

M I N U T E S

ORMOND BEACH DOWNTOWN STEERING COMMITTEE

Kickoff Meeting

March 28, 2019

6:00 PM

Anderson-Price Building

42 North Beach Street
Ormond Beach, Florida

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. MEMBERS PRESENT

Committee Members

Dorian Burt
Debbie Cotton
Ronald DeFilippo
Frank Ganz
Bonda Garrison
Lewis Heaster
Ryck Hundredmark
Charles Lichtigman
Nancy Lohman
Jason Morgan
Ellen Needham
Susan Persis
Ashley Rose
Lori Tolland
Thomas MacDonald (excused)
Katie Tripp (excused)

Staff

Steven Spraker, Planning Director
Becky Weedo, Senior Planner
Brian Rademacher, Economic Development Director
Julia Truilo, Ormond MainStreet Executive Director
Melanie Nagel, Recording Technician

Consultants

Peter Sechler, GAI Consultants
Molly Stahl, GAI Consultants

III. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Steven Spraker, Planning Director, welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of the purpose of the committee. Mr. Spraker thanked the Ormond Historical Society for hosting the Steering Committee at the Anderson-Price building. Mr. Spraker then turned the meeting over to Mr. Peter Sechler with GAI Consultants.

Mr. Sechler stated the following information:

- He was part of the original 2006 update, and he thinks the purpose of this effort is to refresh the plans. Many things have been accomplished, but criteria has changed. There are now different challenges and opportunities.
- Within communities, people have specific interests or initiatives, and their job is to look for balance and try to get things in alignment, around the core issues that this committee decides are of particular importance relative to the CRA.

- When they work with a community, they get a lot of input, and it tends to be really varied. They try to listen to all of the input, and they try to characterize it into some major, guiding topical issues which are generally of common importance. There may be 200 points of input, but they need to circle around 5 or 6 key issues of common importance, from which the approach or philosophy can be developed.
- If there is general agreement on the themes and things that are important, and generally how you want to approach those things, then the individual elements that happen from one year to the next don't matter so much.
- There are six major land uses: (1) places where you live, (2) places where you shop or work, (3) commercial places, (4) civic/institutional buildings, (5) parks and the natural environment, and (6) how people get around, whether by car, on foot, by bike, by bus. We have to think about how things are arranged in the community.
- It is a very complicated set of dynamics, but some very basic parts that we have to work with. We try to gauge where people's minds are, what the economic possibilities are, what some of the physical options are, or some physical challenges that we try to solve.
- In 2006 the committee worked on several themes and ideas, which led to a set of frameworks for actions that we would take. In looking at the three distinct districts within the CRA, they are all laid out in very different physical patterns. We will deal with some common guiding ideas, with some targeted solutions.

Mr. Spraker asked all of the committee members to introduce themselves, and tell what city board they are a part of, or what their place of business is in the downtown district. Following introductions, Mr. Spraker reviewed the Sunshine Laws with the committee.

IV. CITY REVIEW OF CRA

Mr. Spraker referenced the review of progress since the adopted 2006/2007 Downtown Master plan update report. Mr. Spraker provided a summary of the report as follows:

- The Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) boundaries are from the Ocean to Orchard Street, and about 300 feet of either side of Granada Boulevard.
- The CRA uses a funding mechanism called tax increment financing generated by property taxes within the district after the CRA is formed.
- The Ormond Beach CRA was established in 1985 and is scheduled to end in 2036. There is no current debt within the CRA and no staff are paid from CRA funds.
- The 2006/2007 master plan established three districts in the CRA: (1) Ocean, (2) River, and (3) Creek District.
- The themes and vision of the 2006/2007 Master Plan adoption has been implemented in four general areas: (1) capital projects within the CRA, (2) simulation of redevelopment on private property, (3) partnership with Ormond MainStreet, and (4) legislative changes to implement the master plan.
- Detailed constructed capital projects such as landscape medians and underground utilities on Granada Boulevard, stormwater improvements, way-finding, Rockefeller

Gardens, Vining Court streetscape, public art, Thompson Creek improvements and the Cassen Park improvements.

- Detailed the downtown grant programs and sites that have received grant funds. It was stated that 61 grants have been constructed with an award value of \$2,131,394 and a permit value of \$11,101,299.

