



CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 22, 2021

7:00 PM

Leo Robb Gymnasium

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order on the above date by Vice Mayor Ben Preston at 7:00 p.m., in the Leo Robb Gymnasium, 445 SW 2nd Street, Deerfield Beach, Florida.

Present: 3 – Commissioner Todd Drosky
Commissioner Michael Hudak
Vice Mayor Ben Preston

Also Present: 2 – City Manager David Santucci
Assistant City Clerk Heather Montemayor

Absent: 2 – Commissioner Bernie Parness
Mayor Bill Ganz

MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

There was a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF CITY COMMISSION AGENDA

April 22, 2021

MOTION was made by Commissioner Hudak, seconded by Commissioner Drosky, to approve the agenda as submitted. Voice Vote:

Yeas: 3 - Commissioner Drosky, Commissioner Hudak, Vice Mayor Preston

Nays: 0

DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS

1. Presentation by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Advisory Panel regarding Central City Redevelopment.

Vice Mayor Preston thanked everyone for attending tonight's workshop. The ULI Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Report outlines the redevelopment of the central city area. He advised that Mayor Ganz could not attend as he is not feeling well. Also, Commissioner Parness could not attend. Thereafter, he introduced Commissioners Drosky and Hudak.

Continuing, Vice Mayor Preston stated that redevelopment of the central city area has been left behind over the years and something must be done; whereas, the study conducted by the ULI provides findings and recommendations for revitalization. Additionally, the City is not just looking at the revitalization of the area but elevating the area economically and socially. Vice Mayor Preston outlined the logistics of the workshop, whereby, the presentation will be given by the Panel, followed by the Q&A session, then the breakout sessions, which will occur in person only, followed by the adjournment. Thereafter, he introduced Debbie Orshefsky, TAP Chair.

DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS - CONTINUED

About Us - Ms. Orshefsky thanked everyone for attending; thereafter, a PowerPoint presentation was displayed. She explained that the ULI is an international organization that helps shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. She then introduced the panelists: Scott MacLaren, President, Stiles; Alfred Battle, Junior Deputy Director, Sustainable Development, City of Fort Lauderdale; Juan Mullerat, Founder, Plusurbia; Eric Liff, Principal, Lambert Advisory; Alia Awwad, Senior Associate Engineer, Alta Planning + Design; Alfonso Costa, Executive Vice President, Falcone Group; and Darwyn Kelly, Panel Intern, University of Miami. She commented on the panel's background and their contributions to the study.

Panel Purpose - Ms. Orshefsky said the City asked that the TAP identify factors that discourage revitalization/redevelopment of the study area and recommend measures to overcome those obstacles. Also, to do the work to help strengthen the community, and the relationship between the City and stakeholders, i.e. those within the community, including businesses.

Study Area Assets and Opportunities - Ms. Orshefsky said the TAP needs to know and understand the study area, which is accomplished through outdoor site visits, walking and driving the corridor, working with staff, etc. Further, she said the TAP was able to identify the opportunities offered by this area, to include: proximity to I-95 and the turnpike, commercial nodes and high-traffic corridors. There is a hospital which supports jobs and residential demand, schools which support a family-oriented market, variety of legacy issues which support potential for resurgent activity, and vacant properties which present redevelopment potential.

Economic and Market Considerations - Ms. Orshefsky outlined the economic and market considerations: economic challenges within and around the study area are due to moderate income compared to the City and County, lower homeownership rates and elevated unemployment; economic growth in the study area has not kept pace with the rest of the City; and residential and commercial lease rates are due to the other factors outlined.

Economic and Market Opportunities - Ms. Orshefsky outlined the economic and market opportunities: there is an employment base, whereas, most people who live in the study area work outside the area. This creates an impetus for job creation and would help keep people in the community.

Existing Obstacles to Redevelopment - Ms. Orshefsky listed the existing obstacles to redevelopment: site constraints, regulatory obstacles, lack of consensus on a vision of the corridor, ownership patterns and legacy land banking, existing infrastructure, community relations and lack of incentives and funding to support revitalization/redevelopment.

Neighborhoods + Nodes + Corridors - Ms. Orshefsky said this corridor is not one (1) consistent character but is comprised of three (3) distinct character areas: neighborhoods, nodes and corridors which need to be addressed separately.

