MINUTES
CITY OF COCOA
PLANNING & ZONING BARD/ LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 2, 2019

The Regular Meeting of the Planning & Zoning Board/ Local Planning Agency was held on October 2, 2019 at City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL, as publically noted.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairperson Washington called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Michael Dobrin	Chairperson
Al Washington	Vice Chairperson
Todd Anderson	Board Member
Jeri Blanco	Board Member
Sherry Ervin	Board Member
Trina Gilliam	Board Member
Marilyn Green	Board Member
Aleck Greenwood	Board Member
Lawrence Koss	Board Member
Russell Sengel	Board Member
Kristin Eick	Board Attorney
Jake Williams Jr.	Board Liaison
Courtney Jackson	Recording Secretary

PRESENT:

Al Washington	Vice Chairperson
Jeri Blanco	Board Member
Sherry Ervin	Board Member
Trina Gilliam	Board Member
Marilyn Green	Board Member
Aleck Greenwood	Board Member
Russell Sengel	Board Member
Kristin Eick	Board Attorney
Jake Williams Jr.	Board Liaison

ABSENT:

Michael Dobrin	Chairperson
Todd Anderson	Board Member
Lawrence Koss	Board Member (arrived at 6:04pm)

STAFF PRESENT:
Dodie Selig, Planning & Zoning Manager, **Angela Essing**, Senior Planner, **Lorraine Koss**, Council Member, **Charlene Neuterman,** Community Services Deputy Director**, Sandra Leon,** Planner.

Vice Chairperson Washington led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America[1].

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:

1. AGENDA: Regular Meeting of October 2, 2019

* **MOTION BY BOARD MEMBER ERVIN; SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER GREEN TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 2, 2019 AS PRESENTED.**

AYES: WASHINGTON, BLANCO, ERVIN, GILLIAM, GREEN, GREENWOOD, KOSS, SENGEL

MOTION CARRIED (8-0)

2. MINUTES: Special Meeting of September 24, 2019

* **MOTION MADE BY BOARD MEMBER GREENWOOD; SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER GREEN TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 24, 2019 WITH AMENDMENTS.**

AYES: WASHINGTON, BLANCO, ERVIN, GILLIAM, GREEN, GREENWOOD, KOSS, SENGEL

MOTION PASSED UNAMIOUSLY (8-0)

III. OLD BUSINESS:

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. PZ-19-031- Large Scale Site Plan (Cocoa Gateway Entry Feature)

The City of Cocoa, Coca Redevelopment Agency, is requesting Approval of a Large Scale Site Plan entitled "Cocoa Gateway Entry Sign" to develop a parcel of land as a gateway entry feature. The subject property totals ±0.13 acres and is generally located at the southeast corner of King Street (eastbound SR 520) and Forrest Avenue. The property is more specifically identified by the Brevard County Property Appraiser as Parcel # 24-36-33-35-*-10.

Ms. Selig discussed with the Board what the site-plan entails and provided background details to how the site-plan came to its' current status.

Board Member Greenwood explained the historical importance and emphasis paddle boats have with the City of Cocoa and recommended Staff to consider enlarging the paddle boat on the sign to scale and implementing an oak tree on the site-plan since the City is known for its' oak trees. He felt with those

[1] Board member Koss entered the room at 6:04pm

recommendations implemented, it would best represent Cocoa. He also asked for clarification regarding if funding was a factor that would hold up the project.

Ms. Selig responded that funding is a separate issue and the only factor the Board is to consider is the site-plan itself.

Discussion between the **Board** and **Ms. Selig** regarding why there will not be benches added to the entry feature.

Board Member Koss asked if solar power would be incorporated into the signage.

Ms. Selig explained that solar power would be under utilities and she would not be able to answer on their behalf.

Board Member Koss recommended solar power being implemented without taking away the overall look of the signage.

Council Member Koss added that the CRA has discussed to use the older light fixtures that are on the promenade currently and using those to light the area.

Discussion between **Ms. Selig** and **Council Member Koss** regarding clarification on the light fixtures.

Board discussion regarding time it has taken to have the site-plan designed.

