

**City of Bonita Springs
City Council
Downtown Redevelopment Workshop
Tuesday, August 12, 2014
9:00 A.M.
Bonita Springs City Hall
9101 Bonita Beach Road
Bonita Springs, FL 34135
MINUTES**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Ben Nelson, Jr., called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

II. ROLL CALL:

Mayor Nelson and all Council Members were in attendance.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

At the request of Mayor Nelson, Council Member Slachta led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:

9:04:19 AM Martha Simons asked that the Lemon Tree property not be used for a roundabout. She feels the monies would better be spent on the median north of Terry Street. She also supports funds to bury utility lines, which would make a huge visual difference and help during hurricane events. She also requested trees be planted on Front Street, and that the color palette be changed, especially for the area of Old 41. She also asked that Council make sure the 50-foot buffer is kept on both sides of the Bamboo property.

9:07:21 AM Kathy McGrath wants a walkable community to bring more people to the area, and suggested Council look at Winter Park Florida. She is looking forward to, and hopes that Shangri-La opens soon.

V. PRESENTATION:

9:08:56 AM City Manager Carl Schwing furnished an overview, explaining that Staff is here today seeking direction from City Council on downtown. He next furnished a brief update on the RFP sent out for improvements for downtown to address the medians, landscaping, parking, drainage, etc. A total of three firms have been selected to go before a Staff committee, who will make a recommendation on the ranking of those firms to bring to Council. Council will receive copies of all three presentation backgrounds. An RFP for the Bamboo property will be coming before Council at their August 20, 2014 meeting. Also, an RFP is also going to be prepared for the Levin property, which will also be discussed this morning. Staff will also be furnishing Council with a report on mobility fees at their September 17, 2014 meeting.

Council Member Steve Slachta entered a motion for Staff to go through the typical City RFP process and to provide Council with the information for all three firms; Council Member Janet Martin seconded. Public Works Director Matt Feeney provided a brief overview of the RFP which is for design and engineering services, which covers basically streetscape, drainage and parking. The motion carried unanimously.

9:23:21 AM Jennifer Hagen, Community Development, next furnished a PowerPoint presentation (copy in Clerk's file) to provide an overview of Staff's presentation. The intent is to refine the downtown vision, discuss the Lemon Tree property, the Industrial District, development patterns, a destination feature, include a historical destination, a government center, and complete streets.

9:39:52 AM Ms. Hagen explained that Council will hear from a variety of Staff Members on each of the points appropriate to their topic area, with the first area of discussion relating to the industrial area. Discussion will be on expanding the Industrial District. Currently the sub-district stops on the western portion of Industrial Street. She showed buildings that were not part of that district, which Council may want to include to make the district more complete. There is also the idea of flex space and the potential art district or "lofts." Discussion will also include the Shangri-La resort right-of-way vacation and some of the connectivity of the industrial district. The question is how Council envisions that industrial area. Staff has had a lot of requests come in for heavier industrial uses in that area that may or may not suit the need for that sub-district. Staff is seeking direction.

9:41:31 AM Council Member Steve McIntosh referred to a slide he furnished of the CRA and questioned the location of the industrial area. He also asked how that would affect what they were doing. Ms. Hagen explained that the Master Conceptual Plan for Old 41 labels Tennessee Street as industrial – Sub-Area 11. She referred to an aerial and applications Shangri-La has had to vacate portions of Industrial and Tennessee Street - the highlighted areas in blue and a smaller area on Kentucky Street near Oak Creek.

Council Member McIntosh stated he didn't want to jeopardize some of the things the City has done with the CRA and the money the City is getting by getting out of the CRA, and so all he was asking was for Staff to describe from the old CRA map items shown as the redevelopment area, the town center, and the urban core. There are parts of the City they can protect for that "small town charm." If it can be done inside the areas that have already been determined to be part of what is being funded then he feels the City would be saving themselves money and issues. Ms. Hagen explained that the industrial area falls within the larger CRA area; however, the sub-district is further defined by the Master Conceptual Plan for downtown. Old 41, Tennessee Street, and Industrial Street are all within the CRA. The area also includes commercial uses, industrial and some "historic" and/or properties that should be saved for Small Town Charm. Ms. Hagen stated it definitely has commercial and industrial uses. Council Member McIntosh asked if all of those pieces are within the parameters of the CRA, to which Ms. Hagen explained that the problem is that there is the boundary of Industrial Street. Ms. Hagen further explained, noting that all the properties adjacent to the railroad are not part of the CRA. When she speaks about expanding, Staff has presented the concept of expanding those liner buildings on the western portion of Industrial Street, to which Council Member McIntosh stated was important.

