

~ MEETING SUMMARY ~
EAST GATEWAY STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP
August 13, 2009, 6:00 p.m.

Location: 2nd Floor Conference Room, Clearwater City Hall, 112 S. Osceola Avenue

Attendance:

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>SAG Members:</i> | Rich Levy, Vice Chair | Donna Maxa |
| | Dr. Paul Guidi | Joanna Siskin |
| | Elvira Morgan | R. Smokey Townson |
| <i>Others:</i> | Andrea Guidi (Business) | Doreen Levy (Business) |
| <i>City Staff:</i> | Tammy Vrana (Eco Dev & Housing) | |

1. Meeting Summary

The June 11, 2008, SAG meeting summary was accepted without changes.

2. New Stakeholder Advisory Group Members

New SAG members Elvira Morgan and Maryce Garber were welcomed and asked to say a few things about their views on the East Gateway District.

Elvira Morgan said that she is originally from Cuba but has been in the Tampa Bay area since 1984. She relocated to East Gateway in 1991 and opened a business (Master Learning Center). Until recently, she was relatively unaware of neighborhood dynamics although she had encounters with street people over the years. She is very interested in neighborhood beautification and helping to inform Hispanic residents and businesses about the neighborhood revitalization effort. She has noticed that the local Hispanic community in Clearwater does not express themselves culturally (e.g., through music, dance, etc.) as much as in their homelands or other adopted communities. She would like to see this change because it is a rich culture that could become a neighborhood asset.

Maryce Garber said that she is a long-time East Gateway resident and is concerned with the way the neighborhood has changed over the years, especially its appearance. However, she is encouraged by the accomplishments of the Downtown Bike Team and the Business & Neighborhood Association and has noticed slight changes for the better. She is working on establishing a mural arts district with other BNA subcommittee members.

3. Hispanic Community Engagement

T. Vrana introduced the agenda topic, stating that the views and opinions of East Gateway's Hispanic community are vital to the neighborhood revitalization process. She asked the SAG to suggest ways of increasing participation by this large population group. Everyone agreed that Hispanic community leaders, such as business owners, Mexican Council of Tampa Bay members and Hispanic Outreach Center Hispanic Leadership Council members, would be good sources of information about needs and preferences of the local Hispanic community.

Elvira Morgan, who has canvassed parts of the neighborhood to speak with Hispanic residents, said that very few have internet access and many use Metro PCS for their cell phone service. The group discussed the ability to use cell phone text messaging to access the East Gateway Spanish language Twitter site (www.twitter.com/MiVecindario) but concluded that an email address would be necessary to get text messages from Twitter. The group felt that traditional formats such as flyers, newspaper articles and other printed materials were good alternatives to electronic formats. A. Vendetti from the Hispanic Outreach Center said that broadcast media, especially radio, worked well, but that it was important that the topic of discussion be of concern to the Hispanic community (e.g., bus transport to school and work, muggings).

4. Business Community Engagement

The group was informed about ways that the East Gateway revitalization effort would benefit from business community involvement and was asked to provide input on engaging this sector of the neighborhood. Business & Neighbors Association members talked about possibly dividing their association so that business owners would have their own East Gateway forum and could devote their time to the issues that matter most to businesses. A breakfast meeting time was suggested. Also a business survey was suggested as a targeted way to build meeting agendas.

5. Project & Program Updates:

T. Vrana provide brief reports on current city projects and programs including six sidewalk construction projects; in-house design of the Gateway Feature at the Five-Points intersection; and four applications for the Façade Improvement Program.

J. Siskin reported on the new crime walk organizations fostered by the Business & Neighbors Association. She also invited SAG members to take part in the neighborhood crime walk scheduled on Thursday, August 20th at 6:45 pm at Goodyear Tire Center on Cleveland Street.

6. Other Discussion

None.

Next SAG Meeting: October 8, 2009, 6:00 pm at City Hall (2nd Floor Conference Room).

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.