



## ***REVITALIZATION AND REDEVELOPMENT AD-HOC COMMITTEE***

The meeting of the Miami Springs Revitalization and Redevelopment Ad-Hoc Committee was held on Monday, March 21, 2011 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

### **1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Present were:           Laz Martinez  
                                  Arturo Rabade  
                                  Wade Smith  
                                  Todd Stiff  
                                  Joe Valencia (\*arrived at 7:19 p.m.)

Also Present:           City Manager James R. Borgmann  
                                  Assistant City Manager Ronald K. Gorland  
                                  City Planner Richard E. Ventura  
                                  Deputy City Clerk Suzanne S. Hitaffer

### **2. Approval of Minutes: February 21, 2011 Meeting**

The minutes of February 21, 2011 were approved as amended.

**Committee member Smith moved to approve and Vice Chair Stiff seconded the motion.**

City Planner Ventura clarified that the minutes reflected his comments, but he would like to add that the third work order for Calvin, Giordano and Associates will be a traffic assessment of Westward Drive between the Circle and the Library.

**The motion carried 4-0 on voice vote.**

### **3. Discussion Regarding the Draft Ordinance for the N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street District Boundary Regulations**

Chair Martinez explained that the Vice Chair had requested this agenda item for review of the changes that were made by Council at the Special Meeting of March 9, 2011.

Committee member Smith noted that a correction is needed in box two of the Development Review Procedure chart since it repeats City Staff. He said that Council made minor changes and it looks like the ordinance will be adopted at the March 28<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. He recommended that all Committee members should attend the meeting to show support.

\* Joe Valencia arrived at this time.

At the request of Chair Martinez, City Manager Borgmann reported on the meeting and tour of the City facilities, the Golf Course, the Abraham Tract and N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street with the Beacon Council. He explained that the focus of the Beacon Council is on bringing businesses to South Florida, especially Miami-Dade and now they know that Miami Springs is a great place to reside and they were very impressed.

Chair Martinez mentioned that later in the process after the Abraham Tract district boundary regulations are in place it would be a good idea to hold a developer's conference to advise larger scale developers of the changes that were made. He said that the Beacon Council is the second step in the process after first getting some projects on site.

City Manager Borgmann agreed that a developer's conference is a good idea and worth Council's consideration.

Discussion ensued regarding a large tract on N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street that is for sale and potential development into a much larger use.

Vice Chair Stiff stated that under the right conditions the City might give up a street that is only a block or two long, but the water and sewer does not belong to City now and the developer would have to relocate those lines.

City Manager Borgmann added that the developer would have to move the lines as well as construct a lift station and upgrade the fire flow standards.

Committee member Smith noted that he placed a call to Florida Power and Light because there is a power station that is accessible through a fence off of Oakwood Drive and it is a security risk.

The City Manager offered to check with the City's contact at Florida Power and Light.

Chair Martinez asked if there were any comments regarding 36<sup>th</sup> Street that could be presented to Council for the second reading of the ordinance.

Vice Chair Stiff asked if property tax assessments were based on the current use of the property or highest and best use. He recalled that it was a ballot issue within the last six to eight years to dictate that property would be assessed at its highest and best use.

Chair Martinez informed the Committee members that the work order was approved for the Abraham Tract and the proposed recommendations will be another area for review. He felt that it is a natural course to suggest that Council consider another work order for the Golf District.

Committee member Valencia pointed out that the build-to-line in the proposed ordinance is a good idea for N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street because it will define the street and create a uniform facade. He felt that some of the bonus incentives could be greater because they would provide for better street conditions, while there are others in question because they do not translate to a better looking functioning urban condition.

Mr. Valencia felt that the pedestrian amenities bonus on page 15 could be increased from .25 to .50 and in order to encourage more hotel rooms the bonus of .01 per hotel room could be higher. He added that the bonus for landscape maturity could be more than .25 to encourage better trees. He noted that there is not a lot of room for landscape improvements in the right-of-way and perhaps there could be a credit for planting mature trees next to the sidewalks.

