

~ MEETING SUMMARY ~

EAST GATEWAY STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP
December 11, 2008, 6:00 p.m.

Location: Achieva Credit Union, 1499 Gulf to Bay Boulevard

Attendance:

SAG Members: Duggan Cooley
Dawn Dixon
Dr. Gilbert Jannelli
Donna Maxa

Joanna Siskin
R. Smokey Townson

SAG Alternates: Shelley Kuroghlian
Cole Altner

City Staff Tammy Vrana (Economic
Development & Housing)
Geri Campos Lopez (Economic
Development & Housing)

Steve Doherty (Engineering)

Others: Linda Mignone (Achieva)

1. Meeting Summary

The meeting summary from the October 2, 2008, SAG meeting was accepted without changes.

2. Clearwater Sidewalk Program

S. Doherty presented the requirements for the City's Sidewalk Program and a constructability assessment of East Gateway streets lacking sidewalks. He informed the group that the support of 51% of property owners on a block would be needed before the City would construct sidewalks. He added that residents would be responsible for the petition drive to obtain property owner support. T. Vrana referred to a map in the agenda packet indicating street segments in East Gateway with the worst pedestrian level of service (i.e., Missouri Ave, Hillcrest Ave, Franklin St, DeLeon St and Pierce St.). She indicated that these streets would be a good place to start sidewalk petition efforts unless the SAG knew of other streets in need of sidewalks.

J. Siskin asked where sidewalks are typically situated within the street right-of-way and if the City installs sidewalk on one or both sides of the street. S. Doherty said that, when feasible, sidewalks are installed within 10 feet of the property line and on both sides of the street. S. Kuroghlian asked about wider sidewalks on commercial corridors. S. Doherty indicated that the Clearwater Sidewalk Program does not address arterial streets. G. Lopez stated that pedestrian-friendly sidewalk widths along Cleveland St and Gulf to Bay Blvd in East Gateway would be determined during future streetscape design.

3. Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy

T. Vrana informed the SAG about a proposal to designate East Gateway as a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) to facilitate the achievement of East Gateway Action Program goals. A NSRA, created under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program encourages the coordination of human and economic capital for neighborhood revitalization that benefits of low to moderate income residents. Communities with approved NRSAs enjoy greater flexibility in undertaking economic development, housing and public service activities with their CDBG funds. The East Gateway District NRSA would represent the third NSRA in the City of Clearwater (North Greenwood NSRA and South Greenwood NSRA were approved in 2000). T. Vrana asked the SAG to provide input on East Gateway issues and potential solutions so they could be addressed in the final document (survey distributed).

A general discussion of issues ensued. C. Altner asked about the supplemental Police patrol in East Gateway and whether there had been any increase in crime, perhaps a result of the economic downturn. T. Vrana reported that two officers were added to the combined East Gateway and Downtown bike team and would be under the supervision of Sgt. Falcone, effective January 1, 2009. S. Kuroghlian added that the interlocal agreement between the Police (City operation) and the Community Redevelopment Agency (funding agency) requires specific performance by the Police in East Gateway. J. Siskin reported that the East Gateway Business & Neighbors Association was starting up neighborhood walks again (with Police escort). G. Jannelli stated that he has No Trespassing signs (w/associated affidavits), which allow the Police to trespass vagrants off his property. C. Altner asked if the same officers were working in East Gateway. J. Siskin replied that there had been changes in staffing and that she has noticed an improved level of commitment with the current staff (e.g., Sgt. Falcone). G. Lopez suggested that Police officers be invited to the next SAG meeting.

Note: Public hearing dates indicated at the SAG meeting have since been changed to one public hearing on March 5, 2009. Visit: www.myclearwater.com/eastgateway to view details.

4. East Gateway Façade & Building Lot Improvement Program

T. Vrana provided an overview of the draft East Gateway Façade and Building Lot Improvement Program. The grant to loan program would be offered to eligible commercial property owners on Cleveland St and Gulf to Bay Blvd for eligible projects. She indicated that the draft program was undergoing staff review and would be brought to the Community Redevelopment Agency in January or February for approval. The SAG was requested to provide input and indicate if there was general support for the program. G. Jannelli asked if the City could secure contract rates with architectural and engineering firms for design services beyond the conceptual design services offered under the program. T. Vrana stated that the varying scope of projects would make this difficult for the City to negotiate and that the customary bidding process used to secure design and construction services should arrive at the most equitable fee. There SAG unanimously supported the draft program.

5. Tot-Lot Planning

T. Vrana reported on the need for recreational opportunities within East Gateway as expressed by the community during development of the Five-Year Action Program. A recent analysis of the parkland level of service in East Gateway revealed that the City's standard is currently being met. The SAG was asked if they would support a higher level of service for parkland in East Gateway through the development of a small park with playground equipment in an area

proximate to families. With support from the SAG, City staff would move forward on the project by identifying candidate sites and preparing cost estimates for consideration by the community and the Community Redevelopment Agency. There was unanimous support by the SAG for the general lot-proposal.

6. East Gateway Business & Neighbors Association (BNA)

J. Siskin reported on the East Gateway Business & Neighbors Association, a new grassroots organization that meets the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm at Greektown Grille. The BNA is a neighborhood organization that is getting people involved in neighborhood matters. The BNA is soliciting members—all people interested in East Gateway are encouraged to attend. The BNA differs from the SAG in that it has no pre-determined life span. Alternatively, the SAG was established by the City specifically to provide guidance for the implementation of the East Gateway District Five-Year Action Program.

7. East Gateway Multicultural Event – Ciclovía

T. Vrana pitched an idea for the annual East Gateway multicultural celebration built on a SAG request for a street festival (October 2008 SAG meeting). The multicultural event would serve to further Action Program directives to: 1) hold multicultural celebrations and other special events that strive to include long-time East Gateway residents as well as newcomers to the neighborhood; 2) engage residents, businesses and other neighborhood interests in the creation and implementation of the action program; and 3) establish a unique and positive identity that instills neighborhood pride and sense of ownership.

T. Vrana described a street festival concept in a car-free environment called Ciclovía (see-kloh-VEE-uh) and requested SAG input on hosting the in East Gateway in March 2009 (Florida Bicycle Month). Unanimous support was expressed by the SAG. D. Dixon suggested holding a soapbox derby during Ciclovía. C. Altner suggested bringing artists and musicians to Ciclovía to attract a range of people and to promote arts-and-culture businesses.

8. Other Discussion

G. Lopez thanked the SAG on behalf of City Council and City administration for their time commitment to the SAG and overall interest in the revitalization of the neighborhood.

G. Jannelli asked if the SAG thought the City's contribution to CHIP should continue. He noted that St. Vincent de Paul owns the property where CHIP is located and leases it to the City. D. Maxa said she would need more information on the CHIP program before rendering an opinion. A motion was approved to add this topic to SAG's February agenda.

Next Meeting

The next SAG meetings will be on April 9, 2009, at 6:00 p.m. at Achieva Credit Union, 1499 Gulf to Bay Boulevard.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:15 p.m.