

**CITY OF PALMETTO
CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING
MARCH 18, 2013
4:30 PM**

Elected Officials Present

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor
Tambra Varnadore, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 2
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2
Jonathan Davis, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Charles Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

Staff Present:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Jeff Burton, CRA Director
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Allen Tusing, Public Works Director
Amber Foley, Assistant City Clerk

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

1. GATEWAY SIGN DISCUSSION

Mr. Burton explained that Kiwanis of Bradenton is working with the CRA to improve the northeast corner of Riverside Drive at 8th Avenue. Turner Tree & Landscape is donating some larger trees for the corner. Within the next ten days, there will be several volunteers from Manatee County working there.

Staff has been discussing a theme for the gateway sign. They have decided to continue the theme at Sutton Park by using the same bricks, pavers, and lighting. Mr. Burton would like feedback from Commission on the development of this sign and the landscaping that will be at the corner.

Commissioner Varnadore questioned the location of the site, and if it was City-owned property. Mr. Burton stated the property is owned by the City, and it is located opposite the old Shell Gas Station, on the northeast corner of Riverside Drive and 8th Avenue.

Mr. Burton stated he received three quotes for the construction of the sign from three local contractors, DeLesline, Zirkelbach, and Stellar, which range in price from \$22,000 to \$29,000. The sign will be built to Commission's specifications and use two existing light fixtures from Sutton Park. Mr. Burton would like the message portion of the sign to be in light-emitting diode (LED) with an actual video; no flashing. This will be controlled wirelessly through City Hall and be used to provide information about events going on throughout the City. He can provide Commission with simulations of what the message part will look like. Mr. Burton stated that this type of sign can replace the event banner display method that is currently used. Mayor Bryant opined that an electronic sign will clean up the gateway to the City.

Commissioner Varnadore is not in favor of an electronic sign because it does not convey historic Palmetto to her.

In regard to power outages, Mr. Burton said the sign can be designed to attach to a generator.

Mr. Burton informed Commission that political and personal signs will not be an approved use for this sign. A policy can be drafted regarding rules and restrictions for advertisement and use of the sign.

Commissioner Williams opined that banners are a better way of allowing visitors and residents to view the events every time they travel the bridge. Using an electronic sign for the advertisements will not guarantee that every person traveling the bridge will see that event. He is not in favor of the location for

the sign and landscaping. He opined that a better placement would be where the monuments used to be located.

Mr. Burton estimated that the cost to put the LED sign in would be approximately \$30,000, for a total sign cost of less than \$60,000. He will check with Purchasing to see this is required to go to bid.

Commissioner Williams questioned the use of cabbage palms. Mr. Burton stated that these types of palms follow the theme with downtown. If the consensus of Commission is to have different landscaping, that can be done too.

Commissioner Smith stated he is usually against electronic signs but feels that one in this location on the main road will look well. He would like a policy written regarding the use of the sign. Mr. Burton will bring a policy back to Commission regarding the use of the sign for advertising and how to use the revenue earned from the ads.

Attorney Barnebey stated that there will have to be changes made to the Downtown Design Guidelines to allow the use of electronic signs.

Commissioner Varnadore requested the status of the electronic sign on Riverside Plaza. She stated that CRA funds were used to help purchase that sign. Mr. Burton will find out from the company that is going in that building if they are getting rid of the sign, and if so, are they willing to give it to the CRA.

Mayor Bryant informed Commission that Keep Manatee Beautiful along with the Kiwanis will be planting the landscaping this weekend. She would like a decision from Commission if they agree with what is being planted. The consensus of Commission was to plant the landscaping as presented.

Mr. Burton discussed the building of a sign in front of City Hall. He would like to incorporate the same theme in that sign as well. Mayor Bryant explained there is a need for a sign in front of City Hall because she has received complaints of people not being able to locate the building.

Commissioner Varnadore agrees with the need for a sign at City Hall; however, she does not want to see it cost \$60,000 like the gateway sign.

Commissioner Varnadore requested to see alternative signs to the electronic sign that is being proposed. Jon Moore, of Moore 2 Designs, will look into different options and present Commission with those.

2. CONTINUATION OF DOWNTOWN CORE DESIGN ORDINANCE NO. 2013-05 DISCUSSION

Attorney Barnebey stated there will have to be some adjustments made to the sign regulations in this document to allow for an informational LED sign for governmental purposes, and he will be amending the title of the ordinance before it goes to advertisement for the public hearings.

Mr. Barnebey explained that additional changes to the Downtown Core Design Guidelines will be forthcoming, some interim steps that he recommends be taken immediately are:

- Change the name from "Guidelines" to "Regulations." Regulations are code, not just guidelines.
- With the revision, an applicant can request an alternative for all requirements be approved by Commission at a hearing.
- Removes some of the density and intensity code text.

Attorney Barnebey requested direction from Commission regarding amending the sign regulations to allow an LED sign.

Mr. Barnebey clarified that the name will be changed from "Guidelines" to "Code."

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Commissioner Williams would like to see all plans combined for more efficiency. Mr. Burton would like to see these plans aligned with the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Varnadore requested a redline version to show changes that have been made since the last copy.

This item is being carried forward to the 7:00 p.m. meeting for a first read.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

Minutes approved: April 1, 2013

James R. Freeman

James R. Freeman
City Clerk