had moved across the street.

Ms. Ponder asked about the possibility of installing a fence around the property.

Mr. Sykes stated that the City could not force the owners to install a fence but noted that he had suggested both fencing and No-Trespassing signs. He outlined Code violations cited on the CITGO station, such as signs and potholes, and asked the Board to provide Bike Week concerns to Code Enforcement in advance.

Ms. Heard noted ongoing problems with Get It While It's Hot and other barbecue vendors, emphasizing that they should not be using Church lots for their vending.

Mr. Sykes acknowledged the problems but stated that Code Enforcement did not address Church properties.

Ms. Heard stated that pastors needed to address the issue.

Ms. McMillon asked if the Board could draft a letter to individuals or businesses not in compliance to ensure that they were aware of the proper legal processes.

Ms. Heard also noted issues of barbecue vendors in car wash businesses.

Mr. Gross stated that it would be difficult to generate a single letter to address differing scenarios, but noted that if a Code violation was ignored, an individual or business could be brought before the Board, and recommended that Code Enforcement liaison meet with the City Attorney.

Mr. Sykes noted that health issues could be cited.

Mr. Gross stated issues with the broad definition of a church, noting that it could include things such as good service, and stated while churches had special protections, it would be easier to address problems with car washes.

Ms. McMillon emphasized the need to ensure that everyone was aware of what they could or could not legally do and help them grow their businesses the right way.

Mr. Gross stated that he would research the issues to obtain a clearer understanding regarding what was legally acceptable with churches and other properties.

Mr. Sykes noted that the food vending in barbershops in Mary McLeod-Bethune had been shut down. He also outlined pictures of current Code projects, noting the demolition of 614 Cedar Street, the removal of a tree on Magnolia Avenue,

and the No-Trespassing signs posted the lot on the corner of George Engram Boulevard and Lincoln Street.

Ms. Ponder expressed her appreciation of the Black History Month information included in the Code report.

5. Midtown Master Plan Workshop

Mr. Bryant outlined the recent Midtown Master Plan workshops, noting that one had been cancelled due to weather but one had taken place on February 1. He stated that the information in the packet included a draft of what had been presented at the workshop and outlined the nine key questions sent from FAMU, stating that pending input from the Board and Staff, a finalized draft would be established on the February 25 meeting. He stated that the first two comments demonstrated the top three concept proposals that had been presented and ranked the three in preferred order with brief explanations, while the remainder of the survey provided more detailed responses and explanations regarding the proposals and components of each proposal. He emphasized the importance of question #3, which outlined items that should be included in the final plan from any of the five proposals, and reasoning behind the selections. He also noted question #6, which outlined the non-historic or non-significant homes or businesses which should remain intact in the near future. He asked the Board to go through the list in detail and provide him with comments and input via telephone or email.

Mr. Ivey stated the need to continue having workshops every month and keep FAMU involved in the Master Plan process as well as the LDC process.

Ms. McMillon asked if there was documentation specifying what made a landmark historical.

Mr. Berger stated that he could provide criteria for historical designation, as well as local designation criteria should a local historical district be pursued.

Ms. McMillon asked if the draft would be submitted as is or if the draft would be amended prior to final submittal.

Mr. Bryant stated he wanted individual comments and input to adjust the draft before submittal.

Ms. Heard asked for clarification of question #6, as to whether the buildings listed were historical buildings or buildings that should remain.

Mr. Bryant stated that the buildings listed on question #6 reflected both historical buildings and non-protected buildings that should remain intact. He asked the Board to include any other buildings not mentioned on the list provided.

Ms. Ponder asked if Bonner Elementary School was on the historic register and what could be done to protect it.

Mr. Bryant stated that Bonner Elementary was not on the historic register and recommended trying to work with the School Board to preserve the building, but noted that most of the buildings on the list were historically protected.

Ms. Ponder asked for a list of the buildings on the historic register.

Ms. Heard asked if there was any further information about the African-American Educational Group.

Mr. Bryant stated that he had been unable to obtain further information.

6. Economic Incentives

Mr. Berger updated the Board on economic incentive programs, noting that non-matching grants were feasible with minor changes to the grant resolution. He stated that the economic incentives would be addressed at the April meeting and stated that current matching grant programs needed to be adjusted, since \$50,000 of the available \$70,000 had already been spent in the first four months of the fiscal year, noting that the grant funding record had been reached in both Midtown and Main Street.

Ms. Ponder asked for clarification as to what the \$50,000 had been spent on.

Mr. Berger clarified that \$50,000 had been spent on matching grant fund requests, noting that that demonstrated that the matching grant programs were working for some people as evidenced by the usage of the funds, and recommended transferring additional funds into the economic incentive accounts, but noted that moving forward with non-matching grant funds would require spending more grant money in the future.

Mr. Ivey emphasized the need for better communication and interaction with City architects and engineers.

Mr. Berger stated the need to identify how funds would work regarding planning grants

Mr. Ivey expressed the need to involve more African American-owned firms who were more in touch with the needs of the Midtown community.

Mr. Berger emphasized the need for a plan to shape up the important corridors such as Orange Avenue.