City Manager Borgmann explained that in order to receive credits the developer must provide elements from each one of first four design categories and the fifth is a bonus for green buildings. The developer will present their plan for review by Staff, advisory boards and Council followed by negotiations for various incentives.

Committee member Valencia stated that N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> street will never be pedestrian friendly and if the intent is to create more pedestrian traffic it would have to be on the back side adjacent to the residential neighborhoods. He added that he supports the design bonus for green buildings, but it is heavily weighed because it does not necessarily translate to a good urban street. The intent is good since it will save energy, but normally the improvements are related to electrical and mechanical systems and all buildings should be green.

Mr. Valencia thought that another credit could be included for a compact automated parking garage that takes up less land and street frontage and it would create a better street façade. He said that the definitions for the Streamline Moderne architectural style should be tighter and better defined because the description is confusing. He understands that visual brochures will be given to developers and feels that the proposed ordinance is a good document, but the definition could be tighter.

Councilman Espino acknowledged Mr. Valencia's comment about the vision for N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street and felt that it was very important. He said that the vision was addressed by Council when considering the permitted uses. Calvin, Giordano had included restaurants and retail stores in the permitted uses and it was decided that those uses should be incorporated with larger uses in order to encourage higher density.

Councilman Espino felt Mr. Valencia's recommendations were good; he will bring them to Council for consideration. He added that the natural progression in the Golf District will be weighted more heavily because of the scale in that area.

Chair Martinez agreed that Mr. Valencia brought up good points about the pedestrian amenities, but was not sure if there is time to incorporate changes. He said that there would have to be a requirement that abutting residential would require a walkway or bike path behind the buildings because N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street is a dangerous street for pedestrian traffic.

Committee member Rabade mentioned that Lincoln Road was closed to make it a pedestrian walkway and perhaps something similar on a smaller scale could be done in the back of buildings away from the traffic on 36<sup>th</sup> Street.

Councilman Espino advised the Committee that he did not want multi-family on N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street even if the Charter allowed it because it would be counterproductive to the intent for higher density. Multi-family would be allowed toward the rear of the properties and it could facilitate a pedestrian walkway or bike path.

Vice Chair Stiff noted that mixed-use development of residential uses up to 20 dwelling units per acre must be built on the northern half of the property if the property is adjacent to N.W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street, as outlined in (B) (1) (i).

Vice Chair Stiff asked how the Revitalization Specialist would be contracted by City and what prevents them from being contracted by a developer at the same time.

Councilman Espino explained that the Professional Revitalization Consultant only referred to the Consultants and it was changed to Revitalization Specialist and that is an agent of the City that handles this topic. Currently it is Calvin, Giordano and they are paid by individual work orders according to a contract for those services. He cannot say whether or not this precludes them from being contracted by a developer.

City Manager Borgmann stated that there will be an ordinance presented for first reading at the March 28<sup>th</sup> meeting in regard to the Revitalization Specialist. The definition of the position will be placed in the Code.

Vice Chair Stiff expressed his concern that the consultant should not work for two masters.

Councilman Espino assured Mr. Stiff that it would have to be addressed if it were to come up, although he does not see the Revitalization Specialist proceeding in that manner. He explained the development review procedure includes City Staff and Calvin, Giordano in the informational session and mandatory preliminary review. The Architectural Review Board is also involved and their recommendations are sent to Council for consideration. He added that there are check points within the process and it might take one or two projects to completely work it out.

City Manager Borgmann explained that the ordinance will be a work in progress and it can be amended if needed. He said that the first projects should give the developers the understanding that the City wants them to succeed without any obstacles.

Committee member Smith commented that many of the existing building owners should be more concerned about the appearance of their properties.

Committee member Rabade referred to pages 8 and 22 under the site planning section. He noted that item five in section (A) states that all utilities should be placed underground. He asked if this relates to proposed development or existing buildings because it states "all utilities."

Vice Chair Stiff explained that it is a subsection that relates to site plan development.

