

1.1 Roll Call and Review April 8th Meeting Minutes: The meeting was called to order by Adrienne Burke at 3:35pm.

Members present: Steve Rieck, Jose Miranda, Robin Lentz, Jon Lasserre (Planning Advisory Board), Phil Griffin, Mark Bennett (Planning Advisory Board), Melinda Luedtke, Adrienne Burke (CDD Director), and Kelly Gibson (Senior Planner)

There was a brief review of the Minutes from the last meeting.

1.2 Review Initial 8th Street Survey Results: Ms. Burke reported that she had the 8th Street general public survey up on Survey Monkey and the other ones are done, but have not been mailed yet. She stated that there have been 116 responses and reviewed the comments with the Working Group. She explained that the top six responses were more landscaping, theme revision to guide redevelopment, enhanced lighting, fewer big trucks, bike friendly options, and revised sign policies. From the preliminary results of the survey people want to see some kind of cohesive theme that is welcoming and inviting. There was some discussion about various ways to get information out that the survey was available online. There was a brief explanation that there are some people in the community working on the scenic highway designation and creating a loop so people will go down Centre Street. The Working Group also had some discussion about the high cost of putting utilities underground and that hardened poles were being put up instead. The goal of the survey would be to get feedback on things that can be turned into policies for redevelopment.

Ms. Burke briefly explained the idea of a rehabilitation incentive where a property's ad valorem taxes are frozen at the pre-improvement value for 10 years. She stated that there are two types of preservation tax incentives authorized by the State (one for commercial – 50% ad valorem tax exemption and the other is residential and commercial – rehabilitation based). The online survey would stay open and the other surveys would be mailed out. There was a review of the information about the challenges on 8th Street as seen by an architect, an economic development professional, an engineer, and a commercial real estate professional.

1.3 Determine Next Steps for 8th Street Fact-finding: It was suggested to take the responses from the survey and create a picture of what 8th Street is now, what it could look like, and the kind of things that could help it get there. A member suggested that this could draft an overlay district that could be expanded to add 9th Street and 7th Street where appropriate. The group also had some discussion about the Main Street program, which hasn't been fully supported from within the City administration because of staffing. The Main Street program is focused on economic revitalization of distressed commercial corridors, but it requires a full-time staff person. It was pointed out that there are private foundation grant funds that could help with staffing and the group brainstormed about other possible funding opportunities. Main Street information would be emailed to members of the group.

The group discussed MU-1 zoning and the idea of creating another zoning or overlay for 8th Street. It was noted that the setbacks were a concern when the MU-1 zoning was created. Mr. Bennett pointed out that back then there was discussion about architectural review as a means of cleaning up 8th Street, but that didn't go over well. Ms. Burke commented that it could be accomplished with an overlay without having a separate step of review. She clarified that the design parameters would be in the code. It was noted that some items are required under the Building Code, which comes from the State and the Building Official cannot override these State requirements. There was some discussion about the Building Code.

Mr. Griffin offered to write the first viewpoint to get information out to the community about the existing problems and other members would take turns to write viewpoints in the future to help educate the community. It was noted that this would be a proactive step to get the information out about what can be done, obstacles to getting things done, code requirements, etc. There was some discussion about this and other points brought up during this meeting.

The group had some discussion about the idea of taking a property and staging it to show what you can do. It was noted that if you can get a property to improve it can jump start other neighbors to improve their property. There was some discussion about reuse of buildings and the idea of having C-3 zoning along 8th Street.

1.4 Discuss Steps for Information Gathering Regarding Remaining Commercial Corridors: Ms. Burke reminded the group that the goal was to wrap this group up by the end of the year, but the City wants to work on other corridors. She questioned whether to do surveys with the other corridors and if the other corridors should be done concurrently. Ms. Gibson commented that the first part is fact finding and then process the changes from it, which is really more the staff side of things so the group could move onto the next corridor. Mr. Miranda noted that the group would move from one to another.

Ms. Luedtke referred to Mr. Peter Smith's comments about the Scenic Highway and explained that he talked about the importance of making Fletcher look better and slowing the traffic down. She commented that you could think of policies that might make that whole roadway look nice. There was some discussion about other corridors of Sadler and 14th Street, which were both County roads. It was pointed out that the Amelia Island Parkway is also an important corridor.

The consensus of the group is to focus on 8th Street for the time being and before the next meeting Ms. Burke would provide some information about the Main Street program. It was noted that the survey would continue to be available online and the mailed ones would go out to property owners and businesses. There was a review of maps that were available to the group.

1.5 Determine Next Meeting Date: The next meeting would be Tuesday, June 10th at 3:30pm.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to discuss by the working group the meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.