



PLANNING SERVICES

THE UPSIDE *of* FLORIDA

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD**

**September 12, 2017**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Paul Ritz, Danny Grundhoefer, Kurt Larson, Nathan Monk

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jared Moore, Kyle Owens, Nina Campbell

**STAFF PRESENT:** Brandi Deese, Assistant Planning Services Administrator, Leslie Statler, Planner  
Ericka Burnett, City Clerk

**OTHERS PRESENT:** William T. Butler, Diane Mack, Kamal Hossain

**AGENDA:**

- Quorum/Call to Order
- Swearing In of Members
- Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 8, 2017
- New Business:
  1. Request for Preliminary Plat Approval for Aguada Creek Subdivision
  2. Request for Site Plan Approval for 4771 North 9th Avenue (North 9th Avenue Corridor Management Overlay District)
  3. Consider LDC Amendment 12-2-21 Palafox Historic Business District
- Open Forum
- Adjournment

**Call to Order / Quorum Present**

Chairman Ritz called the meeting to order at 2:11 pm with a quorum present.

**Swearing in of members** – Paul Ritz was sworn in by the City Clerk’s Office.

Mr. Larson nominated Mr. Ritz for Chairman, seconded by Mr. Grundhoefer, and it carried unanimously.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Larson made a motion to approve the August 8, 2017 minutes, seconded by Mr. Monk, and it carried unanimously.

**Request for Preliminary Plat Approval for Aguada Creek Subdivision**

Ms. Deese requested this item be delayed to the last agenda item due to travel time for the developers traveling from Mississippi. The Board agreed.

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**Request for Site Plan Approval for 4771 North 9th Avenue (North 9th Avenue Corridor Management Overlay District)**

Ms. Deese advised the owner's representative was available to discuss the project. This project was initially reviewed by the Board at their meeting on July 11, 2017. It has been revised based upon the comments and suggestions of the Board. Chairman Ritz addressed the increase of landscape at 9<sup>th</sup> and Springdale, the windows, the addition of brick on all sides and lighting features. He found this current version more attractive. Mr. Grundhoefer advised the client had addressed several concerns in decreasing the asphalt and adding landscape. There was also improvement with the brick detail and the proportions of the windows. Mr. Larson noted the trash enclosure at the southeast corner, and Ms. Deese advised the owner was willing to address the enclosure, and the Code would require it as well.

Mr. Hossain addressed the Board and stated the changes would improve the corner. He explained the trash enclosure would also be dealt with along with any other improvements required by the Board. Chairman Ritz preferred the changes from stucco to brick, and the revised version was a vast improvement and adhered to the requirements of the overlay district.

Mr. Grundhoefer suggested if the sidewalk could be pushed back or shifted to the west with a landscape buffer, possibly Asiatic jasmine, it would buffer the pedestrian and vehicular traffic and be much safer on 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Hossain advised they would take this suggestion into consideration. Ms. Deese advised this was a DOT street, and although it was a great idea, the Board would be limited in its authority.

Mr. Monk stated everyone had worked hard to improve the aesthetics of this section of town, and was hoping the actual construction once completed would continue to maintain this aesthetic in elevating this part of town.

Mr. Grundhoefer suggested the decorative base be a darker color brick, and since the handicap stall is usually placed at the center for convenience and usually empty, it allows more visibility of the front. Mr. Hossain advised they would also take this into consideration.

Ms. Mack addressed the Board and advised she was very happy with the process and efforts of everyone involved in this project. She was looking forward to sharing the new development with the neighborhood association and would be encouraging them to become patrons.

Chairman Ritz appreciated the civic involvement, and Mr. Larson thanked Mr. Grundhoefer for volunteering his assistance with the project. **Mr. Larson then made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Grundhoefer, and it carried unanimously.**

**Consider LDC Amendment 12-2-21 Palafox Historic Business District**

City Council, at their August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting, referred to this Board for consideration a Land Development Code Amendment for Section 12-2-21 Palafox Historic Business District. Recently, the Architectural Review Board (ARB) has interpreted the Code to authorize the denial of internally illuminated signage within the Palafox Historic Business District (PHBD). Two of the applicants chose to file an appeal to ARB's decision. City Council reversed the ARB decision on both occasions based on lack of specific prohibition within the Code. The amendment for Section 12-2-21 prohibits internal illumination with the exception of individual lettering of a sign shall be permitted.

Chairman Ritz informed he was at some of the meetings dealing with this issue and recalled the YMCA signage. Mr. Larson stated this falls in line with the question from the Holiday Inn with the individual letters being lit from behind or inside. He was instructed by Ms. Deese there was nothing in the code to address it specifically. **Mr. Larson made a motion to approve this addition to the LDC and then withdrew it for further discussion.**

Ms. Deese stated the YMCA signage was appealed followed by the Holiday Inn's signage on Main Street. In both instances, the ARB stated no internal illumination was allowed. During the discussion, the sign contractor for the Holiday Inn proposed lighting the letters instead of the entire panel, but ARB denied this suggestion as well. Ms. Deese stated this seemed to be a good compromise between what the hotel brand, the owner, or the sign contractor wanted and ARB's desire.

