

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 21, 2013

5:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT:

Steve McFarlin, Mayor
Lorraine Huhn, Vice Mayor
Jim Parent, Commissioner
Marvin Shavlan, Commissioner
Melinda Pletcher, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:

Mike Bonfield, City Manager
Steve Hallock, Director of Public Services Department
George Kinney, Director of Community Development Department
Mary Jo Murphy, Recording Secretary

1. **Presentation by Michael Baker Jr., Inc.**

Jerry Dabkowski, project manager with Michael Baker Jr., Inc., and his staff – Susan Harden, Anita Bullock and John Fennel - gave a presentation about highlights from the CRA public meeting, breakfast meet and greet with local merchants, couplet discussions, community workshop and community walks.

Mayor McFarlin asked for public comments.

Deborah Schechner, Boca Ciega Isle Drive, spoke against the couplet concept.

Tom Rodgers, Corey Avenue, commended the Commission for going forward with Community Design Week and exploring ideas for future improvements to the Corey Avenue District. Mr. Rodgers spoke in favor of the couplet concept and thought it would be beneficial to the city.

Michael Lehman, 535 80th Avenue, spoke in favor of the project. Mr. Lehman asked for clarification from Mr. Dabkowski about the level of service and traffic flow with the signal at 75th and Corey.

Jerry Dabkowski, project manager with Michael Baker Jr., Inc., explained the levels of service with 75th and Blind Pass Road. Mr. Dabkowski summarized that with the couplet project in place today, with existing traffic, the intersection would operate at a better level of service. Projecting into the year 2035, which DOT requires, the intersection would operate at a failing level of service if the couplet project is not in place.

Deborah Martohue, 9150 Blind Pass Road, spoke in favor of the couplet project not only for traffic flow and parking but for opportunities on 75th and Gulf Boulevard for street furniture, landscaping and lighting.

Joanne Lentino, 7010 Boca Ciega Drive, St. Pete Beach, posed questions about the library expansion and parking, historical properties, and the possibility of a high-end boutique hotel at the end of Corey to capitalize on the sunrise to sunset theme.

Mayor McFarlin asked Mr. Dabkowski or Ms. Harden to address the questions.

Susan Harden, Michael Baker Jr., Inc., replied to Ms. Lentino's questions. In reference to the library parking, the shared parking would be when the library hours are not in operation. In terms of historic properties, it is a voluntary program; therefore, there is a recommendation that people should look at designating or contributing their building as historic. Lastly, the final question was in reference to the vista that must be maintained to the water with the possibility of a hotel. The city would work with a developer and show a footprint of a shared type of public amenity in addition to a hotel facility.

Harry Metz, 504 Pass-a-Grille Way, spoke about concerns with the traffic flow of the couplet project but spoke in favor of beautifying Corey Avenue as soon as possible.

Jerry Dabkowski, project manager with Michael Baker Jr., Inc., replied to Mr. Metz's concerns with a summary of FDOT's requirements and discussions with the fire chief for future design plans to accommodate the traffic flow on 73rd Avenue and Gulf Boulevard.

Mayor McFarlin asked for public comments and there were no further comments.

Vice Mayor Huhn thanked all the participants with Michael Baker Jr., Inc.

Commissioner Parent thanked all the residents for providing input in the sessions involved with the Corey Avenue project. Commissioner Parent commented that he does have concerns with reference to the couplet, the Corey Avenue project and the budget that will be involved, using CRA or local tax dollars, but believes there is so much potential in the area and the City should move forward with the project.

Commissioner Shavlan spoke in support of the Corey Avenue project and the couplet. Commissioner Shavlan encouraged everyone to embrace change and to move forward with the projects.

Commissioner Pletcher complimented everyone with Michael Baker Jr., Inc. on their community meetings and staff meetings.

Mayor McFarlin commented it was the City's responsibility to change the configuration of the City to attract investors and spoke in favor of the plan.

Commissioner Parent spoke very much in favor of enticing the Secrets of the Sea to come to the City of St. Pete Beach. Commissioner Parent also posed a question to Ms. Harden about what happens if there is no couplet.

Susan Harden, Michael Baker Jr., Inc., stated they would still look at Corey Avenue and small enhancements on Gulf Boulevard but that it would not have the same impact as the couplet.

Commissioner Parent suggested to Ms. Harden that the graphic packages should demonstrate what the directional signage will be. Ms. Harden replied that it will be a part of their project.

City Manager Bonfield thanked everyone in the public for their participation. Also, City Manager Bonfield thanked the consultants with Michael Baker Jr., Inc.; George Kinney, Director of the Community Development Department; and Chelsey Welden, Urban Planner, for their hard work.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Note: No signatures needed for Workshop.