Site Constraints & Configuration - Ms. Orshefsky said there were two (2) main dynamics. First, a majority of the corridor parcels are very narrow and a number of them abut existing residential development. She outlined the issues faced: creating compatibility between the commercial frontage and what development types are appropriate to narrow lots. Further, she stated that the solutions for the corridor is to target low-density, smaller scale development and to take actions to support the assemblage of smaller parcels.

Mr. MacLaren displayed two (2) very small parcels, which are very indicative of the corridor. He said there is limited access onto these parcels from Dixie Highway northbound. On both sides of these parcels are DOT retention ponds, which prevents them from being combined. These parcels are also adjacent to the neighborhoods with no separation, or buffers; therefore, recommendations will be provided for buffering the neighborhoods from commercial parcels as new development occurs. Thereafter, a photograph was displayed of five (5) buildings in a small area along the corridor. He stated that these buildings were combined and are utilized as small business user's corporate headquarters, which works for these buildings as there is limited parking.

DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS - CONTINUED

Recommended Uses Along the Corridor - Mr. MacLaren said the corridor can support and should pursue small flex industrial and small-bay warehouse, owner-occupied businesses and job creators, additional retail/entertainment opportunities, additional grocery and convenience [stores] such as Dollar General.

Site Constraints & Configuration at the Nodes - Mr. MacLaren said there are opportunities at the signals at the highest traffic points along Hillsboro Boulevard to 10th Street, from 48th Street to Sample Road. He outlined potential changes along 48th Street, i.e. major intensity, new industrial, new businesses and jobs. Along 10th Street, they noticed real opportunity for more density to occur over time.

Thereafter, Ms. Orshefsky provided a brief overview of negative comments received regarding small bay warehouses, which should not be of concern because it offers flexible warehouse office use and is a very profitable asset class if designed more like office buildings. They bring employment which must be supported by retail.

Recommended Uses at the Nodes - Ms. Orshefsky said they recommend intensification at the nodes as an assemblage is possible and being high-traffic makes it attractive for the neighborhood.

Site Constraints & Configuration Solutions for Neighborhoods - Ms. Orshefsky explained that it is important to assure the neighborhood are okay during redevelopment and development. She said buffers can be done and the impact of non-residential on the existing community can be controlled through height limits, like a pyramid, lower as it goes toward the residential use and higher on the commercial frontage.

Recommended Uses - Ms. Orshefsky said a key component for the neighborhoods is to provide new residential opportunities, different types of housing choices. Implementing a variety of housing choices will require looking at density in a different way.

Regulatory Obstacles - Ms. Orshefsky outlined the regulatory obstacles: the existing zoning is too restrictive and does not encourage a meaningful mixed use. For example, it would require residential along the Dixie corridor which is undesired. Additionally, the community did not understand the entitlement process which needed to be communicated and simplified. A key to creating a zoning district that encourages development and redevelopment is to have a balance between certainty in the regulations and flexibility which is not easy to achieve but must be done.

Regulatory Solutions – Ms. Orshefsky said there is a lot of information on form-based code as it makes it difficult to collaborate. A level of certainty is provided in the process and to encourage more development means having a lot of administrative approval; whereby, the City Commission would have to relinquish some control. A form-based code secures a regulatory vision and makes the hand-off effective; i.e. Miami 21. Regulatory incentives need to be built in if the area is to be perceived as an attractive place to develop, i.e. reduced parking, expedited permitting and density bonuses. Ms. Orshefsky also commented on a land use plan created by Broward County about three (3) years ago called commerce; she opined it is the best created. Additionally, it was amended in January to permit residential use. Furthermore, it requires certain efforts toward affordable housing and although the study area contains affordable housing, the City can continue to promote affordable housing while encouraging market rate housing.

Ownership Patterns (Obstacles) - Ms. Orshefsky outlined the obstacles to ownership patterns: there are many individual parcels that do not allow anyone to do as much as they would like; legacy landowners feel the need to pass their land down to the next generation. She said there are different ways within the development industry that the legacy can be carried forward, without the parcel remaining vacant. Other obstacles include a lack of market ready development rules which applies to zoning within the area; there must be a shared vision which also builds trust so everyone works together toward a common goal.

