

**8TH STREET STREETScape AND IMPROVEMENT GROUP +  
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD 8TH STREET SUBCOMMITTEE  
JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 11, 2015**

Meeting held at City Hall from 3:30pm – 5:30pm

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS – CALLED TO ORDER AT 3:35**

Attendees: Robin Lentz, Mark Bennett (PAB), Len Kreger (PAB), Jamie Morrill (PAB), Phil Griffin, Eric Bartelt, Chip Ross (PAB), Mac Newton, Roy Smith, Marla McDaniel, Lynn Williams, Cheryl Lilly, Phil Scanlan, Clinch Kavanaugh, John Stack, Florida Public Utilities Guests (RJ Sicre, Aleida Socarras, Buddy Shelley), Adrienne Burke

**2. UPDATE ON 8TH STREET STREETScape IDEAS**

Commissioner Lentz provided a quick update on how this group has evolved into a streetscaping focus and that she has been working with Eric Bartelt on getting a better evaluation of existing conditions on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. She shared the idea of a 6' easement or setback to do landscaping to help soften and buffer the street. She mentioned the next part is to come up with a tentative design and/or photoshopped images to help visualize changes, and then the next step was to approach the 8<sup>th</sup> Street property owners and then take things to the City Commission.

Mr. Kreger said property owners were reached out to about landscaping not that long ago when the City decided to rip out the landscaping and it was not generally objected to. He said that was an example of going right to the property owners and not to the Commission first.

Commissioner Lentz pointed out that Rep. Adkins office wants to see a specific plan so they can help obtain funding. Ms. Burke pointed out that at the CRAAB meeting prior to this meeting that Dan McCranie mentioned FDOT is in the design phase for resurfacing 8<sup>th</sup> Street and that this is something we need to follow up on as it seems like it would be a good time to engage them on any plans. Commissioner Lentz said she would reach out to Mr. McCranie to find out who a good contact is.

Mr. Bartelt wanted to expand on “who we are and why we are here.” He explained that the PAB subcommittee will be tackling the Land Development Code (LDC) and zoning issues, and the little group he is working with is the streetscape/aesthetic focused group, and the third leg of the stool is Mr. Scanlan and his group working on underground utilities. Mr. Morrill said that the 4<sup>th</sup> leg of the stool could be the business community – stewardship of their own properties too.

Mr. Bartelt brought his drawings to show some ideas. The whole group gathered around the table to look at the options he presented. There was a discussion about the difference between an easement and right-of-way. There was also discussion about how streetscaping and the LDC are related, so an option would be to create an incentive – look at something like getting the easement in exchange for a density bonus or a height bonus (or whatever is decided). Mr. Bartelt believes the easement is critical to ensuring uniformity of design and making it the most beneficial. The issue of signage came up. Mr. Scanlan had asked Mike Zaffaroni to come up with

**8TH STREET STREETScape AND IMPROVEMENT GROUP +  
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD 8TH STREET SUBCOMMITTEE  
JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 11, 2015**

some ideas. Mr. Bartelt pointed out there could be an island-wide wayfinding option. Mr. Scanlan reminded the group that signage is not on the table for discussion today.

Mr. Bartelt noted as you get closer to Atlantic it is harder to do things because the buildings are closer to the street and there are some other constraints. There was a question about the concrete plant, but that is in the county. Mr. Scanlan said he would be willing to approach that owner about planting some trees to help buffer the view of it in the meantime. Mr. Bartelt walked through his design. Mr. Ross asked, who will take care of this in terms of maintenance? Commissioner Lentz and Mr. Bartelt said that is one of the questions to be answered. Mr. Bartelt noted one of the issues is how many driveway cuts there are on 8<sup>th</sup> Street that don't seem necessary. Mr. Scanlan says FDOT would support reduction of driveway cuts. Mr. Bartelt suggested medians as an option. Mr. Scanlan pointed out FDOT has to approve everything as it is a state road. Mr. Kreger brought up stormwater issues. Mr. Ross asked how it would impact trucks. In theory it should not impact trucks because medians would not be in the path of trucks.