City Manager Borgmann explained that existing utilities would stay and new development would be underground.

Discussion ensued regarding the inadequate fire flow on N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street that would have to be improved by the County before development takes place.

Committee member Valencia suggested that the district boundary regulations for N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street could be tested by giving the document to either Florida International University or the University of Miami. Most schools are looking for real projects and they might be willing to take on the design exercise.

Chair Martínez agreed with Mr. Valencia that using the universities would be a great tool and it could help to find any flaws in the Code.

**Vice Chair Stiff moved to recommend that Council approve the district boundary regulation ordinance for N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street. The motion was seconded by Committee member Smith.**

Chair Martínez asked about the comments made by Mr. Valencia.

Vice Chair Stiff explained that all the comments would be on the record and Councilman Espino is taking notes. The ordinance can always be changed by the next Council as they see fit. He likes the idea of checking with the universities to see if they want to consider the new regulations as part of a classroom exercise, but it should not bog down the process.

Committee Member Valencia said that his intent was not to bog down the process; they were only suggestions.

Chair Martínez said that he is fine with passing the ordinance the way it is and he is all for giving Council a vote of confidence.

Committee member Valencia reiterated that he was only presenting his comments; he is not suggesting that any changes should be made.

Committee member Smith commented that it was clear during the meeting discussions that the bonus points are flexible; they are only a starting point.

**The motion was unanimously carried on roll call vote.**

#### **4. Discussion Regarding the Use of Citizen's Independent Transportation Trust (CITT) Funds**

Chair Martinez stated that the goal is to make improvements with as little money as possible and the Citizen Independent Transportation Trust (CITT) funds are one source of funding tied to the transportation process that does not reduce the budget. The Committee wants to be informed about the process so that the funds can be used to make an impact and the City Planner was asked for more information on the possible uses for the funds.

City Manager Borgmann explained that the Committee received a copy of a memorandum from 2008 listing what projects would qualify for CITT funding. Staff always notifies the CITT Staff to let them know that the City is considering a specific project so that they can respond as to whether or not it is an allowable expense. On two occasions, the City sent a proposal for a surface parking lot, including bus stop locations, and they came back with a negative response; they would only fund a small percentage of the project. He said that if the City was able to abandon Nakhoda Drive to the alley it could double the size of the area for a parking development with retail on the bottom floor.

Chair Martinez mentioned an example of a multi-use facility that was constructed with private funds with a penthouse on the top floor that generates revenue. He wondered if the City could take advantage of a facility that allows parking and also generates revenue.

Chair Martinez asked if any thought had been given to parking signage since there is some confusion as to the location of municipal parking.

City Manager Borgmann responded that signage is included as part of the revitalization process. The Architectural Review Board presented plans that Council has approved for directional signage and it was temporarily put aside because of the focus on N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street. He clarified that the signage would qualify for CITT funding.

Committee member Valencia said that another consideration is the completion of the connector to Downtown Miami at the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC). He explained that there is a bus that takes people from Miami Springs directly to the airport and it would be beneficial to be able to park in Miami Springs, take the bus to the terminal and connect with the train that goes Downtown.

The City Manager reported that the new bus by location was moved from Canal Street to Nakhoda Drive utilizing CITT funds.

To answer Chair Martinez's question, City Manager Borgmann explained that CITT funds are received on a regular basis. The City is required to show that the funds are budgeted. He explained the situation with the fund allocation to the three new cities. The latest proposal from the County would benefit the small cities like Miami Springs as opposed to the larger cities.

Chair Martinez commented that there are many transportation changes happening and he wants to make sure the City benefits from the CITT funds.

City Manager Borgmann explained that the City is required to spend 80% of the CITT funds on transportation improvements and 20% on transit (shuttle). Every City had to provide a budget number for these types of projects when the program was implemented and this is called the maintenance of effort. The new proposal from the County is to reduce transit to 10% and eliminate the maintenance of effort requirement.

Chair Martinez asked if there were any projects beyond signage and parking that relates to CITT funds.