Ownership Patterns (Solutions) - Ms. Orshefsky outlined the solutions to ownership patterns: having meetings, better communication and getting the information out to all the stakeholders, along with a dialogue. She reiterated the importance of incentives, communicating on plans and opportunities to build trust; whereas, it is the responsibility of the City and stakeholders to make sure it happens.

Community Relations (Obstacles) - Ms. Orshefsky listed the obstacles to community relations: too much studying, not enough action. Part of the report was geared toward getting recommendations on actions.

DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS - CONTINUED

Community Relations (Solutions) - Ms. Orshefsky outlined the solutions to community relations: establishing a community advisory board that the City pulls from the community; support development education for property owners and increase collaboration through workshops to explain how form-based zoning works, and identifying who's behind the regulations. She also commented on assemblage and how developers could work with the property owners to invest in the area and form partnerships. Having a dedicated staff person within City Hall to serve as the liaison for the community which is often undertaken by a community redevelopment area or CRA director. If none, having a consistent face that the community could go to would also be beneficial. Ms. Orshefsky also recommended creating events that bring the community together and give an opportunity to talk in a comfortable setting.

Infrastructure & Public Realm (Obstacles) - Ms. Orshefsky outlined the obstacles for infrastructure and the public realm. On the west side of Dixie Highway, there is no pedestrian opportunity or feel. Funding is needed for infrastructure improvements which could be achieved through development. Additionally, there is an overabundance of detention/retention ponds along Dixie Highway owned by FDOT and it is time that FDOT finds a different form of drainage. Those are prime development parcels and should be made available for private development.

Infrastructure & Public Realm (Solutions) - Ms. Orshefsky commented on improving rights-of-way, but the problem is financing. She reiterated the need to work with FDOT; analyzing the parking conditions, whereby, commercial uses are parking in the residential area. A study needs to be done to determine if it is occurring and how to prevent it if it is. Ms. Orshefsky recommended using an FDOT lot to resolve the problem. Moreover, installing a waterfront park in the waterfront area within Alwood Homes.

Lack of Incentives and Funding for Redevelopment (Obstacles) - Ms. Orshefsky said the obstacle to achieving the things outlined is money and lack of vision for the area, and the need for a coordinated funding source and administrative body that looks after the study area.

Incentives and Funding for Redevelopment (Solutions) - Ms. Orshefsky said she has discussed a number of incentive type solutions, but there are a number of federal programs that are outlined in their report. Also suggested by Mr. Battle was a city-only funded CRA, like Fort Lauderdale. Even if a CRA cannot be formed, there is a way the City can express that intention. The County is also using TIF-less (tax increment financing) CRAs, whereby, a few cities have done them successfully; information has been provided to staff.

Overarching Recommendations - Ms. Orshefsky stated that the recommendations are outlined in the report; however, the most important recommendation is focusing on the future. Lastly, she stated that the panel hopes that the ULI recommendations will assist with the vision.

Vice Chair Preston opened the Q&A Session.

Tom Connick, 411 E. Hillsboro Boulevard, Deerfield Beach, said the people living in the central area are good, hard working people who are interested in how this will affect them and their quality of life; therefore, this study should be about the protecting the quality of life for existing residents as well as revitalization and redevelopment. Mr. Connick provided a brief history of a developer who, in 2017, tried to close a road and build apartments in this area, which was rejected by the Commission. Further, he said these residents don't have the time to attend meetings or hire attorneys on their behalf, so they rely heavily on the Commission to make the right decisions for their community. Lastly, Mr. Connick asked if this community will be heard and not pushed aside and how much protection will be given to their quality of life.

Ms. Orshefsky replied that protecting the neighborhood, while allowing for additional development is outlined throughout the report. The ULI recommends a sensitivity to the existing neighborhood, while celebrating the neighborhood by helping people maximize their property. Further, she said neighborhood preservation is extremely important, which is why they recommend that the nodes have more intensity and corridor have special regulations.

Vice Mayor Preston said he is an advocate for making sure the community is comfortable with whatever is presented and though everyone may not agree, will be heard.

DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS - CONTINUED

Sylvia Poitier, 233 SW 1st Terrace, Deerfield Beach, spoke in support of revitalization, but stated that the community's needs must come first. Thereafter, she provided a brief background of her time as an Elected Official. *(Due to technical difficulty, much of the Ms. Poitier's comments could not be heard)*

Harry Ecton, 1355 SW 122nd Way, Pembroke Pines, said he previously owned property in this area and is the former director for Habitat for Humanity. Thereafter, he provided a brief background of meetings that took place years ago with the Habitat for Humanity regarding revitalization and redevelopment. He agreed with most of what was said this evening but has concerns with rezoning, as it should be fair and equitable across the board. Lastly, Mr. Ecton said the trust of this community will come once everyone is assured things are being disclosed and are being done fair and equitably.

Ms. Orshefsky stated that part of their recommendation is looking at a comprehensive rezoning, not parcel by parcel.

Sandra Jackson, 386 SW 35th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, said she owns property in District 2 and expressed concerns with how this meeting was communicated, as the community was not properly notified. Further, she stated that if changes are going on in the City, property owners must be notified in a timely manner, so they can voice their opinions.

Octavia McDougal, 49 S. Dixie Highway, Deerfield Beach, said coming to this meeting is exciting because she does believe in the possibilities that have been mentioned and her family is ready to move forward into the future; however, the challenge landowners face is trust. Ms. McDougal commented on her experiences, in 2018, when the McDougal family invested \$1.4 million into a building to be utilized as an educational center but many challenges arose, and they decided to put the property on the market. Though offers were received, those interested backed out because the City advised that the ideas they had for the building were not allowed; therefore, she agreed with the zoning issues. Thereafter, she listed the uses perspective buyers were seeking. Lastly, she said the community has encouraged others to hold on to their building and keep fighting, but it shouldn't continue to be an uphill battle for people wanting to bring business to the central area.

Marvin Swain, 401 SW 14th Place, Deerfield Beach, expressed concerns with how the meeting was noticed untimely and asked that the City do better with notifying the residents. Further, he outlined issues with commercial vehicles parking on residential property and asked that the City handle it. Mr. Swain said the community does not need additional housing along Dixie Highway but needs Black owned businesses to provide jobs for the community. He stated that the developers buying and developing these properties do not live in Deerfield and do not understand what the community wants or needs, they only care about making money. Lastly, he asked that the City listen to what this community wants.

Mae Francis Feagin, 3500 SW Natura Boulevard, Deerfield Beach, provided a brief history of things that have occurred within this community that have caused the lack of trust mentioned. Further, she commented on secret meetings occurring and the last-minute notification like this meeting. Lastly, Ms. Feagin stated that the City must ask what we as residents want in our community.

Emma Sampson, 495 N. Deerfield Avenue, Deerfield Beach, said she attended the first meeting via Zoom and the only area discussed was Dixie Highway to Eller Street. Since other areas have been discussed this evening, she asked for clarification on what is considered central Deerfield and whether Deerfield Avenue is included.

Juan Mullerat, ULI Panel, replied that planners cannot just look at a corridor but the surrounding areas as well; therefore, the area incorporates neighborhoods, which are all different. Although, Alwood and College Park are separate neighborhoods, they are geographically considered one (1) and there are three (3) others east of the corridor. Further, he said one (1) of their recommendations is to perform a study on those surrounding neighborhoods because whatever happens in the corridor, will inherently affect those neighborhoods. Lastly, he stated that community input is greatly needed, especially when it comes to the vision for the surrounding neighborhoods.

Angela Storr, 1041 SW 8th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, asked for clarification on how things from Dixie Highway west should be handled.

DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS - CONTINUED

Ms. Orshefsky explained the components of a pedestrian friendly corridor, i.e. the sidewalk, walkability, etc.; whereby, on the westside of Dixie Highway, those do not currently exist.

Alia Awwad, ULI Panel, stated that when redeveloping the corridor and properties along Dixie Highway it is important to think of the public streets and how they can improve the quality of life and increase economic development opportunities.

Continuing, Ms. Storr said the redevelopment of the area should be left up to the people that own the property. Further, she said she isn't happy with everything the City is doing, but believes the City is doing a good job.

Ms. Awwad said the panel has only provided infrastructure recommendations and agreed that the community should be involved especially when it comes to public safety.

Ms. Storr said it was her understanding that this meeting was only regarding the Dixie Highway corridor, and it's frustrating that there is so much miscommunication within the community.

Ms. Orshefsky said one of the key components built into all the recommendations is the concept of the nodes, neighborhood and corridor; whereby, each one needs to be looked at individually and then their relationship to the other.