Ms. Julia Truilo, Ormond MainStreet Executive Director, spoke of the partnership of MainStreet with the City. Ms. Truilo stated that Ormond MainStreet is a private non-profit entity that is run by volunteers. Ms. Truilo stated that they base their activities on the national MainStreet model that works on economic vitality, design, revitalizing the district by bringing in people (such as events or marketing). Ms. Truilo stated that Ormond MainStreet implements the master plan in many ways including working with merchants, coordinating events, providing input on design, and working on public art. Ms. Truilo explained that MainStreet is not a brand, MainStreet is an organization. What we brand is what happens in the district. Ms. Truilo concluded with a discussion of the events that bring almost 50,000 people to the Downtown area each year.

Mr. Spraker discussed the final area of the implementation of the 2006/2007 master plan, legislative changes to implement the master plan. Mr. Spraker stated that the previous Downtown plans did not include Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code changes of how the Downtown should look and be redeveloped. Mr. Spraker stated the 2006/2007 master plan established a vision which was implemented with Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code amendments.

Mr. Spraker detailed other downtown area initiatives that include the City's purchase of the property at 56 North Beach Street, the former Ormond Union Church. Mr. Spraker also discussed the police station and the emergency operations center. Mr. Spraker concluded that the 2006/2007 plan established the vision and that actions were performed to be consistent with the overall vision of the master plan.

V. THE 2019 UPDATE PLAN APPROACH

Mr. Sechler discussed the scope of service for this project and the upcoming meetings. The upcoming April meeting will explore issues and opportunities with a mid-day meeting with the Downtown Steering Committee and a public meeting the same day. At the May meetings, framework ideas that would form the master plan update would be discussed by the Downtown Steering Committee and a public meeting the same day. Mr. Sechler concluded from these meetings, a draft master plan update can be discussed and refined.

Mr. Sechler stated that he was interested in obtaining any general thoughts from the Committee members and any input in the design or questions for a public survey.

VI. BRAINSTORMING TOP OF MIND

Mr. Sechler asked the Committee members to discuss what are important items to address either as an opportunity or a challenge.

Mr. DeFilippo questioned: How to hold people within the Downtown area where Granada Boulevard is used as more of a thru way for motorists?

Ms. Garrison stated we have a unique story to tell about this town with the history, culture, and development including the Casements, MacDonald House, and the Art Museum.

Opportunity to promote this area of the Ocean District as Museum Row. Opportunity to improve the MacDonald House. How can historic and cultural tourism be capitalized?

Ms. Burt stated within the River district, public parking is needed. There has been a lot of investment and businesses and parking options such as valet parking have helped. More public parking options are needed.

Mr. Sechler questioned where are parking issues most severe? Steering committee members responded that both the River and Ocean districts have parking issues.

Ms. Burt stated valet parking has been used as a creative way to address parking concerns and problems.

Mr. Heaster added that there is limited parking on Granada Boulevard. For example, the beachside only has five on-street parking spaces.

Mr. Wakefield stated valet companies are an absolute necessity. Private businesses have allowed valet parking that allow restaurants to operate.

Mr. Lichtigman stated Oceanside parking is compounded by the lack of off-beach parking. Granada Plaza has individuals who are using this center for off-beach parking that is hurting retailers and restaurants. Parking is needed on the beachside. Event parking is also needed.

Ms. Rose stated customers will change their visiting patterns on event days because parking is so challenging.

Mr. Ganz stated there is a lack of critical mass of destinations and a lack of walkability. Individuals are visiting one business, such as a restaurant, and not visiting multiple businesses. It is a long, narrow corridor.

Mr. Sechler stated that he understood the parking challenges. There may be tactical operational solutions to help address parking. Successful MainStreet's require some walking from parking locations. Mr. Sechler continued the challenge in this Downtown is that a lot of areas feel un-walkable. There appears to be a multi-dimensional problem: (1) do you have sheer volume of parking in the right place and (2) would people explore the area or would they do single trip destinations.

Mr. Ganz detailed an example of the parking garage in St. Augustine feels walkable and people are more willing to spend time at multiple businesses.

Ms. Lohman stated that we have come a long way in twelve years including the undergrounding of utilities. There is still a need to look at aesthetics of the area including existing overhead power lines at Halifax Drive and East Granada Boulevard. Ms. Lohman stated the 4' by 4' bridge signs should be reviewed and replaced with more aesthetically pleasing changeable copy signage that could help with branding. Ms. Lohman stated there are opportunities to do better community signage at both bases of the bridge.