Board Member Greenwood explained from his understanding that the fault lies with working with the engineers in regards to the time is has taken. He also noted that the paddle boat design being enlarged was brought up at the last CRA meeting and explained that there is plenty of room to have the paddle boat enlarged. He shared that at that same CRA meeting, Janet Stewart (Past CRA Member), expressed it should be enlarged and the Planning and Zoning Board should honor her wishes wanting the paddle boats to be larger.

Mayor Williams explained that there is a lot of work that has gone into this project and each time the board makes changes, the competition time will continue to move back.

Board Member Greenwood rebutted clarifying that he is not asking for anything to change, they are just asking to enlarge the size of the paddle boat, so that people can easily see it when they drive by.

Discussion between **Board Member Blanco** and **Ms. Selig** regarding if the enlargement would be a cost to the City.

Board Member Greenwood shared a brief discussion about how at the last CRA meeting, Deputy Mayor Warner established setting funds aside for changes in the site plan.

Ms. Selig brought up the potential issues that could arise from placing a live oak tree on the parcel due to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) visual

obstruction/maintenance guidelines. She suggested that the Board pick a tree that would not interfere with the roadways as a visual obstruction to traffic and/or put the FDOT workers at risk to trim/maintain the tree.

Councilperson Koss pointed out there are designated spots for live oaks on the parcel.

Board Member Koss suggested to put the live oak in the center of the parcel and place the crepe myrtles somewhere else.

Board Member Ervin provided a follow-up suggestion for selecting the Right Tree, Right Place with the recommendation of the live oak.

Discussion between **Board Member Koss** and **Board Member Greenwood** regarding the benefits of planting live oak trees.

Board Member Koss explained how the City should pick the young live oak tree and to make sure Staff follows selection/planting guidelines set by arborists.

* **MOTION BY BOARD MEMBER ERVIN; SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER GREENWOOD TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL TO CITY COUNCIL FOR THE LARGE-SCALE SITE PLAN ENTITLED "COCOCA GATEWAY ENTRY SIGN" WITH AMENDED RECOMMENDATION TO ENLARGE THE STEAM BOAT TO SCALE AND PLACING ONE LIVE OAK TREE IN THE CENTER OF THE PARCEL IN PLACE OF THE PROPOSED CREPE MERTILES.**

AYES: WASHINGTON, ERVIN, GILLIAM, GREEN, GREENWOOD, KOSS, SENGEL

OPPOSED: BLANCO

MOTION PASSES 7-1[2]

* **NO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TOOK PLACE DUE TO NO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BEING IN ATTENDANCE.**

B. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

a. **Tree Board Update**

1. Tree-City USA Application Update:

Ms. Selig shared that the application is moving forward and has been given to Public Works. She explained that Public Works should be submitting the application shortly.

Due to technical difficulties with Board Member Gilliam's presentation- Ms. Essing was asked to present first and Board Member Gilliam second.

[2] Mrs. Neuterman left the room at 6:30pm

2. Presentation by Angela Essing (From Tree Workshop in Tampa):

Ms. Essing presented a PowerPoint[3] to update the board of the Tree Workshop she attended and shared her takeaways.

In Attendance for Tampa Tree Workshop:
-Board Member Aleck Greenwood (Planning & Zoning- representing Cocoa's Tree Board).
-Chair Jennifer Riggs (Sustainability- representing Cocoa's Sustainability Committee).
-Board Member Trina Gilliam (Planning & Zoning- representing Cocoa Tree Board and City of Rockledge).
-Abigail Diaz (Assistant City Engineer- representing of City of Cocoa).
-Matt Fuhrer (Assistant City Manager- representing City of Cocoa).
-Angela Essing (Senior Planner- representing City of Cocoa).

Board Member Discussion:

Discussion between **Board Member Ervin** and **Ms. Essing** regarding Tree Code Requirements[4] with site-plans.

Discussion between **Board Member Ervin, Board Member Greenwood,** and **Ms. Essing** regarding the length of Tampa's Tree Board experience.

Board Member Greenwood discussed how there is now a science that has developed into actual figures that can be attached trees, which has led to the drastic change of Developer's opinions regarding how trees add property value.

Ms. Essing further discussed replacement tree requirements, tree values and how value varies based on the type of tree.

