

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING - [Corrected](#)
To Discuss Land Use and 2009 Work Plan
CHARLOTTE HARBOR
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monday, February 23, 2009 – 2:30 p.m.
County Administration Building – Room B-106
18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948

~~(These minutes are not official until they have been approved by the Charlotte Harbor CRA Advisory Committee.)~~

Members Present

James Herston, *Chairman*
Michael Haymans, *Vice Chairman*
Grace Amodeo, *Secretary*
Nathaniel Cooley
Evelyn Loeffler
David Schmidt
Charlotte Ventola

Members Absent

Staff Present

Commissioner Richard Loftus
Debrah Forester, Redevelopment Manager
Derek Rooney, County Attorney's Office
Seann Smith, Planner II
Kathy M. Knee, Recorder
Inga Williams, Principal Planner
Nicole Dozier, Zoning Official
Dianne Quilty, Budget Analyst

Guests

Candace Wehbe
Cheryl Wynn
Jenny Miller
Jennifer ~~Benecourt~~[Bettecourt](#)

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Mike Haymans called the February 23, 2009 Special Meeting of the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee to order at 2:37 p.m. in Room B-106 of the Charlotte County Administration Complex.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chairman Haymans led the members and the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum

Roll call was taken; Secretary Grace Amodeo confirmed a quorum was present.

IV. Current Land Use Designations

Debrah Forester gave a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting: to talk about land use and zoning; to give the Committee an opportunity to make recommendations/changes to the Comp Plan, the Zoning Code or the Redevelopment Plan and/or to confirm its satisfaction with these documents. Ms. Forester introduced Growth Management staff and thanked them for making time for this meeting. Ms. Forester asked that this meeting be informal and questions should be asked and comments made as each topic is discussed.

Debrah mentioned that the following documents were made available to the Committee:

- Existing Comprehensive Plan (Objective 2.3) (Attachment A and B)
- Existing Community Redevelopment Plan (Planning Sub-Districts) (Attachment C and D)
- Existing Zoning Code (Section 3-9-50.5) (Attachment E and F)

Chairman Jim Herston arrived and Vice Chairman Mike Haymans turned the gavel over to him.

Neighborhood Business/Residential – Discussion developed regarding the 20/80 commercial/residential issue. Tracking is not currently being done and the 20/80 commercial/residential policy may need to be looked at to determine if it is needed. Consensus of Committee is this Policy needs to be reworked to encourage mixture without as many restrictions. Comments included:

- Place more focus on the individual parcel; there is concern that someone might not be able to utilize their property as they wish.
- Expand NBR significantly between Bayshore, 41 and Live Oak Park. Commercial tourist near park is a good idea; go to planned development (PD). Growth Management staff suggested that instead of a PD, a special exception might be a better option.

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- Cross between PD and special exception should be explored. Vegetation should be protected. Existing plan was done with resident input.
- Neighborhood workshop should be held to allow property owners to be involved with decision making. Poll attendees – who is an owner, who is a renter.
- Identify a Study Area needs to be determined.

After discussion, **Mike Haymans presented a Motion, which was seconded by David Schmidt, to designate the area shown in Attachment G as the study area and a workshop should be scheduled in the Spring with stakeholders of the study area to discuss possible changes to land use and zoning, categories and definitions.** Debrah Forester advised that Attachment G includes the Riverwalk district. Mr. Haymans suggested it would be reasonable to include the Riverwalk stakeholders because surrounding land may be of interest to them. **Motion passed unanimously.**

V. Artist Studio/Gallery Concept Discussion (Target Area – Attachment G and H)

Debrah Forester reported that a proposal was put together after meeting with the director of the Arts & Humanities Council and residents. Land use changes are not required to create an art walk area. After a brief discussion it was agreed that residents should have input at this time.

Candace Wehbe is a resident and property owner in the targeted area who is finishing up at police academy. Ms. Wehbe indicated that drugs and crime are a problem in this neighborhood and believes an artist village could improve the area and create a destination for both visitors and residents.

Cheryl Wynn, who came before the Committee last March, described her properties which are zoned NBR and CR. She reminded the Committee that she had hoped to create a courtyard to join her properties so that all tenants could share the common area as well as to be able to live and sell their products on these properties. The fees to do a special exception are costly so she decided to just work with the NBR properties. Ms. Wynn requested the Committee to help make the community better - there is a lot of potential.