9:49:24 AM Council Member McIntosh asked City Manager Schwing if the CRA, as currently outlined, if expanded, does anything to the funding that has been approved for downtown. City Manager Schwing stated that is a question he was going to address. He explained that the area in which they expect to spend the \$16 million is an area on Old 41, between Dean Street and the river or Terry Street, and a couple of blocks east and west. However, the "capture area" for the redevelopment area where all the revenue is coming from is much larger, because they are able to take advantage of some of the developments that are occurring on north Old 41 – the new residential areas. They've also included some of the area to the south, including the racetrack area, so that as they develop the City will get that growth to help fund the changes. When you say the CRA it's not all one area; the redevelopment area/capture area is much larger so they can capture more revenue to pay off debt, but the actual area to create improvements is between Dean Street and Terry Street, and then a couple blocks to the east and west. Council Member McIntosh stated that he didn't want to create a different framework today of what they are working on and void the agreement for the \$16 million. City Manager Schwing responded that what they were talking about now, which he is recommending that they cross over and pick up the west side of Industrial Street to do this. They are not looking at additional

redevelopment/improvements along there, as they were just trying to include it in the area. It will not have to do with the county funding. The question regards whether Council still wants to allow for industrial uses in that area, or should they move to a more “Small Town Charm” atmosphere. Mayor Nelson responded by addressing the need to incentivize, to which Ms. Hagan agreed. She referred to the term “flex space” and the question regards what Council’s vision is for that area, and how it mirrors the business or property owners.

9:53:18 AM Council Member Janet Martin stated that there are a few warehouses that are defunct or sitting empty that could be used by co-op type artists, i.e., welders painters, who need larger spaces. She feels the vision is spot on. Mayor Nelson stated that the question regards if the vision is going to be something that the private sector is going to want to do. It needs to be made to where it’s something people want to do. Ms. Hagan agreed, and stated that by identifying some of those flex uses, that’s one way they can pursue it.

9:56:35 AM Public Works Director Matt Feeney stated that the Shangri-La folks previously expressed an interest in the City vacating portions of Industrial, Tennessee, and Kentucky Streets to consolidate their campus for future plans, which may play in the vision of an artist colony if there’s no longer interconnectivity. Shangri-La is interested in the portion of right-of-way along Kentucky Street which is a window for the City to Oak Creek. There is a dredging project scheduled for Oak Creek, and a need for the City to have access to the creek. When Staff looked at the requests for right-of-way vacations, they noticed the two properties that are also owned by Shangri-La and consist of about one-half acre. Staff’s thought was to move forward if Council was willing to entertain the idea of vacating some of the right-of-way, or portions of it. It may be reasonable to look at partnering with Shangri-La and them deeding the properties that are bifurcated by the railroad from their main campus, as they would provide a window back to the City to Oak Creek for maintenance and for public access. There is an important drainage ditch to the east of the properties the City maintains which results in a little bit of public connectivity there, but if the City was to lose the piece on the north side in some form of swap, it may be appropriate for the City to work with them on that portion. Staff did speak to the Attorney that handles the Shangri-La properties to verify that discussion of this would be appropriate, and they seemed open to the idea, which is why Staff brought it before Council. Council discussion followed with Council consensus to negotiate with the Shangri-La with respect to the trade for the small blue piece with the orange piece. Mr. Feeney explained that per discussions, they are interested in the City considering deeding the portion over that’s located next to the main campus, which is important to the City in that it’s a connection to Oak Creek. They are also interested in the entire portion of Industrial Street along the right-of-way as well as Tennessee Street along the right-of-way. He asked if he was correct in that what Council was saying to approach them on the two. Council consensus to negotiate with Shangri-La on the two parcels as suggested.