The City Manager explained that major road resurfacing had taken place over the last ten years and eventually the roads will have to be milled and that would involve significant dollars. He encouraged the Committee members to bring forth their ideas for CITT projects and he would check to see if they qualify.

Committee member Smith referred to the Architectural Review Board's recommendation for signage. He suggested that some type of intermediate signs might be considered for identifying parking locations as there are many lots that are not used.

Chair Martinez stated that the signage recommended by the Architectural Review Board was presented before the Consultants were hired. The Consultants expressed their concern because the signage did not have a theme or branding as it relates to revitalization.

Councilman Espino explained that a vision for Westward Drive had not been addressed. He said that Calvin, Giordano was advised that the City had already approved a logo and slogan, as well as some of the work from the Architectural Review Board. There was some discussion about implementing the signage adopted by the Architectural Review Board and the Consultants mentioned that there could be technical requirements that needed evaluation. There was consensus that Calvin, Giordano should review the technical situation, including the lighting design to make sure they are in sync.

## **5. Discussion Regarding a Short-term Plan for Code Enforcement Related to Property Maintenance**

Chair Martinez stated that there are short term ideas for improving properties. He presented a slide show with photographs of several existing buildings in the City that are in need of maintenance. His main idea was to show that many buildings could benefit from re-painting and then he noticed that many situations are related to enforcement and safety issues.

Discussion ensued regarding the various properties as the photographs were presented.

Chair Martinez explained that code enforcement is one way to improve the properties that would not impact the budget. He added that the poor condition of the Downtown is not appealing to new businesses and it is not fair to those property owners that maintain their buildings.

Chair Martinez stated that the intent is not to put undue stress on property owners and the Chamber has a partnership with Lowe's for paint. He emphasized that a color palette should be approved and that Code Compliance can have a positive effect on improving the commercial properties.

Chair Martinez said that he would like the Committee to make a recommendation to Council to help the City Staff enforce the rules for commercial properties from a paint and aesthetic perspective.

City Manager Borgmann understood that the Lowe's painting project is dead and as part of that project the City was going to send Code Compliance Staff with the Chamber representatives as they visited each building and presented a complimentary code compliance check list. He informed the Committee members that Council did not want to be heavy handed on the businesses and he agreed that all properties that were shown in the slide show could be given violation notices. In addition, the Code Compliance staff was reduced from four to two people.

The City Manager and Assistant City Manager continued to explain the history of code enforcement in the City and the current situation in the Code Compliance Office.

Committee member Smith expressed his concern about enforcing the Code of Ordinances.

Chair Martinez would like to encourage Council to provide the staff to take care of violations.

Councilman Espino said that most people who complain to him do not take their complaints to City Hall. There was a consensus at the Candidate's Forum that these types of problems must be taken care of on Westward Drive. He felt that the majority of the community is noticing the problem and the Ad-Hoc Committee should express their concerns to Council.

Committee member Smith suggested presenting the slides to Council after the election and explain to them that the Committee was charged with being a "sounding" board for commercial revitalization improvements.

Committee member Valencia commented that after seeing the photographs he agrees that the condition of the buildings is a very sad situation and it does not reflect the type of town in which he purchased property and is raising his kids.

Chair Martinez added that some of the business owners had complained about the condition of the buildings. He said that someone who owns a commercial property should be responsible and the City is sending the wrong message by not enforcing the Code. Chair Martinez agreed that code enforcement is a staffing and philosophical issue.

City Manager Borgmann reiterated that the Administration had been advised by Council not to be harsh on the businesses.

Assistant City Manager Gorland agreed that Code Compliance needs the support and the manpower, but there are limitations as to what can be enforced. He added that because the City does not have an approved color palette the property owners could paint their buildings an offensive color. There have been situations when owners were fined on a daily basis for non-compliance, liens were placed on the properties and the owners do not care.

City Manager Borgmann explained that fines had accumulated, liens were placed on the properties and when the owners complained about the fines to the Code Enforcement Board the fines were reduced so that the properties could be sold.