Ms. Garrison added that the existing bridge signs are on the wrong side of the bridge, the acceleration side instead of reading the signs when sitting still in vehicles.

Ms. Lohman stated that she would love to see riverfront dining or food. Ms. Lohman continued that she would like to see the signage on the four corner parks be better choreographed and develop a sense of place. Ms. Lohman concluded that the parks should allow family entertainment such as the ability to rent kayaks, paddleboards, passive activities, etc.

Mr. Sechler added that the four corners concept can be a strong asset.

Mr. Morgan asked what is the feasibility to slow down traffic on Granada Boulevard. The Granada Boulevard characteristics impact walkability. The sidewalks are too small and the vehicles are going too fast.

Ms. Tolland stated that parking and signage are no-brainers. Downtown needs anchors. In the Ocean District the anchor is the beach. Ms. Tolland stated that there needs to be anchors and delineation of the Downtown area and/or districts. Ms. Tolland concluded that it is important to capture millennials and provide things that will attract them to the Downtown.

Mr. Heaster added multi-family development is a key part of the Downtown redevelopment. There needs to be incentives to encourage the multi-family development. Ms. Tolland stated that she agreed and the mixed use was needed.

Mr. Sechler stated the purpose of Granada Boulevard was redefined from having single-family homes to being a car tube to the beach, including having the zoning changed. Ms. Truilo stated that the Granada Boulevard Bridge is the only bridge for many miles.

Ms. Cotton stated the following items:

- Believe that there are two different downtowns, beachside and mainland and they should be treated differently.
- My goal is to have a community center to hold meetings and events. There are no venues that are large enough to host events.
- Signs on the bridge should be looked at and increase the aesthetics.

Commissioner Persis agreed with Ms. Cotton on the need for a community center. Commissioner Persis added a ferry that would take people from one side of the river to the other should be considered.

Mr. Lichtigman stated that there is a need for security and feeling safe. A panhandling ordinance needs to be created. Mr. Lichtigman added bridges could be used for branding with lighting and colors.

Audience comments:

Mr. James Friedman, the Pumphouse restaurant: parking is an issue and is needed. Not supportive of food trucks as Ormond Beach does not have the population to support food trucks.

Lynda Williams, resident, expressed concerns about traffic/speeding. Ms. Williams stated she was excited about walkability and keeping the area folksy. Future plans should include walkable access for neighborhoods. Ms. Williams concluded neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown need to be considered.

Dwight Selby, City Commissioner, Zone 1, stated he had three comments to make:

1. Nomenclature: Do not get the district names of Ocean, River and Creek districts. Mr. Selby suggested Beachside, Downtown, and Uptown as district names.
2. Walkability is incredibly important.
3. Livability. Encourage more people to live Downtown by increasing density. Downtown residents would decrease the demand for parking and increase the use of businesses.

Mr. Selby stated the purchase of 56 North Beach Street allows opportunities for the City. The City is looking at moving the emergency center operations of the Police station and this would be a large parcel in the Downtown. Mr. Selby stated that the City of Ormond Beach owns the library that has a 35,000 square foot building. Mr. Selby stated that there three to five years left on the library lease and there are tremendous opportunities with air rights and parking.

Key questions and topics

Mr. Sechler stated in preparation for the April 17, 2019 meeting what are some key questions or topics to discuss.

Mr. Morgan questioned if traffic were to be slowed on Granada Boulevard, what would be the political concerns? Mr. Sechler stated do you think that there are some questions that deal with tradeoffs. Mr. Morgan stated what if there are individuals that live north or south on beachside and they just want to go home. With slowing on Granada Boulevard, it could take another five minutes to get home. Mr. Morgan stated that the delay may be an issue.

Mr. Ganz suggested a question of what type of stores would individuals go Downtown for? Committee members also added how far would individuals be willing to walk. Mr. Sechler stated that a scale comparison for walking may be useful to compare walking at a shopping mall. Mr. Sechler added what type of services are needed.

The Committee members discussed water activities. Mr. Sechler suggested a question of how would you like to engage the water, specifically the River.