The group looked at the idea for the 8<sup>th</sup> and Lime Street intersection as illustrated on the drawing. Mr. Smith mentioned he has worked on road projects like this, one of his last ones was Ft. Myers. It was discussed that there would be an interest in having 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Centre Street more cohesive. Mr. Griffin said it would turn "from gauntlet to gateway!" Mr. Kreger said our entry sign still looks like we are in the 1960's. There were some comments that the employee safety numbers sign is not really of interest to most people. Mr. Kreger said to remember that A1A is a SIS (strategic intermodal system) – a state designation.

Mr. Morrill said that he tries hard to engage people in Egan's Landing about why it's important to get involved in Centre Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street ideas, but they sometimes feel separated from the rest of the City, so he would be concerned about brick walls at the entry because it may kind of represent a divide between that part of town and other parts of town. Mr. Bennett pointed out that if you start with 8<sup>th</sup> Street as you get over the bridge, the lots along 8<sup>th</sup> in the County have other issues, and that here they are just trying to get started with improvements to start something. Mr. Bartelt says he understands the wall and idea he that it may separate people, but that it also serves as a visual buffer between the entry lots and businesses. There is some concern about the club emblems on the entry sign and how the groups would feel about changing or relocating their emblems. Mr. Griffin said how about sell the groups a space and it would help fund the wall.

To wrap this up, Commissioner Lentz said to please think about these ideas and provide her and Mr. Bartelt input. Their next step is to put together some kind of presentation and present it to the property owners. There are 60-70 owners and probably 3/4 of them are local. Mr. Kreger said starting with the entry is a great idea and shows that the corridor is worth investment. Commissioner Lentz agreed that it's a good place to start because the City controls the property and could be a big bang for the buck.

**8TH STREET STREETScape AND IMPROVEMENT GROUP +  
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD 8TH STREET SUBCOMMITTEE  
JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 11, 2015**

Mr. Griffin shared his site plan for the Big Oak project on 8<sup>th</sup> Street to show how existing properties could be redeveloped in the interim before the Code gets fixed or any streetscaping is done. It will be a restaurant and art gallery. They are moving the power off the front so it will come off Date Street instead of the front off of 8<sup>th</sup> Street. This is something to consider for when properties update instead of undergrounding which will take much longer. Ms. Burke brought up something easy to do before any LDC changes are done is to create a “guidelines book” that shows some successful examples on 8<sup>th</sup> Street like Amelia Coastal Realty and Big Oak to help encourage this redevelopment. Mr. Bennett brought up the idea of one way side streets with parking on the sides off of 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Griffin pointed out this would reduce the need for driveway cuts off of 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mr. Kreger asked about a business association on 8<sup>th</sup> Street and how that would be really helpful to have. Or else have more of a partnership with HFBA, says Mr. Scanlan.

Mr. Bennett asked if natural gas comes onto Fletcher and how would that relate to this. Ms. Socarras says that the utilities can’t be commingled and that a study has to look at them separately, but that such a study could look at common trenching. The same company that owns the gas company owns Florida Public Utilities (FPU). Mr. Scanlan pointed out that AT+T and Comcast are also at the table to discuss this whole project.

Commissioner Lentz mentioned Cheryl Lilly, the City’s grants administrator, is here and has been listening in order to help identify grant opportunities. State HB 1102 – Mr. Sicre suggested amending this bill to include utilities instead of just water and sewer. It is a payment mechanism. Mr. Shelley said they are working in Marianna on a downtown improvement project that includes grants. They will get Ms. Lilly that info.