Jenny Miller a new resident and business owner of a consignment specialty shop at Ms. Wynn's property. She noted that there are still some areas of concern in the neighborhood but she is hopeful that things can change. Ms. Miller mentioned the neighborhood is in need of lighting (4385 Guard). Jim Herston offered to contact FPL to see about lighting in Ms. Miller's neighborhood.

Jennifer Benecourt, homeowner in Charlotte Harbor since 2004, moved into the area because of its old Florida charm. Ms. Benecourt bought a dilapidated house and revitalized it with hopes of having it as her home and studio. Ms. Benecourt believes the biggest problem in Charlotte Harbor is the absentee landlords – no one is on site to watch the property or the renters' behavior. Artist community vision is prime for this area along with some commercial zoning for restaurants and shops. Ms. Benecourt agrees with the recommendation of a Community Workshop and would be happy to participate.

Jim Herston suggested that the Community Workshop notice be sent on a postcard with meeting information on one side and a selected poll to get statistics on the other. Debrah Forester suggested an on-line survey is another option. It was suggested that the Community Workshop be held in the evening.

Debrah Forester displayed pictures of existing homes in the Charlotte Harbor neighborhood to facilitate additional discussion. Ms. Forester suggested the Committee do a walking tour of the area to see what is on the ground and its future potential. Ms. Forester also showed pictures of the Art District in Sarasota, since this area had been discussed as an example for the Charlotte Harbor neighborhood district.

Ms. Forester suggested that the Committee could work on an art walk program with Arts & Humanities. One idea of a potential theme that had been discussed is flora and fauna of Florida. Funding issues were questioned and discussed. Mr. Haymans reported Punta Gorda murals are funded and processed in many different ways. Ms. Forester indicated that a concept contract with Arts & Humanities called for a budget of \$17,500 for 8 designated art areas; a contract with the property owner would be required to guarantee that the art would be maintained, an example would be a contract for 3 years with a clause for reimbursement to the CRA if owner moved or wanted the art removed; and a 20% administration fee to

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Arts & Humanities has also been suggested. Other expenses might include a repair fund and recognition plaques. Ms. Forester asked the Committee if they would be interested in doing this project next year. Candace Wehbe stated that the CRA was created to address a blighted area and the art walk is an inexpensive solution. Discussion followed which included financing the project. Committee members voiced their opinions with consensus that funding for the art walk should not be done by the CRA. The Committee offered other means of assistance which might include: help with media exposure, public recognition, donations from businesses (Sherwin Williams, stucco companies), provide space for regular meetings, solicit sponsorships to let community buy into project.

VI. Final Draft Work Plan 2009 – Presentation to BCC (Attachment I)

Debrah Forester asked for direction on the following Work Plan items:

- Art Walk - Consensus: leave art walk on Work Plan as an unfunded project.
- Rehab Program – Consensus: houses in questions are not fit for rehabbing
- Programming Funds in the amount of \$17,500 – Consensus: Leave funds in Programming and marked as Unidentified.

Debrah Forester reported that 12 grants totaling \$37,870 have been approved for the payment of sewer connection hookup fees for residents who have a low to moderate income. CDBG is now over. Waterline improvements are complete and will be updated on the Work Plan to reflect \$618,543 grant funds.

Mike Haymans asked about the status of the RV park owner on US 41 who he referred to Debrah Forester. Ms. Forester responded to the owner indicating that she has been waiting for the final cost of the MSBU. If MSBU can be paid off with the approval of the Advisory Committee and the BCC everyone will benefit. Commissioner Loftus reminded the Committee that he fought and succeeded in reducing the engineering costs at the onset of the sewer project. Discussion followed regarding the payoff of the MSBU and what funds could be used to effect the retirement of debt. Consensus was to take funds from the Gateway Project capital project line. Debrah will update work plan.

Charlotte Ventola announced that she found a copy of the Minutes from the January 26, 2006, which confirms that Punta Gorda will pay for half the banner expenses.

VII. Public Comments – None.

VIII. Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee will be on February 26, 2009 at 10 a.m. in Room 119 of the Charlotte County Administration Center. It will be a joint meeting with the Board of County Commissioners and ex-officio governing board of the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency.

XVII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting **ADJOURNED** at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Knee, Recorder

/kmk

Approved: _____ 03/26/09