

MINUTES
BAY OAKS RECREATIONAL CAMPUS
ADVISORY BOARD (BORCAB)
Town Hall
2525 Estero Blvd.
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Thursday, January 24, 2019

DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Chair Simpson.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Members present: Dan Allers, Becky Bodnar, Lee Melsek and Betty Simpson.

Excused: Janna Holmes and Rae Sprole.

Absent: Dave Anderson

Staff present: Interim Director Alison Giesen and Sarah Mayher.

Council liaison: Tracey Gore

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 20, 2018

MOTION: BORCAB Member Allers moved to approve the minutes; second by BORCAB Member Bodnar.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT - no public comment.

VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Topps Center Redevelopment Project

Al Quattrone from Quattrone & Associates, Inc. was retained by the owner of the Topps property to look at redevelopment opportunities. He indicated that he was trying to get an understanding of the needs and aspirations of the community and ways to strengthen the civic core through a redevelopment project. He reported that it was a 2.16-acre site, nearly 100% impervious, no surface water management, no buffering and no sidewalks. He described the expired CPD (Commercial Planned Development), the Master Concept Plan, the neighborhood condition and Bay Oaks, redevelopment plans and goals, walkable streets, original zoning and conceptual layout, cons of project, schematic of redevelopment and cons, deviation for a 40-room hotel, detailed layout of hotel, retail, restaurant and personal services, sidewalks to connect to Bay Oaks, blowup of the front of the property and photos of vision after completion. He indicated that they will seek to

increase the multiplier from 2.5 to 3 so a 40-room hotel could be constructed and they would continue to pursue the offsite parking deviation.

BORCAB Member Allers questioned how their development would tie into Bay Oaks, especially since Gulf Beach Rd. was higher in elevation. Mr. Quattrone replied that they would create green space with sidewalks and buffering to create a walking corridor. He indicated that the details to connect the properties still had to be worked out.

BORCAB Member Melsek questioned why Mr. Quattrone was presenting to BORCAB. Chair Simpson replied that they requested an opportunity to present their plan. Mayor Gore added that they wanted feedback specifically from BORCAB regarding how to enhance Bay Oaks and the pool area. BORCAB Member Melsek questioned Mr. Quattrone's ideas for enhancing Bay Oaks. He responded that they were interested in cleaning up the area and installing buffering and sidewalks in order to create a direct or indirect benefit to Bay Oaks.

BORCAB Member Bodnar asked what they would create from Estero to Bay Oaks. Mr. Quattrone responded that they would install a landscape buffer between the pavement on Gulf Beach Rd. and their project and a sidewalk within their property limits.

BORCAB Member Allers did not see how it would open up a corridor to Bay Oaks from the picture shown. He questioned whether the developer was open to reconfiguring the layout to create a better view corridor to Bay Oaks. Mr. Quattrone replied that they were open to suggestions and he commented that they would turn the building parallel to Estero Blvd.

Chair Simpson stated that enhancing the visibility to Bay Oaks was one of their priorities. BORCAB Member Bodnar questioned whether it backed up to Tropical Way. Mr. Quattrone replied that building a sidewalk from Estero to Bay Oaks would provide access. He noted that Gulf Beach Rd. bisected their property from Bay Oaks and they would clean up the road.

BORCAB Member Melsek questioned what they planned to do with the property at the canal. Mr. Quattrone envisioned a pool, amenity center and parking. He noted they may use the canal for kayaks or passive recreation.

BORCAB Member Allers questioned whether they would be willing to incorporate part of their green space as part of the Bay Oaks fitness trail, if it came to fruition. Mr. Quattrone replied that they were open to see how it would integrate into their vision. Chair Simpson questioned how the retail shops connected to the restaurant. Mr. Quattrone noted that everything in red was a building on Estero Blvd.

BORCAB Member Melsek questioned whether they would permit Bay Oaks to utilize the kayak launch on their property. Mr. Quattrone commented that he would have to discuss it with the property owners. BORCAB Member Melsek commented that it was a lot of building for a 2-acre lot. He questioned whether the owners would be interested in donating money to Bay Oaks. He stated that the first thing the owners should do is talk to the surrounding property owners. BORCAB Member Allers was not opposed to the project, but he expressed concern regarding opening up visibility to Bay Oaks.

BORCAB Member Melsek questioned when they planned to present to the LPA (Local Planning Agency). Mr. Quattrone replied in 30 to 45 days. BORCAB Member Allers questioned their timeframe from start to finish. Mr. Quattrone was not sure.

Chair Simpson commented on the size of the project for the space. She questioned their next step. BORCAB Member Allers questioned how Mayor Gore felt about the project. She indicated that, as an elected official, she wanted to do what the people wanted. Personally, she felt it may be too big for the property. BORCAB Member Allers agreed that it was pretty big, but something had to happen there. He was interested in the neighbors' opinions. Chair Simpson thought they were going to present more benefits to Bay Oaks. Mr. Quattrone replied that they wanted to present what they envisioned and also to learn from BORCAB what may help Bay Oaks. BORCAB Member Melsek questioned whether there would be a buffer between the hotel and Bay Oaks. Mr. Quattrone replied that they envisioned an easy walk from the hotel to Bay Oaks without going on Estero. They were interested in putting green space back into the area. Mayor Gore stated that a lot of what they were asking for was allowed by right. Requested deviations could possibly be exchanged for public benefit.

Chair Simpson opened the discussion for public comment.