10:02:52 AM Arleen Hunter, Director, Development Services, next updated Council on discussions Staff has had with Shangri-La on the use of their property. As they are moving forward with their renovation process, they are talking about active searches of what might be appropriate uses for these properties. They are actually looking for direction from the City on uses they should be pursuing. Ms. Hunter addressed potential plans, concerns, access, uses for the site, etc., explaining that they are looking for direction before they pursue other leasing options for their properties. Her belief is that they would be willing to partner with the City if the City was to pursue certain uses or create an art district or flex space to encourage users.

10:06:16 AM City Manager Schwing asked if Council was comfortable with Staff stepping back and taking a larger view of this area, outside the smaller vacation to the north, to find the uses, come up with a program to incentivize people to use those buildings the way the City would like them to – to work with the owner to determine how feasible that is for them, and to see if we can mold the entire picture into something that’s good for both the owner and the City. Mayor Nelson stated that while they want the long term vision to be fulfilled, they don’t want to cause an economic hardship that has

the exact result of what you see there – nothing. He thinks there's a way to make it work, and that if Council lets Staff figure out some way to incentivize what occurs there, and make it easier for people to do certain things in that area. Council Member Bill Lonkart suggested that Staff get in contact with the Shangri-La folks as soon as they are back in the area.

Ms. Hagan stated that the next item of discussion pertains to development patterns, which Jay Sweet, Community Development, will discuss how it affects Lemon Tree and adjacent property owners.

10:10:24 AM Jay Sweet, Community Development, began by explaining that one question that came up regarded a roundabout. There are several locations in which a roundabout could be developed, one of which is at Dean Street, which would entail a 3-way street design and would require property from Shangri-La. There would be some construction challenges because it is where Oak Creek is located, and would most likely require a retaining wall. If Council is interested in this, Staff would have to negotiate with the folks from Shangri-La.

There are also the Lemon Tree and Shear Unity properties, both of which have issues, including during season there is no parking and their clients cannot get in and out, one reason is because of the traffic patterns. They are interested in an agreement with the City for a cross access easement, where they would get rid of the two driveways on 41 at the Lemon Tree property, move their driveway, and then share a driveway for purposes of more efficient parking. The alley would then be opened up and improved to provide access because of what occurs on Old 41 and during weekend events. They are a very successful salon and have an 8 year lease. They are also planning to make improvements to the building and put in landscaping. Staff spoke with the property owner (the Quinns) who suggested swapping the property to the south for the property to the north, both of which are equal in size, both are commercial and both are on the corner. They would also give the City the corner for additional right-of-way if needed for a roundabout. Council consensus to not swap the property.

10:14:53 AM Council consensus to look at Mayor Nelson's suggestion regarding moving some of the entrance points, or redesigning the alley. Council consensus also for Staff to research the idea of a roundabout at Dean Street.

10:18:07 AM Mr. Sweet next suggested Council consider the concept of preserving the Dixie Moon property should they move forward with a historic district. Council Member Martin asked if they would be able to relocate it to the Levin property. Mr. Sweet stated his next topic was development patterns, and explained that there is one street downtown that doesn't really work. The focus needs to be on how to expand development patterns onto Front and Felts, and in doing so they need to look at activities and other opportunities. He further explained that during construction the Farmer's Market could be located on Front Street with signs to direct people. Referring to Felts Avenue, Staff would suggest a historical area with some water features to start to attract people to that three street pattern, which blends into the complete streets program. Mayor Nelson addressed a proposal made a long time ago, whereby as soon as you cross the river heading south, to split 41 up with each lane going different ways to create a traffic pattern that circulates and brings businesses to Felts Street. The roundabout would then play into that.

