



**CITY OF MELBOURNE
BABCOCK STREET COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT
AGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
March 2, 2010 ♦ 5:30 P.M.**

1. A special meeting of the Babcock Street Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee was held in the City Council Chamber, 900 East Strawbridge Avenue, and was called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Chairman, John Edmiston.
2. All present gave the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
3. The following members were:

Present: John Edmiston, Chairman
 Lawrence Wuensch, Vice-Chairman
 Nancy Garmer, Member
 Jim Ridenour, Member
 Karen Harshaw, Member
 Carl Beneduci, Member
 Chris Campanaro, Alternate Member

Absent: Neil Long, Member
 Ken Levesque, Alternate Member (Excused)

Also Present: Tami Gillen, Assistant City Engineer
 Doug Dombroski, Economic and Redevelopment Coordinator
 Angela Howard, Recording Secretary

4. **Phase II Realignment Workshop**

Mr. Edmiston thanked everyone for attending the workshop.

Mr. Dombroski gave a brief overview of the Phase II realignment; the technical summation was given by Tami Gillen, Assistant City Engineer.

The project encompasses the north end of Babcock Street and Laurie Street, north to U.S. Highway 1.

The first phase of the project was completed in 2004, which realigned Ballard Drive and Babcock Street. Below are some of the existing conditions in the second phase of the project.

- Northbound traffic bottleneck – One through lane from Laurie Street to Highway US 1
- One Southbound travel lane from US 1
- Non-conforming parking presents dangerous conditions
- Lack of pedestrian sidewalks
- Area lacks landscape enhancements

Staff reviewed several photos demonstrating the current traffic, sidewalk, and parking conditions.

Mr. Dombroski then listed improvements the project intends to make:

- Additional Northbound and Southbound lanes improves traffic level of service
- Removal of non-conforming parking eliminates potential accidents
- Additional public surface parking for area businesses (11 spaces)
- Sidewalk installation and crosswalk improvements for pedestrian travel and safety
- Landscape & paver enhancements to improve the appearance of the district

Ms. Gillen displayed the Engineering plans and pointed out details of the changes. She stated that the project was not only to increase capacity, but to improve the esthetics of the area.

Questions from the audience pertained to access to Babcock Street from Laurie Street. There was a concern that the only entrance to Babcock from Laurie Street would be blocked by two lanes of traffic headed north on Babcock Street.

There was also a complaint presented about the closure of Laurie Street to Highway US1.

Ms. Gillen reviewed the history behind the traffic flow change on Laurie Street for those that were may have not been unaware. She said as she understood it, FDOT recommended that the City prohibit the traffic from turning left onto US1 from Laurie Street due to traffic safety issues. If FDOT's recommendation's were ignored the City would be liable for accidents at that intersection.

An audience attendee asked if a traffic light could be installed at Laurie Street and Babcock Street. Ms. Gillen stated a signal warrant study could be conducted at the intersection of Laurie Street and Babcock Street. She said if a traffic light is warranted one could be installed, however, Engineering must first verify there is a problem to justify the expensive of a mast arm signal.

Mr. Wuesnch asked how much the study would cost and how long it would take to be conducted.

Ms. Gillen said her best estimate for the cost of a signal warrant is approximately \$8,000 and the report could be completed in approximately three weeks after a successful study.

A workshop attendee, who is an Engineer by profession, expressed that a study should have been conducted before the final plans were drafted to see how two lanes of traffic would affect the intersection. Therefore, if a traffic light were warranted, mast arms could have been designed into the project instead of after a completed project.

Mr. Wuensch agreed that the mast arms and crosswalks should be reviewed now instead of after the completion of the project.

Mr. Edminston said that the study was done several years ago and a signal was not warranted.

Ms. Harshaw said she was surprised that signs reading "Do not block intersection" were not posted at Laurie Street for northbound traffic.

Ms. Gillen announced that the installation of the signs could be accomplished quickly.

An audience attendee pointed out that there is not enough roadway for a U-turn, to travel south on Babcock Street at the intersection of Laurie Street and Babcock Street.

Mr. Edmiston summarized the areas of concern for the committee:

- Additional parking on Poinciana Drive
- U-turn difficulties at the intersection of Laurie Street and Babcock Street
- Traffic count at the intersection of Laurie Street and Babcock Street

Moved (Wuensch/Ridenour) for Staff to bring the three points of concern back to the committee prior to making a recommendation on the realignment plans to Council.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Facade Program Preliminary Application Reviews**

Mr. Dombroski presented two new applications for the Façade Program in a PowerPoint presentation.

24 S. Babcock Street -The Basil Leaf Restaurant:

- Owners/Applicants are Nell & Marlin Gehrke
- Proposed Exterior Improvements
- Rough Carpentry, Finish Carpentry, Electrical, Roofing, Painting, Shutters, Site work
- Estimated Cost= \$55,026
- Grant Request= \$20,000 full amount
- Guidelines allow roofing to be covered if it is seen in the elevation
- Received ARB approval

Mr. Dombroski pointed out that the roofing cost is covered in the application because the roof is noticeable from the elevation. He also mentioned that all permit costs were deducted from the cost estimate still leaving an amount eligible for the full funding.

Mr. Dombroski asked if there were any questions from the committee.

Mr. Wuensch asked if the owner had plans to change the use of the property after their improvements.

Mr. Dombroski said he had no knowledge of that; furthermore, the guidelines do not prohibit an owner from making a use change to their property.

The project Contractor, Erick Diaz with Allied Development Group, gave additional details on the site improvements.

Mr. Wuensch asked if parking improvements are eligible under the grant program.

Mr. Dombroski replied that they are eligible expenses only in conjunction with exterior building improvements.

Moved (Ridenour/Wuensch) to recommend approval to Council for façade improvements at 24 S. Babcock St. in the amount of \$20,000.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dombroski pointed out that in their guidelines, a second review is made by the committee to give the applicant an opportunity to clarify any questions the committee may have prior to Council recommendation.

By general consensus, the committee agreed to omit the 2nd review of the application, since there were no further questions or issues, and forward the recommendation to Council.

108 S. Babcock Street-Dragonfly Karate & Land of Spice:

- Owner/Applicants- Nell & Marlin Gehrke
- Proposed Exterior Improvements
- Finish Carpentry/trim, Doors, electrical, painting, Roofing, Site Work
- Estimated cost of exterior eligible improvements \$28,140
- Grant Request- \$14,070 half of the qualifying improvement amount
- Flat roofing does not qualify, but the cost for the canopy will be covered
- Received ARB approval

Moved (Ridenour/Harshaw) to approve the façade application for 108 S. Babcock Street with a funding amount of \$14,070.

Motion carried unanimously.

By general consensus, the committee agreed to omit the 2nd review of the application and forward the request to Council, since there were no further questions or issues.

6. Additional Discussion

Mr. Dombroski reminded the committee that their next regular meeting is scheduled for March 17, 2010.

7. Adjournment

Moved (Ridenour) to adjourn meeting at 6:35 P.M.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Angela Howard, Recording Secretary