

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING
FEBRUARY 26, 2009**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dawn MacGibbon, Chairman
Nancy Miller-Houck, Julia Moore, Christel Schmidt

MEMBERS ABSENT: Teresa Evan

OTHERS PRESENT: David Hilston, Urban Design Manager

CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Roll Call
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting - March 26, 2009
- C. Last Scheduled Meeting - January 22, 2009
- D. Election of Officers
 - Ms. MacGibbon asked if the Board wished to hold the Election of Officers at their next meeting when additional members would be present.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck MOVED, Ms. Moore SECONDED to continue Election of Officers to March 26, 2009.
- E. Recommendation of HPAB Representative for the Revitalization Committee
 - Ms. MacGibbon explained former member Mr. Larry Sandles had been the Board representative on the Revitalization Committee; however, a new representative must be appointed as Mr. Sandles was no longer a member, asking if anyone wished to volunteer.
 - Consensus of the Board was to delay a recommendation until their next meeting to allow time for another member to be appointed by City Council.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Meeting of January 22, 2009
 - Ms. Moore MOVED, Ms. Schmidt SECONDED approval of the January 22, 2009 minutes.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Certificates of Appropriateness (information only)
 - 1. CA-04-09 - 621 West Retta Esplanade - Alcove Enclosure
 - Mr. David Hilston, Urban Design Manager, displayed an overhead of the subject enclosure, providing a brief description of same.
 - Ms. MacGibbon commented the enclosure was barely visible from the road.

2. CA-05-09 - 626 Trabue Avenue - Fence
 - Mr. Hilston displayed an overhead depicting the subject fence, noting this request was approved administratively by staff. He explained the home was located on the corner of Chasteen Street and Trabue Avenue, adding the fence would run along the rear property line.
- B. Welcome Sign
 - Ms. MacGibbon confirmed Punta Gorda was not to be referred to as “Hibiscus City” but rather the “City of Hibiscus.”
 - Mr. Hilston displayed an overhead of a rendering of the proposed sign, as delineated in the agenda material, stating the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) requested the hibiscus seal be replaced with the City seal; however, the CRA further recommended the hibiscus seal be placed on each of the two pillars.
 - Ms. MacGibbon clarified “City of Hibiscus” on the sign’s arch would be replaced with “City of Punta Gorda” per the CRA’s current recommendation.
 - Mr. Hilston then noted a pineapple would be placed on top of each pillar, adding same would draw attention to the two hibiscus seals. He stated there was also discussion regarding location of the sign, which had originally been proposed to be on the side of U.S. 41 South in the area of the Freeman House; however, the CRA requested a change in location to the opposite side of the street in the area of the former museum on the corner of Retta Esplanade and U.S. 41 South. He concluded the CRA had directed staff to present the sign to this Board, the Revitalization Committee, Team Punta Gorda (TPG) and Main Street Punta Gorda (MSPG).
 - Ms. MacGibbon commented much had changed since she first spoke with Mr. Dennis Murphy, Growth Management Director, and City Manager Howard Kunik. She stated she had purchased a large, red enamel hibiscus sculpture and offered same to the City, stating she had understood the sculpture would be used as part of the entranceway sign. She continued the sign was to have stated “Welcome to the National Register Historic District & the City of Hibiscus.” She pointed out the sculpture sat in the office of Mr. Ron Thomas for approximately one year before she retrieved and mounted it on her own home. She questioned how the sign design had changed, further asking if the CRA was ever provided with the original proposal. She stated Mr. Murphy had informed her the CRA was not interested in the sculpture being used as part of the entranceway sign. She acknowledged pineapples were a sign of welcome and were a part of Punta Gorda’s history; however, she could not envision a location for the sculpture after reviewing the rendering of the sign.

- Ms. Miller-Houck commented favorably on the use of the City seal and the hibiscus seal being placed on the pillars.
- Ms. Schmidt expressed disapproval of the entire sign design, stating she felt there were an excessive amount of different materials, i.e., brick, stucco and metal. She suggested the sign be constructed of one material with the hibiscus seal instead of the City seal.
- Ms. Moore concurred.
- Ms. Miller-Houck expressed uncertainty with regard to the proposal for pineapples on top of the columns. She questioned the sign's size.
- Ms. MacGibbon replied 30 feet/6 inches wide and 25 to 27 feet high.
- Ms. Miller-Houck asked what would be placed under the arch.
- Mr. Hilston replied it was proposed to be located in front of and frame a large tree.
- Ms. MacGibbon suggested the Board first focus on a recommendation for the sign's location.
- Ms. Miller-Houck spoke in favor of placing the sign on the right side of the road heading south; however, she acknowledged that side of the road was somewhat busy with the Freeman House and Indian statue.
- Ms. MacGibbon advised she desired the sign to be that which was originally proposed as stated above.
- Discussion ensued with regard to what the Board felt was a drastic change from the original sign concept which welcomed people into the National Register Historic District.
- Ms. MacGibbon asked Mr. Hilston to research the chain of events starting from the original presentation of the sculpture to the City.
- Consensus of the Board was to revisit the original, conceptual design.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Historic Punta Gorda Neighborhood Meeting held on February 7, 2009 (Note: Minutes to be distributed at the March 26, 2009 meeting)
 - Ms. MacGibbon announced approximately 30 people attended, stating she felt the meeting was positive. She mentioned the Police Chief would be meeting with neighborhood residents on Saturday, February 28, 2009, at 10:30 a.m. in Gilchrist Park. She then reviewed some of the main discussion items as follows: lighting, paint, traffic calming, speed on Retta Esplanade, Marion Avenue and Olympia Avenue, brick crosswalks and streets, Wayfinding System, flood elevations.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck recalled a number of concerns relative to crime were expressed.

- Ms. MacGibbon opined a number of questions and concerns were addressed, adding people were made aware of which City Department and/or Division to go to for answers.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Punta Gorda Historical Society, Inc.

- Ms. MacGibbon announced Ms. Nancy Lisby had submitted an application to serve on this Board, commenting favorably on same. She noted the Historical Society's recent Chili Cook-off had been a true success, adding a Southern Dinner event would be held in the near future.

B. Punta Gorda CRA Status Report

- Ms. MacGibbon confirmed members had received the most recent CRA Project Status Report. She questioned whether the interactive fountain was complete.
- Mr. Hilston replied construction was almost complete.

C. Bylaws

- Ms. MacGibbon noted City Council had not adopted the Board's recommendation to amend their bylaws to expand membership to property owners in the historic district but rather voted to continue to limit same to residents only.
- Ms. Schmidt mentioned she understood several members of other advisory boards and committees were not in favor of City Council's new absence policy in which a member forfeited his or her seat automatically after three absences.

STAFF COMMENTS

- Ms. Miller-Houck commented on the parking garage currently under construction, requesting clarification of the central area within same.
- Mr. Hilston explained that area was a platted alleyway, stating the plan was to make the area pedestrian friendly as part of the City's overall downtown pedestrian system

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting Adjourned: 9:13 a.m.

Dawn MacGibbon, Chairman

Mary Kelly, Recording Secretary