The amendment language was drafted by City Council since ARB is not a recommending body and does not have authority in legislation. The amendment, sponsored by Council President Spencer, was forwarded to the Planning Board for a recommendation back to City Council. Ms. Deese explained the Board could recommend approval as is, deny, or recommend changes. Mr. Grundhoefer stated if this was enforced, the YMCA with 4' illuminated letters would be a candidate. He objected to illuminated letters as well as illuminated signs in a historic district. Chairman Ritz advised the overall size of the letters might need to be considered, as in the case of the large YMCA sign. Ms. Deese clarified that some of the projects mentioned were in the historic district versus the PHBD, and the size of signage is increased in the PHBD. She advised there was an item on the ARB agenda at One Palafox Place for a large tenant who is asking for variances for several things, but it would relate to this since they have internal illumination on all three sides of their building. They also have a monument sign with illuminated lettering, which would meet the definition of this Code.

Mr. Monk was concerned with the continued compromise of the ordinance; we think we won't get new businesses with our existing ordinance. But he pointed out in the Franklin, Tennessee area, national chains were bending over backwards to change their signage and their aesthetics to blend in with the downtown historic district. He explained if the businesses want to be here, we should stand firm and they will comply. You either want bright lights or preservation of the historic aesthetic. Mr. Larson liked the individual letters which were backlit. Ms. Deese clarified if the Board wanted the lettering to be backlit or reverse channel, the appropriate language would have to be prohibiting internal illumination altogether. Chairman Ritz advised if the Board stated internally illuminated signs shall be prohibited, that would answer the problem, and ARB could then enforce the rule in the district. Mr. Monk recommended a letter going forward with this recommendation explaining the Board's reasoning.

Mr. Grundhoefer asked if the PHBD was in the ARB purview, and Ms. Deese stated it was. She pointed out there is specific language prohibiting illumination in the Pensacola Historic District but not in the PHBD which explained why there was an issue with the YMCA and the Holiday Inn. The ARB enforces 12-2-21. There is nothing to prohibit illumination in the PHBD, but the ARB thought it inappropriate which resulted in the appeals.

**Mr. Larson made a motion that stops the sentence after the word "prohibited" with a period. (Internally illuminated signs shall be prohibited.) Council could then make the determination to accept or reject.**

**Mr. Monk seconded the motion.** Chairman Ritz stated this would give the ARB a position from which to rule. Mr. Grundhoefer explained the ARB was attempting to maintain and preserve the integrity and history of the city, and if the Planning Board also has that as a mantra, then the Board should be proud to take that on as well. Mr. Larson stated Starbucks bent over backwards to get into Disney, and their signs are architecturally compliant with that environment. He stated we should be asking the businesses coming to Pensacola to meet the vision of the community. **With no other discussion, the motion carried unanimously.**

At this point, Ms. Deese had not heard from the applicants for Item 1, but the surveyor was available, and the Board returned to Item 1.

#### **Request for Preliminary Plat Approval for Aguada Creek Subdivision**

Ahi Esta LLC has submitted a request for Preliminary Plat approval for "Aguada Creek" subdivision. The townhouse development is proposed to be located on a .6027-acre site bounded by S. Intendencia Street on the south and S. Spring Street on the east. It is currently vacant. The proposed Preliminary Plat consists of 14 lots which measure at least 20 feet in width. This development is located within the C-2 zoning district as well as being within the boundary of the Dense Business Area (DBA); the maximum density within the DBA is 135 dwelling units per acre. The proposed development complies with this standard. Although the provisions of the district eliminate the building setbacks, allowing for zero-lot lines on all sides, DBA has a maximum front setback of 10 feet.

The minimum parking required for townhouse developments is 1 parking space per unit as cited in LDC Section 12-3-1(B); the developer intends to meet this requirement with garages accessed from the interior of the development. The Preliminary Plat has been routed through the various City departments and utility providers.

William Butler addressed the Board and stated the comments from Engineering were addressed by the developer. He advised the ingress/egress for the site would be performed in agreement with the Board and the LDC by the project engineer which was noted on the drawing (General Notes, No. 7). Chairman Ritz reminded the Board this was preliminary plat approval. The survey indicated all easements for the project.

Ron Ladner and Rimmer Covington (owner-developer) then arrived to speak to the item. Mr. Grundhoefer indicated he was happy to see townhouses on the street with rear access to garages. Mr. Covington explained they would use an underground protection system for storm-water. The garages would be on grade, stepping up 3' for the units. Mr. Ladner stated their architect was Bruce Toler. He pointed out there was a need for units locals could afford, and they were doing their best to meet that need.

Mr. Monk advised he liked the location which did not disrupt the existing neighborhood. **Mr. Monk made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Larson. Mr. Grundhoefer asked if part of the motion could be that the Board was accepting their responses and would see those items in the final plat. The amendment was accepted. This amendment confirmed that the ingress/egress was on Spring Street and storm-water retention, all of which was described by the applicant and accepted by the Board.** Mr. Ladner asked if there would be a problem with an entrance on Spring Street. Mr. Grundhoefer stated the problem would be the proximity of the driveway near the intersection. **The motion then carried unanimously.**

**Open Forum** – As Chairman, Mr. Ritz explained he will be attending the Boards, Authorities and Commissions Annual Report and Recognition Reception.

**Adjournment** – With no further business, Chairman Ritz adjourned the meeting at 3:21 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brandi C. Deese  
Secretary to the Board