Discussion between **Council Member Koss** and **Ms. Essing** regarding the topic of stormwater management and stormwater preparation discussed at the Tampa Workshop.

Vice Chair Washington expressed he wanted to know how they can spread awareness.

Ms. Essing explained that Tampa has spent 20 years to get to where they are in regards to educating citizens and it is difficult.

Mayor Williams added that Cocoa is going to add a section in their new edition of the FYI Newsletter specifically for tree education and it will be available in English and Spanish.

Vice Chairperson Washington noted that is a great idea, but does not think it is enough and more should be done.

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[3] Tampa Workshop PowerPoint
[4] 2nd to last slide for Tampa PowerPoint

Board Member Koss asked about Arbor Day.

Council Member Koss shared staff is pursuing an education grant.

Board Member Ervin expressed that with the news of climate change, spreading tree awareness with the help of the education grant is a great start.

Mayor Williams explained that state legislators are cracking down on municipalities being too involved with decisions being made with property owner's trees.

Assistant city Attorney Eick asked if House Bill (HB) 1159 has been reviewed by Staff.

Ms. Essing confirmed that they have reviewed it and they are aware of the obstacles it poses and they are working through it.

Board Member Koss further discussed Florida's Arbor Day with the room.

Board Member Greenwood expressed, in regards to HB 1159 and state legislator's opinions of municipalities being too involved, he shared that he does not feel they are dictating what someone can and cannot do with their trees on their property, he is only insisting that if there is a valuable tree on a property, that it needs to be replanted somewhere else.

Mayor Williams explained while he understands his point, that is not how the House Bill reads and he would not be able to enforce that.

Board Member Greenwood added that he will fix that and shared an example of an oak tree being taken down.

Discussion between **Board Member Sengel** and **Board Member Greenwood** regarding how **Board Member Greenwood** would define value in a tree on someone's personal property.

Board Member Sengel pointed out that yes, he agrees the trees need to be preserved and there needs to be more education regarding trees, but feels the City should not be able to dictate what to do with the trees on his property.

Mayor Williams re-emphasized the conversations that he has had with State Legislators and the feedback he has been getting, is that municipalities are getting too involved and are crossing a line with home owners dictating what they can and cannot do on their property.

Board Member Greenwood rebutted saying that they are not telling the property owners "no", but telling them "wait a minute" by telling them to plant the tree of value elsewhere in order to protect the trees and protect the aerial view of Cocoa.

Mayor Williams explained that what a tree means to him may not be the same meaning the property owner.

Discussion between **Mayor Williams** and **Board Member Greenwood** regarding how removing a tree affects the aerial view of Cocoa.

2. Presentation by Trina Gilliam:

Board Member Gilliam presented a PowerPoint[5] titled "Community Greening Project". She explained to the Board how the project idea started with her wanting more street tree planted where she lived. The PowerPoint discussed the overall benefits of trees, benefits of managing stormwater runoff, examples of how trees benefit the City specifically, trees that are appropriate for Cocoa's zone, how tree banks work, funding, and discussion of incorporating partners from the community to assist with the tree farm.

Board Member Discussion:

Discussion between **Board Member Koss** and **Board Member Greenwood** regarding the use of the tree bags.

Board and **Staff** discussion regarding Jacaranda Trees.

Vice Chair Washington asked since the trees soak up a large amount of water, if it starve the grass surrounding it.

Board Member Koss explained the trees and grass do not compete for water, rather, they share the water.

Council Member Koss added that shade would affect the grass more.

Discussion between **Vice Chair Washington**, **Board Member Koss**, and **Board Member Greenwood** regarding the structure of roots and water tables.

Discussion between **Board Member Blanco** and **Board Member Gilliam** regarding the clarification on how the temperature variations effect the canopies.

Board Member Sengel suggested partnering with the City of Rockledge or a sister city because it would cut costs.

Board Member Koss suggested involving local universities as well.

Council Member Koss added that the tree farm and the canopies would be most effective having a large area to cover and by partnering with a sister city, such as Rockledge, it would make a bigger impact.

Board Member Greenwood and **Board Member Gilliam** regarding the color changes the jacaranda tree goes through and when.

