



**CITY OF GULFPORT
WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (WRAB)**

Monday
May 24, 2010
Gulfport Senior Center

MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

Members Present: Lori Rosso, Avrio Taylor, Michael O'Toole, Mike Baggs
Members Absent: Bill Esielionis, Metria Jones, Bob Newcomb

City Representatives Present:
Mr. Fred Metcalf, Community Development Director;
Myra Schwarz, Planner

II. Discussion: Beach Boulevard Signage

After welcoming new member Mike Baggs, Lori Rosso noted that if someone were getting to Gulfport using GPS, they are taken down 54th Street South along O'Maddy's. 54th Street S is residential then suddenly they find themselves at the water with no direction or signage. Now WRAB should go to Council and recommend adding a brand of blue and white with a sailboat to any signage. She also noted that the little "Dining,shopping,etc" sign at Clymer Park is off center because it was placed in its current location to accommodate a tree that no longer exists. Prior discussion included talking about putting a sailboat in Clymer Park, or something big, to draw the eye. Electronic signs that change text are expensive and violate the City Code of Ordinances so are not a good option. Mike Baggs commented that the sailboat idea would need to go to Council before anything can be done.

Avrio Taylor said that his friend would like to see a stoplight at 55th St South and Gulfport Blvd. Mr. Metcalf replied that is not an option. The alignment of the intersection is off and it is not a good potential location for a light. The corner would probably not meet a warrant study and Gulfport Blvd. is a county road.

There was some discussion of color of signage. Lori asked if any brick embellishment could be done on Gulfport blvd. Mr. Metcalf replied yes, that had just been done on 49th Street South. Lori noted that embellishments would have to be budgeted for the future.

Avrio asked what we are trying to promote. Lori replied that we are trying to attract a constant flow of traffic at all times, and the question is how we advertise.

Signs for the fresh market are being put up on Tuesday mornings then taken down in the afternoon.

Discussion ensued about what to call the Waterfront area. Suggestions were: Historic, Village, Art Village, and Waterfront. Mike Baggs noted that, as mixed use extends, you will have more of a village or historic feel. Mr. Metcalf noted that the area could be branded "The Historic Waterfront" because it's about the character of the area being unique because of its structures. The area isn't historic in the true sense of the word; it is just how Gulfport has looked for a very long time. Mr. Metcalf informed the group that commercial guidelines are being developed to build incentives to keep it that way. So there should be a tie so "historic", like you are going back in time, and we are trying to keep what Old Florida looked like in the early to mid 1900's.

Lori suggested that kiosks be placed at strategic points in the Waterfront with an artist's rendering of what the Waterfront looks like. She said that it didn't have to be a major thing, just something to give visitors an idea of where things are. Fred suggested just adding brochures or maps to places that already exist. Lori noted that type of advertising could be done relatively fast and inexpensively and suggested putting card holders on the Pelican signs.

Mike Baggs asked about WRAB having a mission statement. Mr. Metcalf gave a history of the group, that it was originally brought about to help create a Waterfront Redevelopment Area with a 10-year Plan. The Plan has been updated and includes the Waterfront Redevelopment Overlay District (WORD) that is an appendix to the plan. The group was designed to be all encompassing but focusing on business. For example, the blue lights in the trees unify the area. They were the first connection suggested by WRAB, and WRAB also suggested the pavers.

More discussion was made about brochures and how to contain them. Lori suggested Plexiglas holders, maybe where the trolley signs are. Lori asked if WRAB needs to go to Council to ask for brochure holders and noted that they are about \$1.50 each at Home Depot. Mr. Metcalf will check with the City Manager. She also said that the Chamber of Commerce is trying to do maps but it is expensive.

Lori noted that she like the example of the Williams Pier sign the best. Avrio said that he prefers words other than "Historic" and has looked at words thinking, who are we attracting? It was noted that "Waterfront" is the word currently being used.

Lori asked what the next step is if WRAB wants to use a sailboat as signage. Mr. Metcalf stated that the general concern is that you want something to catch your eye to make you want to look further, whether it is boat, or a model village, or bell buoys. Other cities allow banners and moving signs, but Gulfport does not.

Mike Baggs noted that the waterfront currently only has one shop (Domain) that is open at night, and that care must be taken not to change the atmosphere in presenting the Waterfront. Lori said that the Chamber of Commerce has been using sailboats and beach themes, and that the Merchant's Association has been using the back of the Casino. She feels that staying with a sailboat theme is simple and more universal. Mr. Metcalf suggested that something more modern could be used with the same effect, such as metal signs and flagpoles to suggest a regatta, and to get some artist's concepts. He stated that the design can be affordable and can be simple and inexpensive to make. We just need an artist to come up with the idea.

Lori said that a call to artists should be made to come up with ideas. Mr. Metcalf suggested that the group to come up with a list of things for artists to do. He said that this will be an ongoing discussion with a buy-in to the community. He suggested that the group flesh out what was discussed to create a goal or mission statement. Avrio suggested putting a call to artists in the Flyer, at the St. Petersburg Art Center, and at other St. Petersburg art galleries.

Lori ended the meeting by making some recent positive notes:

- There has been a consistent and noticeable increase in trolley traffic. The trolley was rerouted and that may have made that transition in ridership.
- Gulfport has received kudos from the Sierra club regarding the community support and City support regarding the oil spill. The Sierra Club will keep Gulfport on its list of places to go that is in visitor pamphlets, and is telling people that we have no oil on our beaches.
- A new magazine is coming out called Gulfport the Magazine. It is being printed now and will be printed twice this year and quarterly in future years, and will sell for a nominal amount like \$1.00.

Action Items:

Mr. Metcalf:

- Check with CM regarding Plexiglas brochure holders.
- Check with Don Sopak about painting wood signs.

WRAB:

- Check on the cost of painting and designs at Clymer Park.
- Flagpoles- call to artists for ideas.

III. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

The next WRAB meeting is to be June 28, 2010, at 6:00 P.M. at the Senior Center.

Approved _____