Mr. McGee asked if the FAMU students could create computer-generated renderings of what the Midtown community would like to see on the corridors, which could serve as a tool to generate interest in the improving the community.

Mr. Berger acknowledged the need for visuals to show to potential retailers and investors.

Mr. McGee emphasized the need for a complete package to be able to show to others.

Mr. Ivey emphasized the need to concentrate on the basics and tie economic incentives to the five corridors.

Ms. Ponder expressed the need for a safe and varied development of business along International Speedway Boulevard.

Mr. Berger noted the progress being made in Delray Beach, including new economic incentives such as land acquisition and recommended researching that community for insight into possible incentive programs.

Ms. Ponder recommended visiting Delray Beach to obtain further insight into their programs and progress.

7. Redevelopment Project Updates

Mr. Bryant presented a letter of resignation from Ms. Shirley Benjamin, expressing her ongoing support for the Board and for Midtown. He stated that new Board members would be selected at an upcoming City Commission meeting. He stated that the World Changers Program would be starting soon with college students helping to repair and/or repaint local homes. He also updated the Board on redevelopment projects, noting possible demolitions at 132 N. Franklin Street, 351 Walnut Street, and 517 Mary McLeod Bethune Boulevard, as well as a violation at 138 S. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard for lack of an occupational license on a property not zoned to be a church and the owner given 60 days to relocate. He also presented pictures of the work being done on the Bethune-Cookman University new athletic center.

Mr. Ivey stated that the sidewalks near the BCU athletic center had been torn up for nine months, and he was concerned for students and children walking in the street nearby. He stated that the agreement had been for all work entrances to be off of Jesse Street, emphasizing the need to clean up the area.

Ms. Ponder emphasized the need for deadlines by which the area should have been cleaned up.

Mr. Ivey concurred with the need for a timeframe to repair the sidewalks.

Ms. McMillon stated that she had observed programs with ingress and egress from the Civic Engagement Center while students were walking across the area and emphasized the need to implement more security to ensure student safety. She stated that everybody needed to be accountable for safety and reiterated the need to find out the projected dates of construction beginning and ending.

Ms. Ponder reiterated the need to have deadlines included in the Land Development Code text and stated the need to contact President Reed regarding concerns with the construction progress.

Mr. Bryant stated that he would contact University security regarding the safety of the students and recommend the implementation of security guards.

Ms. Ponder requested that Mr. Bryant present Board concerns in writing.

Mr. Bryant presented photographs of Mr. Tamari Walker attending the Orlando Magic game on January 30. He described the efforts of the community in fulfilling Mr. Walker's wish of attending a Magic game and giving him the opportunity to meet the Orlando Magic team members. He was presented with an autographed basketball and a personalized Magic jersey, and noted the contribution of the Fifth Third Bank in opening an account for Mr. Walker.

Mr. McGee asked about the best way to provide Mr. Bryant with comments regarding the Midtown Master Plan.

Mr. Bryant stated that the Board members could call, email, or fax him their input.

Ms. McMillon asked about the ownership of the properties in possible demolition stages.

Mr. Bryant stated that the property owner maintained ownership, while the City placed a lien on the property for the cost of demolition.

Ms. McMillon asked if the owners of the properties in possible demolition stages were local or from out of town.

Mr. Bryant stated that there was a mix of both local and out-of-town owners.

Ms. McMillon asked if the same rules applied to local owners and out-of-town owners.

Mr. Bryant stated yes.

8. Public Comments

Dr. Evelyn Bethune, 623 S. Palmetto, stated that a broken light pole remained at 638 Fulton Street from a car chase back in December, highlighting the potential danger of the broken pole and a lack of response from Florida Power & Light.

Ms. McMillon noted that the broken light pole in front of Popeye's Fried Chicken had been fixed.

Dr. Bethune also expressed her enthusiasm for the last Midtown Master Plan workshop and stated her hope for more participation from the community.

Ms. Shirley Benjamin, 206 S. Lincoln Street, expressed her appreciation for having had the opportunity to work with the Midtown Board and emphasized her intent to remain an active participant in the Midtown community.

Dr. Bethune also noted that the City licensing and permitting office was not friendly and informative, stating that there needed to be more communication with that office to encourage positive and helpful attitudes.

9. Board Comments

Ms. McMillon expressed her appreciation for the work of Mr. Bryant and Mr. Berger on the Midtown Master Plan workshops, stating that sincerely interested individuals would be there to participate, and emphasized the need to stay positive and sincere. She stated her enjoyment of the last workshop and commended Mr. McGee's knowledge and insight contributed to the project.

Ms. Heard concurred with Ms. McMillon's comments and expressed her appreciation for everyone's work on the Board. She stated the need to continue spreading the word and getting the community involved. She noted the need to review the activities of the previous year, emphasizing the need for the Board to be heard in terms of putting things on City Commission meeting agenda's, stating that the City Manager had been remiss in his duties to consider the Midtown communities.

Ms. Ponder expressed her hope for a successful Bike Week and concurred with the Board's appreciation of a good workshop. She emphasized the need to remain involved in the Midtown community and reiterated that policies could ultimately be changed.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:41pm.

Johnnie Ponder, Chairman

Cathleen Olson, Board Secretary