10:24:09 AM City Manager Schwing referred to the slide depicting the Abernathy property and stated that when they talk about the potential for a historic village, the question has been raised whether this site would be an appropriate location, inclusive of a water feature with historic buildings placed around that. It would draw the traffic in, away from Old 41 and would expand the historic area. With respect to the possibility of the Levin property, his recommendation would be to allow the Levin property to continue for an economic development purpose, and use the Abernathy property for purposes of a historic district concept to use it jointly with a water feature to be part of the drainage system. Mayor Nelson stated that his concern regards who would do all of this and pay for it. He always thought the Abernathy property would be for parking. There are other places that the older houses can be placed, as

he would rather see them dispersed throughout the community rather than having them clustered in one area. Mayor Nelson next referred to the community hall property and stated that they should reserve the frontage and design it to be businesses, and create the on-road parking, the sidewalks, the overhang and the little business, and behind that have the parking and the government businesses or whatever. Mayor Nelson addressed Council direction for Abernathy, to use it to incentivize the redevelopment of that area, for it to be utilized with uses other than historic, and that it be something more practical than that.

10:30:27 AM Assistant City Manager John Gucciardo next addressed the government center for property located off Old 41, going back through the community hall substation and the church property the City purchased. Lee County's Library consultants identified this property as being the first choice for a new library facility because of its proximity to downtown and its availability. Staff is seeking direction from Council on whether or not the idea of a "civic" campus might be appropriate for this location. Staff is seeking feedback on whether those lands would be appropriate for that type of multi-use governmental facility. Depending on what the County consultants come back with and what Council decides to do, it could be anchored by the new library facility. There are still some current obligations in terms of the uses at community hall through the spring, but the City does have budgeted funds for the demolition of the community hall facility and potentially the church facility sometime in the spring and so there is essentially an open slate in terms of potential future uses. In response to Council Member Slachta, Mr. Gucciardo stated development could potentially include the elections office, tax collector, etc. It is not the recommendation of Staff for City Hall to be located there. Council Member Simmons stated he supports the concept 100%, and is not opposed to City Hall being located there. Council Member Martin supports the library being located there, along with a small meeting space, a small theater, and Community Development and Code Enforcement. She is also not opposed to having City Hall there either. Mayor Nelson stated whatever is located there needs to be complimentary to the park across the street where events and concerts are held. There may be a public/private partnership that can occur as far as having some retail along the front with a gateway opening to allow people to go across the street to concerts, with retail, a courtyard, to where the library is located, etc. After further Council discussion, Mr. Gucciardo stated that what he was hearing was that the more government functions could be set back, and allow for 41 to be used for a higher best use, while maintaining that "open" view that would be the entranceway to get one back towards the church property and the municipal functions.

10:41:11 AM Council Member McIntosh stated that he is uncomfortable with a government center, but if that brings people there, that's fine. All small cities and villages have a city center. He suggested something like a village square with pavers and a small gazebo with an event held every Sunday. He would suggest a city center there that's not necessarily government, but designed for people. He feels there is a need to look at the Wonder Gardens property, which he knows is privately owned. He would like Council to look at creating a butterfly garden/ecological center there to draw students. Although the government center has appeal and immediate use, he's not sure that is what he would like. He would like the library there and make sure there are small businesses. It needs to be looked at as a whole. There is \$100,000 allocated for something, but if it's for visioning, he suggested getting someone who understands how these properties can be used and how they can get the ones they want.

10:44:10 AM Ms. Hagen explained that the reason she passed out the 1995 Conceptual Master Plan was because the City has had visioning proposed in the past. The idea is to elaborate more on the one stop shopping for people and combining it into one area. Overall, it might be something that needs to be revisited, but not completely overhauled. Council agreed that they can envision those two properties – community hall and the area behind there, as being used for some type of communal uses that will include some type of public and private, and at this point the library, and have some entrepreneurs in there as well. Council Member Gibson stated he would also like the substation to remain downtown. Council Member Lonkart stated that he feels that the private sector is the key to downtown, and has to occur first.

10:47:21 AM Ms. Hagen next addressed the concept of “Complete Streets” which, she explained, is a tool to retrofit and design existing streets to be more safe, comfortable and accessible to all users, ages, and abilities. It also looks more at pedestrian, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists. A brief discussion was held.