Felicia Poitier, 140 NE 5th Street, Deerfield Beach, said the boundaries for redevelopment keep changing, which is causing frustration within the community. Further, she expressed concerns with the timing of this meeting as there was not proper notice to the property owners in District 2. Ms. Poitier commented on the FDOT retention ponds and asked if the FEC Railroad retention ponds were going to be researched.

Ms. Orshefsky replied that the FEC is a private entity and would have to be approached differently; nevertheless, the panel was focused on Dixie Highway, west, which was the study area defined by staff. Further, in looking at the area, the panel thought it was a shame that FDOT had so many prime parcels that were only being utilized as retention and detention; as such, the panel thought maybe there was a better way for FDOT to address drainage.

Terry Scott, 180 SW 3rd Avenue, Deerfield Beach, asked if the panel provided the City with residential design options.

Ms. Orshefsky replied no.

Mr. Scott said in January 2021, the Commission voted 4-1 on a project that was said to be a part of the ULI [report], which is untrue. He explained that these type actions create mistrust within the community which is unfair to the residents. Further, he agreed that the panel needs to meet, but not with the Commission or city staff, with the landowners. Mr. Scott said when this project started it was supposed to cover Dixie Highway and nothing else, and now it has moved to Sample and the waterfront. Lastly, he asked that the Commissioners apologize to District 2.

Stockard McDougal, 49 S. Dixie Highway, Deerfield Beach, said he feels like everyone's mind is made up, and wants to know when this will happen and if the City wants their business here or not.

Gloria Battle, 1240 SW 6th Way, Deerfield Beach, asked if a city funded CRA could be established for District 2.

Christopher Ribeiro, no address provided, asked what kind of incentives are being offered to landlords. Lastly, he agreed with Mr. Ecton as rezoning should be fair and equitable across the board.

Vice Mayor Preston said redevelopment must come from the landowners who own the property, not the City and suggested that all landowners come together to have a united vision. Thereafter, he asked the audience by a show of hands who knew about the meeting before tonight. Further, he said the City must do a better job communicating information to the residents in a timely manner.

DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS - CONTINUED

Ms. Poitier stated that both city staff and the Commissioners need to review the ULI Technical Assistance Panel Report as there are issues within the report that must be addressed.

Commissioner Drosky asked that the panel provide two (2) recommendations that can be implemented right away.

Ms. Orshefsky replied forming a community advisory board, so there is an organized network of feedback going both ways and readdress the zoning for the area as it does not work and would allow for the community and commission to begin to express a shared vision.

Commissioner Drosky thanked the panel for all the work and effort they put into the report. Thereafter, he asked what the biggest drawback is for this corridor and why Stiles wouldn't want to develop in Deerfield Beach.

Mr. MacLaren replied that they develop throughout the State of Florida, so he cannot say why Stiles wouldn't want to develop in Deerfield Beach, as Florida is a prime location to live. Further, he said it was mentioned that residential is not needed in this area, but jobs are; whereby, this corridor can be rebranded as a commercial corridor.

Commissioner Hudak thanked the panel for the hard work put into this report. Further, he stated that no decisions have been made; whereas, this study was completed to highlight what can be done in the area. He agreed that the community advisory board should be the first step because it must be the community's vision as to what they want in the area. Commissioner Hudak said it's this commission's desire to help move this area along, but it must be with the community's help. Lastly, he said Vice Mayor Preston, along with the rest of this Commission, want to see this area move forward, but it must be done with the community.

Vice Mayor Preston agreed with the creation of the community advisory board, but also stated that the City needs to hire someone to be the liaison between the community and city. He said another key component that was expressed this evening was trust, therefore, eliminating the community's fears is essential. Thereafter, he advised that the breakout sessions will now begin; four (4) tables were set up to discuss communication, funding, zoning and assemblage.

At the conclusion of the breakout sessions, Vice Mayor Preston thanked the residents for attending and providing their input. He also thanked staff for their hard work and efforts. Lastly, he thanked Commissioners Drosky and Hudak for their input this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no additional business to discuss.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Hudak, seconded by Commissioner Drosky, to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m. Voice Vote:

BILL GANZ, MAYOR

Samantha Gillyard, CMC, City Clerk