- Larry Abramoff, Tropical Shore Way, asked whether all three buildings were two stories over parking, how many spaces were required by code for all combined uses and what was the plan to mitigate the impact on their homes. He noted the traffic would be funneled to their street and he expressed concern regarding noise from the tiki bar.

- Delbert Clark, Estero Blvd., indicated that it would be nice to have a grocery store at the location. He discussed moving the trolley stop closer to Town Hall and he suggested that the crosswalk be relocated closer to Gulf Beach Rd. He questioned whether they could generate the revenue needed for their project.

- Leon Moyer noted that a crossover pedestrian bridge with an elevator accessible to the public might alleviate a lot of traffic stoppage on Estero Blvd. He noted they could use the property for something other than a commercial/residential project.

Public comment closed.

BORCAB Member Melsek agreed that a crosswalk was needed across from the project for access to the beach. He encouraged neighbors to attend the LPA meeting to provide feedback. Mayor Gore stated that she would talk to Town Manager Hernstadt and ask if he would contact the county regarding the crosswalk.

Mr. Quattrone indicated that the height of the hotel building would be two stories over parking but within the development parameters. They envisioned one or two stories for the retail building on Estero. He stated that they will look at neighborhood impact issues. He agreed that they would like a crosswalk across Estero Blvd. that lined up with Gulf Beach Rd. He understood the desire for a grocery store but that was beyond his control. He was not sure why Topps did not survive in that location.

BORCAB Member Melsek questioned what Community Development thought about the project. Planner Sarah Propst replied that staff did not review the project but they thought they needed to do more research. They recommended that they contact BORCAB for their ideas. Mayor Gore stated that it was mandatory to contact the neighbors regarding the project.

BORCAB Member Melsek did not think it was appropriate for BORCAB to deal with what they could or could not do for Bay Oaks. He stated that they needed to discuss their plans with the neighborhood before doing anything else and he did not think that BORCAB should be in the middle of it. BORCAB Member Allers commented that Bay Oaks was a neighbor and their input was just as valuable. .

Mr. Quattrone appreciated the opportunity to present their plan and they will talk with the neighborhood. BORCAB Member Allers suggested that people structure their questions around what they could offer them to mitigate what they were already allowed to build.

B. Mayor & Council Initiative Update

Parks & Rec Staff Sarah Mayher noted that she will contact the liaison of CRAB (Community Resource Advisory Board) regarding a joint session. The next meeting for CRAB is scheduled for February 12, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. and she will inquire whether that meeting would work for a joint session. She will let members know the outcome.

C. Department Update

Staff is working to consolidate the strategic plan. BORCAB Member Melsek questioned whether a permanent Director would be hired. Mayor Gore replied that the Town Manager put Interim Director Giesen in charge to see how it would work out. Chair Simpson stated that they were lucky to have Alison Giesen as their interim Director.

BORCAB Member Allers questioned whether dogs were allowed on the Bay Oaks campus. Staff replied that signs indicated that no dogs were allowed except for service animals. Director Giesen noted that legally they were allowed to ask two questions regarding service animals and she will get the information to BORCAB.

C. Bayfront Park & New Parcel

Director Giesen noted that they were scheduled for a joint session with Council on February 7 at 1:00 p.m. Chair Simpson requested an alternate date. Director Giesen will see if they could swap the date with another advisory committee. Consensus was reached that March would be a more suitable date for BORCAB members.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

VIII. MEMBER ITEMS

BORCAB Member Allers welcomed Interim Director Giesen.

BORCAB Member Bodnar described her visit to the art museum at the Florida International University in Miami.

BORCAB Member Melsek questioned who the lobbyist was. Mayor Gore replied that he was Ron Brook and she could get his information to BORCAB. Discussion ensued regarding applying for recreational grants through the Town's lobbyist. Director Giesen described the grants received for The Mound House.

Town Manager Hernstadt did not think that they would be able to speak with the lobbyist because legislature was in session. He noted that lobbyist activities were controlled by Council and BORCAB could provide input at a meeting. BORCAB Member Melsek asked whether the lobbyist pursued recreational grants. Town Manager Hernstadt replied that limited grants with specific limitations were available by the state. He indicated that Director Giesen could look at the list of available grants. Regarding federal recreational grants, Town Manager Hernstadt stated that those grants were typically more restrictive and they did not have a federal lobbyist, but they would take a look at them.

Discussion ensued regarding whether money from the oil companies on the Gulf was available. Town Manager Hernstadt thought the money had to do with the Horizon spill disaster, but that they would look into all opportunities. He explained that building new facilities versus maintenance were two separate items regarding grants.

BORCAB Member Melsek preferred that a new building be constructed. Town Manager Hernstadt stated that it would require a financial commitment by the Town. He suggested starting a conversation with Council at their joint session. He indicated that their lobbyist was rated within the top five in the state and he could not make multiple trips to the Town.

BORCAB Member Allers questioned whether the new parcel would fall in the category of a new structure. Town Manager Hernstadt replied that it depended on the amenity and there was no harm in trying.

Chair Simpson welcomed Director Giesen and looked forward to working with her. She asked why their meeting date changed and she noted that she had a conflict with their February 28, 2019 meeting. BORCAB Member Bodnar indicated she was not available either. Chair Simpson asked whether staff would investigate whether they could go back to meeting on the second Thursday of the month.

Mayor Gore noted that the Beach Kids Foundation was not hosting the Easter egg hunt this year because BORCAB picked up the event.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: BORCAB Member Allers moved to adjourn the meeting; second by BORCAB Member Bodnar.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Adopted April 25, 2019 with/without changes. Motion by _____
(DATE)

Vote: _____ Signature: 

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