

CITY OF MELBOURNE, FLORIDA  
MINUTES – WORKSHOP MEETING BEFORE CITY COUNCIL  
JANUARY 10, 2006



A workshop meeting of the City Council was held in the City Council Chamber, 900 East Strawbridge Avenue, and was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Harry C. Goode, Jr.

1. Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Roll Call.

Present:	Harry C. Goode, Jr.	Mayor
	Richard Contreras	Council Member, District 1
	Mark LaRusso	Council Member, District 2
	Kathy Meehan	Council Member, District 3
	Grace Walker	Council Member, District 4
	Cheryl Palmer	Council Member, District 5
	Loretta Isenberg-Hand	Vice Mayor, District 6
	Jack M. Schluckebier, Ph.D.	City Manager
	Paul R. Gougelman, III	City Attorney
	Cathleen A. Wysor	City Clerk
	Amy W. Elliott	Deputy City Manager
	Howard Ralls	Deputy City Manager
	Cindy Dittmer	Planning & Economic Development Director

3. Council Discussion Re: Downtown Melbourne Redevelopment Plan

Mayor Goode asked Planning and Economic Development Director Cindy Dittmer to introduce the item. He noted that after Council consideration, an ordinance amending Chapter 10 of the City Code will be presented to Council for action at a future meeting.

Mrs. Dittmer reported that in the spring of 2005, the City contracted with Strategic Planning Group to update the existing Downtown Melbourne Redevelopment Plan. The consultant and staff held a series of public meetings and notified all property owners within the existing and proposed Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) boundaries. Additionally, the CRA Advisory Committee has discussed the proposed plan over the past few months. Mrs. Dittmer concluded by introducing Robert Gray from Strategic Planning Group.

Robert Gray, Chairman/CEO, Strategic Planning Group, provided an overview of the plan.

The following are highlights of the proposed projects for redevelopment presented within the existing CRA boundary:

- Promote the North Riverview area for higher density mixed-use projects.
- Promote the West New Haven area as a medical and arts district, due to established medical and arts components, i.e., Henegar Center, existing medical offices, proximity to the hospital.
- Recommended strategies for West New Haven include continuation of streetscape, entrance feature at New Haven and U. S. 192, create hospital linkage on Hickory.

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- Keep the retail core intact as the retail hub, primary location for retail and entertainment. Segregate from medical offices on West New Haven, east of Hickory to remain retail core. Maintain the scale within the retail core to three to four stories.
- Encourage high-density residential projects around perimeter of the retail core (U. S. 1, Strawbridge, Melbourne Avenue) to provide “critical mass”.
- Capital improvement projects specific to the retail core include traffic calming measures on Melbourne Avenue, Strawbridge Avenue and U. S. 1; redirection of traffic from Melbourne Avenue into the retail district; installation of gateway signage in key locations; update existing streetscape within the retail core; construct a parking garage.
- Expand Front Street Park in the harbor area through capital improvements. Specifically, construct a pier and provide increased dock space.
- Encourage connectivity between the harbor area and the retail core linking water sources to retail and entertainment. Explore a pedestrian trolley from Front Street to Downtown.
- Continue streetscape improvements into the harbor area.

The following are highlights of proposed projects for the expansion area:

- Encourage high-density commercial mixed-use projects along Crane Creek in South Melbourne to provide a catalyst for redevelopment throughout the district.
- Restore the pedestrian bridge that once connected South Melbourne with Downtown.
- Increase community utilization of the 15-acre Riverview Park. Make the park the focal point of revitalization along the U. S. 1 corridor by providing desirable public access to the water. Relocate the existing boat ramps from Front Street Park into Riverview Park.
- Conduct road/infrastructure repairs in the tar heel area.
- Expand streetscape improvements along the entire southern U. S. 1 corridor.

Mr. Gray pointed out that the area is well positioned. The problem is determining how to get people back into the Downtown area. He reviewed the findings from the focus groups and stated that this is at least a 20-year vision. He added that the recommended C-3 zoning will provide for the greatest flexibility.

