

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING
APRIL 23, 2009**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Miller-Houck, Acting Chairman
Nancy Lisby, Julia Moore, Christel Schmidt

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dawn MacGibbon

OTHERS PRESENT: Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner

CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Roll Call
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting - May 28, 2009
- C. Last Scheduled Meeting - March 26, 2009

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Meeting of March 26, 2009
 - Ms. Schmidt noted a correction to page 6.
 - Ms. Lisby MOVED, Ms. Moore SECONDED approval of the March 26, 2009 minutes as amended. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Certificates of Appropriateness
 - 1. Information Only
 - a. CA-09-09 - 607 Trabue Avenue - Solar Electric & Heating System
 - b. CA-10-09 - 635 West Marion Avenue - Fence
 - Mr. Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Planner, stated CA-10-09 was for a patio addition and fencing in the rear and side yards. He continued CA-09-09 was for solar electric and water heating, adding all equipment was located on the rear face of the structure; thus, there would be no impact on the historic character of the neighborhood.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck commented favorably on the appearance of 607 Trabue Avenue. She asked if this type of system would help with mold.
 - Mr. Austin replied solar cells absorbed energy; thus, there was less heat getting to the structure. He clarified humidity within the structure would probably increase.
 - Ms. Miller-Houck asked if the Board needed to take any action to allow solar systems in the Historic District.
 - Mr. Austin replied requests would be reviewed as new construction on a case by case basis, adding some sites would be an issue due to a structure's orientation. He requested the Board give some thought to this matter, specifically there may be a need

for alternative configurations to avoid placement on the street façade of historic structures.

OLD BUSINESS

- Ms. Miller-Houck commented on the parking garage, confirming shops were planned for the ground floor. She opined the structure would be aesthetically pleasing.
- Mr. Austin agreed, stating approximately 17,000 square feet of retail space would be available as well as public restrooms and over 300 parking spaces. He mentioned locations had been identified where murals would be appropriate when the structure was finished. He offered to provide members with more specific information at their next meeting.
- Ms. Schmidt confirmed the color scheme had been selected.
- Mr. Austin responded colors were chosen through a lengthy staff/community input process, primarily involving Team Punta Gorda (TPG) and Main Street Punta Gorda (MSPG). He stated he believed there were five paint colors, two awning colors and two metal accessory colors.
- Ms. Schmidt suggested the color be the same as the Courthouse in order to tie the various elements of the entire block together.
- Mr. Austin responded he believed the trim and body colors were “respectful” of the look of the Courthouse.
- Ms. Miller-Houck questioned the status of public parking on the City Marketplace property.
- Mr. Austin expressed uncertainty regarding same.
- Ms. Lisby then stated the Board had asked staff to look into the possibility of stimulus funding for the Wayfinding System.
- Mr. Austin replied he had not yet received a response from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) regarding same. He explained FDOT was waiting to hear whether or not the Federal Highway Administration would approve the signage, noting it had been at least verbally confirmed.
- Ms. Lisby asked if a non-profit group would be allowed to have something identified along U.S. 41 as part of the Wayfinding System.
- Mr. Austin replied affirmatively, stating same would be addressed in the final design process. He reminded members Phase I signage would be placed in the core area of downtown, specifically nothing east of Nesbit Street, west of City Hall and south of Charlotte Avenue.
- Ms. Lisby asked if Train Depot signage should be addressed separately or as part of the Wayfinding System.

- Mr. Austin replied separately, particularly at this point in time.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Punta Gorda Historical Society, Inc.

- Ms. Lisby announced the Charlotte County Historic Courthouse architect won a Florida Trust award which would be presented on May 15, 2009, at 6:00 p.m., at the First Presbyterian Church in West Palm Beach followed immediately by a reception. She expressed uncertainty with regard to whether any type of ceremony was planned locally.
- Ms. Miller-Houck stated she believed Charlotte County was planning some type of ceremony.
- Ms. Schmidt requested members be advised of the particulars of same when available.
- Mr. Austin mentioned he understood Charlotte County was considering establishing museum quality displays of local history within the public spaces of the Courthouse.
- Ms. Lisby mentioned efforts were underway to retrieve all of the pictures originally hung in the Courthouse; however, Charlotte County had not yet agreed to relinquish same. She pointed out hanging methods were available which would prohibit theft.
- Ms. Schmidt asked if there was still a connection between this Board and the County's historic board.
- Mr. Austin replied the formal connection, resulting in twice yearly joint meetings, had fallen off somewhat, stating he believed same was partially due to budget cuts at the County level.

B. Punta Gorda Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Status Report

- Mr. Austin announced the parking garage was progressing as was the play area around the interactive fountain in Laishley Park.

C. Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update

- Mr. Austin directed members to the following link to the City's web page:
www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/departments/commdevelopment/Rec&OpenSpaceMastPlan.htm)
He displayed a portion of the document as it appeared on the City's web site, stating a vision, mission statement, values and goals had been drafted. He noted a map of the City's parks had been developed along with a matrix of amenities available at each location. He mentioned a number of the City's parks were largely undeveloped. He encouraged the community's feedback during this plan development period
- Ms. Miller-Houck asked members to review the draft Master Plan and be prepared to discuss same at the Board's next meeting.
- Ms. Lisby asked if Hector House Plaza was considered a park.

- Mr. Austin replied affirmatively, noting same was included on the above mentioned map.
- Ms. Lisby noted the site was heavily used.
- Mr. Austin agreed, acknowledging the St. Augustine grass did not withstand heavy traffic very well.
- Ms. Schmidt asked if the map was interactive.
- Mr. Austin replied it was not; however, he agreed that was an excellent idea. He noted the Master Plan would include City parks, points of interest, historical points and greenways.
- Ms. Lisby mentioned the City was also working on “rails to trails,” which encompassed the Train Depot.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Ms. Lisby commented a misperception seemed to exist throughout the community where many people believed the Punta Gorda Historical Society was responsible for allowing home construction in the Historic District. She asked Mr. Austin to take whatever steps were necessary to correct this misperception, specifically construction permits were obtained through the Building Division.
- Mr. Austin responded he would advise the Assistant City Manager of same as she was responsible for publication of the City’s newsletter. He suggested perhaps a Board member could write that article.
- Ms. Schmidt then noted the agenda material did not include any back-up on Certificates of Appropriateness.
- Mr. Austin explained the back-up material was no longer being provided as a cost saving measure; however, members could always obtain same through the Urban Design Division.
- Ms. Schmidt asked if the Board had ever been presented with the color scheme of the parking garage.
- Mr. Austin replied they were not, stating staff had been directed to provide same to TPG’s architectural committee and MSPG’s design committee.
- Ms. Schmidt noted the parking garage was reviewed by the Planning Commission. She opined the Board should have been given an opportunity to review the color scheme of the parking garage. She requested a discussion at the next meeting of the Board’s desire to be made privy to City issues which were being referred to TPG and MSPG.
- Ms. Miller-Houck agreed, noting the downtown area was a historic district. She acknowledged members must be more proactive as well.

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting Adjourned: 9:31 a.m.

Nancy Miller-Houck, Acting Chairman

Mary Kelly, Recording Secretary