Ms. Truilo asked how the walkability issue could be asked. One idea would be to ask what would make the Downtown area more walkable. Mr. Wakefield stated that the width of the corridor is so narrow. Mr. Wakefield suggested the side streets along Granada Boulevard are walkable, but there are no activities there. Mr. Wakefield stated that for example in New Smyrna Beach, every parcel has activity where people will walk. Mr. Wakefield concluded that the closed buildings in the evening reduces the walkability. Mr. Sechler stated that these situations are sometimes referred to as missing teeth.

Committee members discussed that in some cases the rear is now becoming the front. Mr. Sechler stated that the rear of the buildings is how parking and accessibility may help solve the walkability issues.

Committee members discussed that the Granada Bridge is a centerpiece of the Downtown and the community. Committee members also discussed lighting and safety as key components of the Downtown. Mr. Morgan discussed the bike lanes and how they disappear coming off the bridge. Mr. Morgan said that other communities have scooters and alternative forms of transportation and our Downtown is not bikeable.

Committee members discussed the disconnect of the three districts. The concept of a shuttle or trolley was discussed. A question was proposed if individuals would find value in a short distance trolley. Committee members stated that the bridge is a barrier. Mr. Sechler suggested a question if it was important to connect the mainland to the beachside. If the answer is yes, continued Mr. Sechler, then the next question is what is the best method to provide local access. Ms. Rose stated that it appears that there is not enough activity to keep people in the Downtown for long periods of time. There are a lot of salons and restaurants, but not much more. Incentivize retail uses to provide people more to do.

Mr. Sechler asked what are the most successful MainStreet events? Ms. Truilo stated that the biggest event is Riverfest that attracts between 12,000 and 14,000 people. Ms. Truilo continued the next most successful event would be the Celtic festival. Ms. Truilo stated that what they are finding is that local customers are staying away during the larger events. MainStreet has tried to move the programmed events around in smaller areas and feature local business.

Ms. Truilo explained that there are different businesses within the Downtown area with differing characteristics. West of the railroad tracks is a lot of services, a gym, and a hardware store. Ms. Truilo continued that the River district provides civic uses such as City Hall, the Library, and Police Station and restaurants. The Ocean district has retail services and restaurants but there is no way currently to connect it with the south side of East Granada Boulevard. Ms. Truilo concluded that each area has a personality and the issue has been connecting the areas.

VII. CONCLUDING THOUGHT, NEXT STEPS, ADOURN

Mr. Sechler asked the Committee that it seems like twelve years ago there was a struggle to have viable businesses. Mr. Sechler stated that there had not been a significant public realm investment and there was not active social capital in the Downtown. Mr. Sechler stated that the needle has moved and there has been success with a healthy business environment. Mr. Sechler stated that there has been a clear engagement in the public realm with the capital projects. With MainStreet, Mr. Sechler stated, there is a social fabric connection of the business areas. Mr. Sechler stated that there are pieces and parts to work with now and the challenge is how to connect all of it. Before in 2006, the challenge was how to get things healthy and economically moving forward. Now it is really how do we take what we have and make places out of it. There are some situation things to solve, such as parking and street crossings, but the focus can move to create places and sub districts.

Ms. Lohman stated that there is a need for more density of retail uses and activity. There are barriers such as the Police Station and City Hall, even though it is beautiful. These are spaces that do not continuously bring people into the Downtown. Ms. Garrison added that there is no performing art to attract individuals to the Downtown. Mr. Sechler concluded that the key to attracting people is good vibrant businesses and a mixture of uses. People have to believe that they are coming to a “park once” environment where they can park once and go have an experience of multiple things. Mr. Sechler stated there are existing physical configuration conditions that push the area to be a single destination Downtown. Mr. Sechler continued that it is not easy for visitors to make an unplanned decision to visit another use.

Mr. Sechler stated that the key of creating a great place to visit is creating a great place to live. If we can make Downtown attractive for residents, then it would work for the tourists. On the other side of the coin, we can do things for the tourists, but the Downtown would fail for the residents.

Ms. Tolland questioned if the Downtown area could be closed for traffic and the traffic would come around the district and over the bridge to increase walkability. Mr. Sechler responded that the concept may not be practically possible and may negatively impact retail such as the outdoor malls in the 1970s. Mr. Sechler concluded retail needs daily drive by traffic.

Mr. Spraker stated that the next meeting of the Downtown Steering Committee would be April 17, 2019 at 11 a.m.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Nagel, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

Steven Spraker, Planning Director