Discussion between **Board Member Green** and **Council Member Koss** regarding if it has been determined that **Abigail Diaz** would be in charge of trees.

[5] Board Member Gilliam PowerPoint

Board Member Green expressed she wanted to how Board could be more helpful when it comes to timelines for these types of projects. She pointed out it took the board 20 minutes to approve a 150 page site-plan and an hour and a half to discuss one tree. She suggested that there should be someone in charge who has a vast and extensive knowledge of trees and asked how the timeline for this project would work.

Council Member Koss pointed out with the grant they have applied for, if they receive it, it would be a 3 year process.

Timeline:
-Year 1: Tree Canopy Inventory
-Year 2: Developing Master-Tree Plan
-Year 3: Developing Storm Management Plan

Mayor Williams pointed out that funding is the current issue and trying to get training in place for maintenance.

Board Member Greenwood added that the tree board has not been enforced and that is why they lost the Tree City USA designation and are now having to go back to have it reinstated. He felt they would have more progress being completed if they never lost the designation and they were enforced the whole time.

Mayor Williams Jr. explained that the board was never discontinued, it was placed with the Code Enforcement Board, which was the wrong board for it to be with.

Board Member Greenwood expressed he was shocked to be notified by Council Member Koss that Cocoa once had a Tree City USA designation and they are now making up for lost time for the tree board not being previously enforced.

Board Member Gilliam clarified that the Tree City USA designation is just a certification, it does not add any additional powers.

Board Member Greenwood added that even if it is just a certification, there are funding benefits.

Board Member Koss shared after having several conversations with arborist, those who maintain trees on public property need to be know not to cut more than 20% or else they risk stressing the tree out, to not cut the small branches on live oak trees, and provided an explanation of where to cut.

Board Member Green pointed out that this is already an issue and is going to become a larger issue, if not addressed. She suggested if it falls under Public Works, they should have a designated full-time employee that can focus on that area.

Board Member Greenwood added that there is someone from the agricultural department that the City can use and can be made available with City Manager Titkanich's permission.

Mayor Williams clarified the City has an arborist and while he is not a full-time, he is available when the City needs him.

Board Member Green suggested that the City should invest in someone who is full-time and can serve as the point of contact for the tree board.

Board Member Banco asked if the City currently has a grant writer

Mayor Williams confirmed that they did and reminded the board that they have limited funding and resources as they are a small City.

Ms. Selig pointed out that there has be previous interest in a tree bank program and the arborist they have would be a great point of reference when researching how to implement the program in Cocoa.

Board Member Gilliam asked for a consensus that the tree farm is a good idea and if they can present to council so they can direct staff to further investigate the implementing a tree farm.

* **UNAMIOUS BOARD CONSENSUS TO PRESENT TREE FARM TO COUNCIL AND TO DIRECT STAFF TO INVESTIGATES ITS APPLICABILITY.**

Mayor Williams pointed out that there are trees at Public Works and while it is not a farm, they still have trees they keep there.

Council Member Koss shared that by adding more trees, it would significantly improve the hydrologic cycle.

Board Member Blanco expressed her appreciation for the hydrologic cycle point that was brought up because after going to Alaska where they are experiencing extreme droughts and melting glaciers, she felt this is a great opportunity to share information about climate change and spread tree conservation awareness to help the environment.

Vice Chair Washington commended **Ms. Essing** and **Board Member Gilliam** for their presentations and that each week is an educational meeting for him.

b. **Recent Development Update:**

None.

c. **Open Discussion by Board Members**

Board Member Greenwood expressed his appreciation for being part of a board that is so positive regarding an important subject that started from nothing and is excited to know that there are others that share his passion for tree conservation and education.

C. **NEXT MEETING DATE:**

Wednesday, November 6, 2019 at 6pm.

D. **ADJOURNMENT:**

* **MOTION TO ADJOURN BY BOARD MEMBER KOSS; SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER ERVIN**

AYES: WASHINGTON, BLANCO, ERVIN, GILLIAM, GREEN, GREENWOOD, KOSS, SENGEL

MOTION PASSED UNAMIOUSLY (8-0)

MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:33PM.

Michael Dobrin, Chairperson

Respectfully Submitted By:

Courtney Jackson, Recording Secretary