

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING  
JANUARY 26, 2012**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Chalifoux, Chairman  
Cynthia Beauford-Johnson, Bill Cote, Nancy Lisby,  
Karen Lyons, Gene Murtha, Teddy Shively

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Gordon Bower, Jan Sidebottom

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner  
Joan LeBeau, Chief Planner

**CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. Roll Call
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting
- 1. February 23, 2012

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Meeting of December 22, 2011
    - Mr. Cote MOVED, Mr. Shively SECONDED approval of the December 22, 2011 minutes.
- MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. CA-01-12 - 145 East Marion Avenue - Signage
  - Mr. Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner, displayed an overhead of the proposed, projecting signage, as delineated in the agenda material, noting same was intended for the Celtic Ray at the subject location. He provided a detailed review of the history of this two-story building, stating same was listed on the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) as having been constructed in 1925. He explained the request consisted of a projecting sign visible from East Marion Avenue in conjunction with existing façade signage, which ran counter to the provisions of Section 26-11.4(b)(6) of the City Code; therefore, at the applicant's request, the application had been reviewed by staff under the provisions of Section 26-11.11, Creative Signs. He concluded with staff's recommendation for approval as the proposed signage did not adversely impact the architectural or historic character of the structure or the Downtown Commercial Historic District.
  - Mr. Chalifoux called three times for anyone to speak on CA-01-12.
  - Mr. Cote MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED to close the public hearing. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- Mr. Murtha commented the owner had provided a tour of the building, stating the interior was sensational.
  - Mr. Chalifoux commended the owner for saving such an important structure, stating the sign was gorgeous.
  - Mr. Murtha MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED approval of CA-01-12. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- B. CA-02-12 – 111 West Marion Avenue – Signage
- Mr. Austin displayed an overhead of the proposed signage, as delineated in the agenda material, noting same was intended for HipNotique at the subject location. He stated the building was constructed circa 1952 and had formed part of the traditional “main street” of Punta Gorda, providing a brief review of the various uses of the building over a number of past years. He explained the proposed signage consisted of a suspended sign visible from West Marion Avenue as well as a projecting sign visible from the pedestrian alley connecting Herald Court to West Marion Avenue. He confirmed all proposed signage complied with City Code. He concluded with staff’s recommendation for approval as the proposed signage did not adversely impact the architectural or historic character of the structure or the Downtown Commercial Historic District.
  - Ms. Lyons questioned the type of business.
  - Mr. Austin replied it was a small clothing boutique.
  - Mr. Chalifoux called three times for anyone to speak on CA-02-12.
  - Mr. Cote MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED to close the public hearing. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
  - Ms. Lyons commented she believed the sign would be difficult to read from the street.
  - Mr. Chalifoux asked if this was the first hanging sign in the area.
  - Mr. Austin replied it was not; however, he noted it was most likely the first such sign reviewed by the Board.
  - Ms. Lyons spoke in favor of hanging signs.
  - Ms. Lisby MOVED, Ms. Lyons SECONDED approval of CA-02-12. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- C. CA-42-11 – 108 Gill Street (information only)
- Mr. Austin announced the applicant had proposed replacement of the existing, non-period, front door of the subject property, stating the home had been constructed circa 1900 and was listed as a contributing structure within the National Register Historic District (NRHD). He explained the replacement door had a period look with a transom

light. He concluded staff had approved CA-42-11 as there was no adverse impact on the structure's character or the NRHD.

- Mr. Chalifoux commented favorably on the home's appearance, particularly the transom and the number above same.

D. 221 Durrance Street

- Mr. Chalifoux announced he had requested this agenda item, explaining the owner of 221 Durrance Street, Mr. Brit Goulding, had approached him with regard to having the home placed on the Historic Register.
- Mr. Austin stated the structure was listed on the Historic Register as a contributing structure to the Punta Gorda NRHD. He explained addresses/buildings could be specifically listed in the Department of the Interior's National Register database; however, when referring to a district, only that district's identifier would appear on the database list. He clarified all structures listed as contributing were actually listed on the National Register but did not necessarily appear in the database. He cited verbiage from the State of Florida's web site as follows: "Though not seen on the roster, those properties are, indeed, listed in the National Register and enjoy the same recognition and benefits derived from individual listing."
- Ms. Lyons asked when the home was constructed.
- Mr. Chalifoux replied the owner believed it was built in the 1920s. He stated if the current owner's father had resided in the home, the chances of listing the structure as contributing by itself would be much higher due to his father's prominence in the history of Punta Gorda; however, that was not the case. He mentioned Mr. Rex Goulding, the property owner's brother, advised the family had resided in a home on Retta Esplanade. He asked if the Retta Esplanade home would qualify for listing as an individual structure if the owners so desired, acknowledging a very large addition had been constructed.
- Mr. Austin replied basically every property in the City which was currently listed was because of architecture. He noted a structure could be listed because of historic events or people; however, to his knowledge, none of the structures were listed in that manner. He clarified a great deal of documentation of past occurrences would be required. He pointed out even a vacant lot could be listed based on people or historical events associated with same.
- Mr. Chalifoux cited the Banyan Tree near the Best Western Hotel as an example, asking if same could be specifically listed if historic significance could be proven to be attributed to same.