**3. DISCUSSION ABOUT ELECTRICAL UTILITY POLES ON 8TH STREET**

Mr. Scanlan said that some of this came about because of rate increases and new big concrete poles coming in and citizens going to a public meeting. Also FPU was asked by the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) to work with these citizens. Mr. Scanlan says that narrowing it down to A1A has helped focus the discussion and they have looked at two areas – S. Fletcher and 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Scanlan shared a photoshopped image of what it could look like without the big concrete poles on S. Fletcher. It was suggested that seeing 8<sup>th</sup> Street photoshopped without poles would be helpful.

The FPU reps joined in the conversation. Aleida Socarras introduced herself and Buddy Shelley, who directs operations here on the island, and RJ Sicre, who is the governmental relations manager. She shared that they are happy to be involved in this program and ways to make it happen, and that when they bring up “buts” it’s not to be difficult, but because they are a regulated utility and have to consider cost and maintenance. She said she is supportive of the overall project and a lot has changed just having everyone at the same table. The FPSC allowed

**8TH STREET STREETScape AND IMPROVEMENT GROUP +  
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD 8TH STREET SUBCOMMITTEE  
JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 11, 2015**

them to use \$50,000 to do a study to look at alternative options – not just underground, but locations, etc. Mr. Scanlan said that the committee wants to look at both 8<sup>th</sup> Street and S. Fletcher. Mr. Shelley said more than 60% of utilities on island are underground already. Some of the concrete poles are because the FPSC required storm hardening and that was cheap and effective at the time. Something to note is that it takes longer to repair and restore underground utilities than poles, just because it's harder to find. But positives of underground utilities are no issues with animals, tree limbs, corrosion, etc. He said that the study will look at all advantages, disadvantages and costs of putting utilities underground or other options. He said there are some power poles on 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets, but the 8<sup>th</sup> Street corridor is the main line – part transmission and part distribution. Underground utilities would have to be buried at 42" minimum. This is typically below standard excavations that occur in the right of way.

Ms. Socarras pointed out having a good scope is important for the study and Mr. Shelley said Mr. Scanlan's group has given them a lot of that information. \$50,000 will be enough to do a study for 8<sup>th</sup> and S. Fletcher. Mr. Scanlan said a question is what is the impact of real estate values when you underground utilities and what people are willing to pay for. S. Fletcher vs. 8<sup>th</sup> Street property owners may not see the same benefit. Arguably the whole community benefits.

Commissioner Lentz asked about FPU's capital improvements plan to replace wood poles that are not in great shape. Mr. Shelley said yes, this is something an inspector evaluates as part of their plan. Mr. Shelley said it's about 1 million a mile to underground and 8<sup>th</sup> Street is about 12 blocks, 1.2 miles. So it could be \$1.2 million for 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Shelley said that the \$1 million does not include working with FDOT and it costs more on FDOT because they are only allowed to work at certain times.

Commissioner Lentz asked when they will have their consultant ready to do the study. FPU responded they are in RFP process. Mr. Scanlan's group is working to help review the responses.

**4. DISCUSS PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD 8TH STREET SUBCOMMITTEE PROCESS AND TIMELINE**

Mr. Bennett wants to hear from the engineers, the architects, etc. to talk about what their impediments are. Mr. Scanlan says you have to look at redevelopment for 8<sup>th</sup> Street only. Ms. Burke pointed out that Mr. Bennett's idea has already been done – that was the point of the LDCED working group and the draft language created by the group was based on these issues. Ms. Burke reviewed the process to date.

**5. DISCUSS DRAFT LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE LANGUAGE FOR 8TH STREET**

Postponed.

**8TH STREET STREETScape AND IMPROVEMENT GROUP +  
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD 8TH STREET SUBCOMMITTEE  
JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 11, 2015**

**6. DETERMINE NEXT MEETING DATE:**

6/25 THURSDAY @ 3PM - PAB SUBCOMMITTEE

AUGUST TBD – 8<sup>TH</sup> STREET IMPROVEMENT GROUP

**ADJOURNED AT 5:22PM**