Committee member Valencia commented that some municipalities will paint the buildings and place a lien on the property.

Further discussion ensued regarding the history of Code Enforcement in the City.

Councilman Espino stated that if he is re-elected he will address the shutter moratorium, color palette, window front coverings, code compliance for signage, paint, mildew, structural, code compliance staff, and unilateral, remedial action after violations have gone unnoticed.

Chair Martinez offered to give the Administration the CD of the slide show presentation so that it can be shown to Council. He is glad that he decided to take the pictures because it really brings the problem to light.

Committee member Smith stated that he would like the Ad-Hoc Committee members to be present at the Council meeting when the slide show is presented so that they can offer their support for the effort.

City Planner Ventura informed the Committee members that Work Order # 2 for Calvin, Giordano and Associates includes the color palette.

Further discussion ensued regarding possible solutions to the code enforcement problem in the City.

Vice Chair Stiff recommended waiting for the approved color palette before the property owners are cited.

Chair Martinez emphasized that everything possible should be done to expedite an approved color palette.

City Manager Borgmann explained that the University of Miami worked on a redesign of the storefronts on Westward Drive that included various colors but the color palette cannot be found.

**Committee member Smith moved to encourage Council to give Code Compliance the manpower to enforce improvement of the condition of the buildings throughout the City that are in existence at this time, limited to the commercial properties, and give Code Compliance the ability to enforce the codes as they stand. The motion was seconded by Committee member Rabade and it was carried unanimously on voice vote.**

Assistant City Manager Gorland explained that the Codes are very antiquated.

City Manager Borgmann stated that the City has a Code Review Board that receives assignments from Council.

Councilman Espino added that the City Attorney had previously recommended the assistance from an expert if the task is to rewrite the entire Code of Ordinances.

Chair Martinez asked the Committee members to set the agenda for the next meeting. He would personally like to discuss the Golf District that is a controversial area surrounding the Golf Course. There is more residential in this area, there are density issues and a gateway component on Curtiss Parkway. He would hope to have more public participation and recommends that Council issue the next work order to the consultants for this district.

Chair Martinez explained that it would work to the Committee's advantage for the members to conduct research and receive community feedback prior to the work of the consultants.

City Planner Ventura clarified that the boundaries of the Airport Golf District are Curtiss Parkway, Fairway Drive and Deer Run.

Chair Martinez stated that the Committee could also discuss the Abraham Tract even though it has work order status. He is still amazed that many people are not aware that this area is part of Miami Springs.

Vice Chair Stiff clarified that the FAR for the Golf District is limited to 1.0. He asked the City Planner if any of the existing buildings in the district are more than 1.0 FAR.

City Planner Ventura stated that the 1.0 FAR had been in existence since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in December 1998. He does not believe there are any buildings more than two stories in height.

Vice Chair Stiff said that there is a four-story condominium behind the church. He would like the City Planner to compile statistics for the Airport Inn across from Burger King, including the size of the property, the FAR, etc. in order to provide a frame of reference.

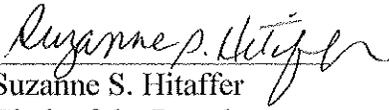
Chair Martinez announced that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Martinez also asked the City Planner to look into the options for incorporating a gateway on Curtiss Parkway because Virginia Gardens is on one side of the street. He wondered if the gateway would have to be located at the point where Miami Springs is on both sides of the street.

**6. Adjourn**

**Committee member Smith moved to adjourn. Committee member seconded the motion, which carried unanimously on voice vote.**

The meeting was duly adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

  
Suzanne S. Hitaffer  
Clerk of the Board

Approved as amended on 04-18-2011:

Page 3, paragraph 3 and 6

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***“The comments, discussions, recommendations and proposed actions of City Citizen Advisory Boards do not constitute the policy, position, or prospective action of the City, which may only be established and authorized by an appropriate vote or other action of the City Council”.***  
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