- Mr. Austin replied it was possible, acknowledging the listing would actually be the site as opposed to the tree itself.
- Ms. Lisby interjected the City's archives included a copy of the 1926 declaration of Punta Gorda as the City of Hibiscus, stating a photograph of Mr. Harry Goulding's house was encompassed within same.
- Mr. Chalifoux asked if this Board was responsible to seek out property owners to have buildings listed or if the onus was on the owners themselves.
- Mr. Austin replied in light of Mr. Harry Goulding's national and international renown regarding hibiscus hybridization, it was likely there was some structure or site which should be listed; however, the problem was locating the necessary documentation.
- Mr. Chalifoux responded same was a worthwhile goal. He noted the biggest hurdle was getting current property owners to do so, acknowledging the additional restrictions placed on a property once it was listed.
- Mr. Austin opined a case could be made for a particular property associated with Mr. Harry Goulding to be able to reach the status of a National Register landmark; however, it would be impossible to do so without the property owner's enthusiastic support.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

##### A. Fund Raising Account Balance

- Mr. Chalifoux reported an account balance of \$370 as of this date, noting specific donations were delineated in the agenda material.

##### B. Historical Award Program

- Mr. Austin reported no applications had been submitted.
- Ms. Lyons commented she did not believe many people were aware of the program.
- Mr. Chalifoux advised he and Mr. Murtha met with Mr. Dennis Murphy, Growth Management Director, and confirmed applications and associated information were available to be downloaded from the City's web site.
- Ms. Lyons questioned the number of people who visited the City's web site.
- Mr. Chalifoux mentioned he had encouraged two individuals to apply.
- Mr. Murtha suggested a "message" be provided on the City's utility bills.
- Mr. Chalifoux concluded he would contact the Utilities Director regarding same.

##### C. Historical Society Update

- Ms. Lisby announced the following events: "Casino Night" – January 27, 2012; "Chili Cook-off" – February 12, 2012; "Historic Home Tour" – March 17 and 18, 2012. She advised the Punta Gorda Historical Society (PGHS) was seeking two more homes for the latter event, which would feature Durrance and Harvey Streets. She then announced

Ms. Sue Blackwell had been appointed to replace the outgoing PGHS president, Ms. Helen Wrobbel.

D. Punta Gorda History Center Update

- Mr. Murtha reported the City had approved the advisory group's use of the former Main Street Punta Gorda (MSPG) offices in City Hall, expressing appreciation of same. He stated the group's first budget projection had been compiled and sent out to all interested parties for comments and feedback. He explained their mission was essentially preservation of the various private collections throughout Punta Gorda. He confirmed Mr. Vernon Peoples had committed to turning over his private collection to the Punta Gorda History Center (PGHC). He announced formation of a fund raising committee, adding marketing was being handled by Mr. Ralph Allen.
- Mr. Chalifoux encouraged members' attendance at the PGHC meetings, noting their next meeting was scheduled for February 16, 2012, at 2:00 p.m., in the Laisley Park Marina Community Room.

E. Florida Master Site File Survey Update

- Mr. Austin reported work was ongoing, stating staff was essentially in "testing mode" following three full days in the field. He noted the database had been redone twice due to errors and discrepancies. He announced approximately 30 properties had been surveyed to date in the area of Ann and Grace Streets. He advised neighborhoods with different types of houses from various historic periods entailed more time, stating surveys of each structure averaged 15 to 20 minutes. He then commented on the Federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program through which stating Charlotte County had purchased a number of properties a few years earlier, one being a small single family home at 318 Fitzhugh Avenue. He continued the home, constructed circa 1948, was not particularly significant from an architectural standpoint; however, Mr. Berlin Bailey, a local historic figure, had resided in the home. He opined the home was most likely under threat of demolition as the County would not be able to utilize it for affordable housing in its current condition. He concluded he simply wished to keep the Board up to date.
- Ms. Beauford-Johnson clarified the home was currently vacant.
- Mr. Austin added it had been vacant for a number of years.
- Mr. Murtha confirmed there were currently no firm plans for demolition.
- Ms. Lyons asked if the City would consider trading another lot for the site.
- Mr. Austin replied same was a possibility.
- Mr. Chalifoux confirmed the home was located in the Trabue Woods Historic District; thus, any application for demolition would require review and approval by this Board.

- Ms. Lyons commented the home would be an ideal location for a museum.

#### **STAFF COMMENTS**

##### A. City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan – Historic Element

- Ms. Joan LeBeau, Chief Planner, provided members with copies of the first draft of the entire set of Goals, Objectives and Policies, as delineated in the agenda material, asking members to review same for discussion at the Board’s next meeting. She stated Ms. Laurie Coventry–Payne, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) Professor, had been assisting with compilation of data and information. She confirmed work had been ongoing steadily since September 2011 on the Historic Element.
- Mr. Chalifoux suggested mention be made of the various organizations working toward establishment of a history museum in the City.
- Ms. LeBeau replied she believed a policy existed which required the City to establish a repository, which would accomplish same. She stated she intended to provide members with another draft in approximately two weeks.
- Mr. Chalifoux suggested delaying issuance of the Board’s next agenda packet so as to allow inclusion of same.

#### **COMMITTEE/BOARD COMMENTS**

- Ms. Lyons commented on the FMSF survey, asking why each survey entailed 15 to 20 minutes as stated earlier.
- Mr. Austin replied the form required by the State for each structure was extremely detailed with approximately 115 items, confirming the survey form had been provided in the Board’s December 22, 2011, agenda material.
- Ms. Lyons requested a copy of same.
- Ms. Lisby then stated the PGHS had been conducting tours of the old Train Depot for the community’s middle school students, adding the children seemed to truly enjoy the “history lessons.”
- Mr. Chalifoux announced the City would be turning 125 years old on December 7, 2012, asking members to begin thinking of ideas for events and such in order to celebrate same. He then requested a discussion of 318 Fitzhugh Avenue be placed on the next joint meeting agenda. He noted the Board’s Election of Officers would be held at their next meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

- Meeting Adjourned: 9:19 a.m.

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John Chalifoux, Chairman

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Mary Kelly, Recording Secretary