In response to Mayor Goode, the members of the CRA Advisory Committee and Main Street were recognized in the audience.

Council Member Cheryl Palmer asked how the boat launching facility can be moved from Front Street to Riverview Park, which doesn't have a deep water area. Mr. Gray said that the intent is to provide an area at Front Street where people can moor or dock in order to visit the Downtown Area. He said it could be a City marina; however, at a minimum we need a harbor master building. To accomplish this, the park to the south would require dredging.

Mrs. Palmer asked Mr. Gray if he believes the City could obtain permits to do this. Mr. Gray said he believes that we could. He confirmed for Mrs. Palmer that the boat launching facility

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would need to be completed and moved prior to the Front Street launching area being closed.

Mrs. Palmer said she does not want to be part of closing a launching facility without being positive that another facility would take its place. Mr. Gray agreed and stated that boating is an economic engine. The County probably doesn't have the money to alter Riverview Park. Once the park is operational, the rebound effect from tax increment financing dollars would be tremendous. He stressed that the critical area of this plan is the ability to do something with this park.

Mrs. Palmer asked if the plan is to remove historic homes from the Riverview area to allow the construction of condominiums. Mr. Gray replied that this is already going to happen. The plan acknowledges that it is going to happen and, in his opinion, this area will redevelop at a higher density. The question is whether to do this sporadically or with a plan.

Mrs. Palmer stated that she studied the plan and it looks wonderful to her. She noted that she is worried that we will eventually have a beautiful riverfront area that is restricted to people who have purchased condominiums. Mr. Gray assured Mrs. Palmer that this is not the vision they have. A critical part of this effort has been determining how to interconnect this area and the ability to access the river. The area will eventually be open with a true riverwalk. He added that during the public meetings, everyone stated that they do not want to create a wall. The harbor area they are trying to create will be far more accessible to local residents.

Continuing, Mr. Gray said that the launch area and the two parks on the north side of Melbourne Court are under-utilized. The intent of the plan is to provide for the opposite.

In response to Vice Mayor Loretta Hand, Mr. Gray said that the intent of the study is not to use eminent domain. A rezoning in the area would allow people to let the market determine how they redevelop their property.

Mayor Goode asked Mr. Gray if he believes that we need more parks and recreation. Mr. Gray said that in the redevelopment area he does not believe we need more parks land; however, it is his opinion that the current parks and recreation facilities are not utilized.

Council Member Mark LaRusso said that the Eau Gallie area has a thriving arts district. He asked if Melbourne could support two such districts. Mr. Gray said yes, definitely. He noted that the buildings in this area of Melbourne are warehousing type structures. They are perfect for a workshop environment for sculpturists, potters, artists who work with steel, etc.

Mr. LaRusso pointed out that there are a lot of parking challenges in this area of U. S. 1. Mr. Gray replied that parking is available in the back. He added that activity will result in construction of a future parking structure.

Mrs. Palmer asked Mr. Gray if he has a height limitation in mind for the mixed use residential. Mr. Gray said no, however, the market will dictate this. He added that the plan should be reviewed every five years because of market conditions.

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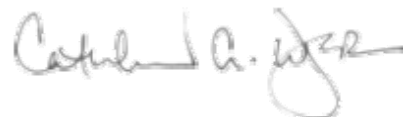
Mr. LaRusso said that the plan recommends three to four story buildings on New Haven Avenue. Mr. Gray said that is meant to provide for a village feel, which came out strongly in public meetings. He pointed out that the amount of space at ground level is finite and there is a limited market for those who want to live in the space above.

That concluded comments and questions from Council. Mr. Gray thanked Council for the opportunity and said it has been a pleasure.

4. Adjournment

Moved by Hand/Walker to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.



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City Clerk – 1/18/2006

Approved by Council: \_\_\_\_\_