

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING – 1:30 P.M.
MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2001
BANK OF AMERICA BUILDING
600 CLEVELAND STREET, SUITE 850, EIGHTH FLOOR
CLEARWATER, FLORIDA**

Members Present:

Walter Fufidio, Chairman	City of Tarpon Springs
Richard Kephart, Vice-Chairman	City of Gulfport
Etim Udoh	City of Clearwater
Jeff Dow	City of Dunedin
Ric Goss	City of Largo
Nick Staszko	City of Oldsmar
Tom Shevlin	City of Pinellas Park
Ron Rinzivillo	City of Safety Harbor
Dave Goodwin	City of St. Petersburg
Mitch Bobowski	City of Seminole
Lynn Rosetti	City of Treasure Island
Gordon Beardslee	Pinellas County
James Miller	Pinellas County School Board

Also Present:

Rick MacAulay	City of St. Petersburg
Richard Gehring	Prime Interest, Inc.
Joe Kubicki	King Engineering and Associates, Inc.
Chris Papandreas	King Engineering and Associates, Inc.
David Healey	Pinellas Planning Council
April Collins	Pinellas Planning Council
Mike Crawford	Pinellas Planning Council
Mark Ely	Pinellas Planning Council
Linda Fisher	Pinellas Planning Council
Alisa Hartsfield	Pinellas Planning Council
Larry Pflueger	Pinellas Planning Council

I. JOINT REDEVELOPMENT ISSUES PROJECT – STATUS REPORT

The special meeting of PAC was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chairman Walter Fufidio.

Dave Healey provided members with a copy of the scope of services for the project and then identified the Oversight Committee of Dave Goodwin, City of St. Petersburg; Buzz David, Pinellas County Economic Development Department, and Dave Healey. Mr. Healey introduced Richard Gehring of Prime Interest; Joe Kubicki of King Engineering and Chris Papandreas of King Engineering.

Richard Gehring explained to members that the project is at a stage where individual interviews with local governments and private entities have been completed and the data compiled. Meanwhile, King Engineering has been evaluating local jurisdiction codes for positive and negative redevelopment elements. This is phase one of a potential three phase project. The objective of phase one is to identify issues of impact on redevelopment for review by the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) and Countywide Planning Authority (CPA) in order to devise methods to improve the redevelopment environment in Pinellas County.

Mr. Gehring referred to the fourteen project Steering Committee members, identifying one-third as elected officials, one-third practitioners, and one-third redevelopment advocates.

Mr. Gehring identified the update of the Countywide Plan, the Pinellas County Tourism Visioning Study, and the State Growth Management Study Commission as other related studies.

Mr. Gehring made a PowerPoint presentation that included a pictorial representation of how growth has occurred in Pinellas County over the past 100 years in 10-year increments. His presentation also included data from the Tax Collector's Office that shows the relationship between development age and value.

Mr. Gehring discussed the Steering Committee macro vision issue of "promotion", which he identified as the driver of quality redevelopment in the County. (i.e., quality of life issues); and the committee's micro issue of "facilitation" which he identified as the details of programming redevelopment. (i.e., permitting, neighborhood/district planning, financing, land assembly) He added that indications from the State Growth Management Study Commission are for more planning functions to be addressed at local levels. With this direction, the result of redevelopment in Pinellas County will be based on how promotion and facilitation are created and implemented. He foresees the results as improved quality of life for Pinellas County residents.

Brian Smith pointed out that in working with neighborhood or community based interests it will be very difficult to apply broad based principles without being insensitive to the individuality of a local community. Mr. Gehring indicated that a handout of a list of concerns and another with a list of issues will be distributed later in the meeting for members to prioritize as to the perceived level of importance and impact.

Joe Kubicki informed members that they surveyed city officials in order to ascertain what redevelopment areas were already designated and how those areas are treated and what redevelopment goals and objectives are desired by each jurisdiction. They also sent surveys to private sector builders and developers to find out what they feel are positive and negative factors affecting redevelopment in Pinellas County. Mr. Kubicki added that they have reviewed many current local codes for positive and negative elements with respect to redevelopment, which Chris Papandreas will discuss in more detail. And finally, they embarked on a national search for strong redevelopment based codes to glean ideas from.