Council Member Martin entered a motion to move forward with an Ordinance for a Complete Street program. Ms. Hagen explained that an Ordinance would provide the “teeth” to implement this City-wide and for implementing the design of the streets downtown. It would also require every street to have those elements. The criteria would be addressed in LDC, Chapter 3, Development Standards. Council Member McIntosh asked if Staff would be able to incorporate complete streets into the strategy as opposed to creating an Ordinance. Ms. Hagen stated they could do both, as they need to have it incorporated into the LDC to make the requirements mandatory. Council Member McIntosh seconded the motion, and asked that Staff come back with a suggestion on how they incorporate it into the sustainability strategy rather than creating a different path. Ms. Hagen stated her approach is two-fold – first, as they pursue the Florida Green Building Coalition Green City designation, they obtain points for creating this type of Ordinance. Also, the Ordinance develops the path for those LDC amendments to include the principles of Complete Streets. Overall, while they can include it into the Sustainability Strategy, the teeth are applied through the LDC. Staff to draft something and bring it back. Staff will also come back with an option of having integrated the strategy instead of an Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.

10:55:20 AM Ms. Hunter stated that Staff will bring the RFP for the Bamboo property to Council on August 20, 2014, which she expanded on. The RFP includes photos of the rendering, the new design standards for Old 41, and the vision Council has set as the Old Florida style. Staff has received inquiries. Staff is also looking for direction on whether Council would like Staff to begin pursuing an RFP for the Levin property, or if Council would like to reserve it for a future use. Mayor Nelson stated that an RFP may be premature, as it might be a good idea to include that with the community center plan. Overall, it might be an important element for any public/private partnership. Council consensus agreed with the Mayor. Council Member Martin stated that may be a great spot to move the farmer’s market to in the interim. Council consensus to wait regarding that parcel.

10:58:44 AM Council Member Martin referred to the Lemon Tree lot and suggested landscaping for the property, which she feels could become part of the park. City Manager Schwing stated that they can put in landscaping. Council Member Martin also asked that they keep the clock tower vision in mind. Mayor Nelson addressed the need to accentuate the water.

11:03:45 AM Council Member Gibson addressed the need to readdress the color palette, stating that he likes the Key West type colors.

Council Member Gibson motioned to look at the color palette; Council Member Lonkart seconded; and the motion carried 6-1 (Mayor Nelson opposed)

11:06:00 AM Council Member Martin suggested a grand entrance, inclusive of the other end of Old 41 near Rosemary, and extend plantings.

VI. DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION TO STAFF: Incorporated in section V. above.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT:

11:07:25 AM Deborah Maclean agrees that the north end, Rosemary Creek, and if roundabout placed there it would solve a lot of problems and clean up the north entrance to Old 41.

11:10:45 AM Bob Hilliard commended Council on their discussions today. He is all for plans regarding the community center. Need to have some type of museum to get artifacts from when Survey began.

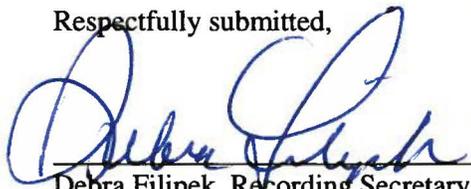
11:12:50 AM Kathy McGrath commended Staff and Council for all the wonderful suggestions and ideas. She agrees with the land swap, as Lemon Tree property needs to remain under the control of the City. She also asked that Council not support the request for easements from Shangri-La,

11:16:27 AM Martha Simons commended Community Development Staff for their recommendation for Complete Streets, which she sees bring all the concepts together – landscaping, lighting, safety, pedestrian friendly, etc. She also asked that Council not give away Oak Creek and Front Street. She likes the idea of a clock tower, theater and library. Do not vacate near the industrial park. Hire visionary to help with urban planning as Naples and Fort Myers have done.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

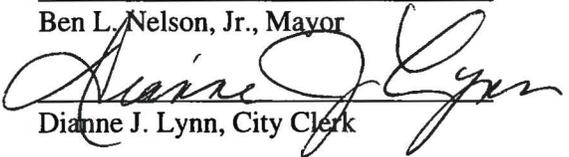
There being no further items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11:21 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Debra Filipek, Recording Secretary

APPROVED:
BONITA SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL:

Date: 9/18/14
AUTHENTICATED:

Ben L. Nelson, Jr., Mayor

Dianne J. Lynn, City Clerk