Chris Papandreas distributed a handout entitled, *Lessons learned*. Ms. Papandreas explained that they evaluated the codes from a standards standpoint, code book organization, procedures, such as site plan approval, and amount of staff level discretion. Ms. Papandreas indicated that uniform organization of code books countywide would enable a developer to find relevant standards, for example parking, in a particular chapter irrespective of the municipality, which would save the developer time when researching requirements. She also theorized that much of the site plan approval process would be more "developer friendly" if there were more staff discretion permitted.

Ms. Papandreas discussed variance procedures. She advised members that there is a need to distinguish between large issue and small issue variances in order to provide the development community with timely approvals. One idea is to notify surrounding affected parties of small issue variances and if no opponent is heard from in thirty days, to then issue approval of the variance. She also suggested the notification process itself could perhaps be more standardized among the communities.

With respect to the standards, Ms. Papandreas advised members that all the codes reviewed to date contain some standard that is redevelopment friendly. She is creating a list of all those standards to be made available prior to conclusion of the study with the intent that some communities may utilize ideas from neighboring communities to improve their own code. Ms. Papandreas pointed out that all codes seem to treat nonconformities as "evil" and are addressed by each community differently.

Ms. Papandreas handed out a *Land Development Code Observation Summary* and proceeded to describe the process for obtaining the information in the summary. She then handed out a copy of the *Builder's Survey Response Memo* and a *Matrix*. An interesting result of the summary was that most favorable responses had little to do with a community's code. A positive problem-solving attitude by staff managed to overcome code pitfalls, whereas negative experiences with a community were related almost entirely to code issues.

Ms. Papandreas informed members that a final task in the project is to prepare some redevelopment templates. The consultants are going to prepare examples of typical types of redevelopment decisions based on a couple of different codes to demonstrate how the decision-making process affects redevelopment.

Mr. Gehring reminded members that the objective of this phase of the study is not to write the "perfect" code for all the communities to adopt. He then handed out a list of redevelopment issues organized under seven main headings, provided a brief explanation of the lists, and asked members to rank the issues from one to five, with one being the least important and five the most important.

Brian Smith pointed out that streamlining is good but will be a complex undertaking. Some communities like a lot of citizen involvement up-front whereas others like a more administrative approach. Many neighborhoods want to keep their neighborhoods as they are while others seek change. Dave Healey responded that the objective of the study is to identify a palette of options that would be made available to communities, rather than a proposed single answer.

Richard Kephart indicated that land use/transportation issues are missing from the study. He added that West Palm Beach is a good resource. Mr. Kephart also pointed out that each plan submitted for review is different and may or may not be complete, and so there is a need for balance in the proposed approach to this project.

Dave Goodwin agreed that the point about balance is a good one. He added that ultimately this study will need to be approved by elected officials and utilized by neighborhood organizations. Mr. Gehring agreed and added that the report will be presented to PAC for input prior to PPC and CPA actions.

Walter Fufidio stated that all redevelopment does not result in positive impacts. Mr. Gehring responded that if a community defines what types of redevelopment are desired and can provide incentives for those developments then redevelopment outcomes should be positive.

Ric Goss informed members that when the redevelopment study was initiated standards did not come to his mind. Instead, issues like land use/transportation needs in the future and regional drainage retention came to mind. He went on to say, that although Largo's code may be flexible that does not mean all developer's qualify for the same perks even though the developer may ask for them. He added that if regional retention is a countywide issue then create a plan (and budget) for it so that no one would have to provide retention on a site specific case by case premise. Mr. Goss maintains that this is the kind of action that will result in redevelopment.

Nick Staszko pointed out (using Tarpon Springs as an example) that with respect to economic development there are unique characteristics within each community and that many communities market their uniqueness. He added that in his community offering drainage, underground utilities and aesthetics to developers are instrumental elements in accomplishing redevelopment, but parking is not. However, this may not be the case in other communities.

Michael Crawford stated that he feels redevelopment should be defined before trying to determine how to react to redevelopment.

Walter Fufidio inquired as to how much opportunity for input PAC will have with this report. David Healey responded that the next step is for the consultants to develop the templates and, following that, a draft report will be brought to PAC for review and input.

Richard Gehring stated that one of the objectives of this report is to gain consensus countywide on relevant issues and forward the findings and ideas to the pertinent agencies at each level of government in order to improve the nature of redevelopment in our county.

Mr. Gehring collected the list of redevelopment issues that PAC was asked to prioritize.

The special meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Healey, Executive Director