



Orange Avenue Overlay Steering Committee Minutes

September 18, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

City of Winter Park Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue | Winter Park, Florida

1. Call to Order:

Planning Director and Committee Lead Bronce Stephenson called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. Steering Committee Members Present: Bill Segal, , Sally Flynn , Sheila De Ciccio, Laura Turner, Ben Ellis, Lamont Garber, Michael Dick, Lambrine Macejewski and Bill Sullivan. Absent: Jill Hamilton-Buss and Phil Kean. Staff Present: Planning Director Bronce Stephenson; Senior Planner Allison McGillis; and Recording Secretary/Clerk Kim Breland.

2. Minutes Approval for August 21st Meeting:

Motion made by Laura Turner, seconded by Sheila De Ciccio to approve the August 21, 2019 meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously with a 9-0 vote.

3. Discussion Items:

A. Extension of Orange Avenue Overlay Steering Committee

Mr. Stephenson explained that with missing the September 3rd meeting due to Hurricane Dorian, he would be making a request to the City Commission to extend the life of the Steering Committee. He provided a draft updated meeting schedule to the Committee members indicating additional meeting dates, but would await the decision made by the Commission on the extension.

B. Orange Avenue Walkshop & Survey Discussion

Mr. Stephenson provided the Committee with the responses to the Orange Avenue survey that was given out during the Walkshop on August 20th. He explained that the most common responses were related to traffic and safety concerns. With relation to the traffic concern responses, Committee member Bill Sullivan asked for data relating to the number of vehicular trips per day on Orange Avenue. Mr. Stephenson stated that he would be providing that data along with a traffic study at a future Steering Committee meeting. The Committee went on to discuss other survey responses, which included lack of open space in the area and ways to combine the vehicular and pedestrian environment. Additionally, Mr. Stephenson explained that there was unanimous support amongst those surveyed to demolish the buildings on the Progress Point site. Committee member Bill Sullivan prepared a height map for the Committee. Mr. Stephenson added that the architect and traffic consultants were currently work on a 3-D model that would include data on all of the existing buildings on Orange Avenue. Mr. Stephenson mentioned that he would be providing the Committee with older studies that the City conducted on the area and specifically related to the Progress Point building for their reference.

C. Input from Large Property Stakeholder Meeting Discussion

Mr. Stephenson gave a brief recap of the Large Property Stakeholder meeting held on August 21st. He talked about the positive input given during the meeting. He noted the importance of having that input as part of the process from not only the large property stakeholders, but also the small property/business owners and the surrounding residential property owners as well. He informed the Committee that as part of the process, he and Senior Planner Allison McGillis had conducted meetings with neighborhoods and condo associations to get feedback from the community and to proactively provide information about the Orange Ave Overlay process. He informed the Committee that he and Mrs. McGillis would be meeting with the neighbors in the Garden Drive area on Tuesday, September 24th.

D. Progress Point Property and Orange Avenue Overlay Steering Committee Recommendation to City Commission

Mr. Stephenson reminded the Committee that recently a bid to demolish the Progress Point building and prepare the site for future development and/or sale was presented to the City Commission, but the request was denied, with Commissioners wanting to get input from the Orange Overlay process on the potential use of the Progress Point site. He stated that in its current condition, the building devalues the property and surrounding properties. He stated that numerous conversations with area residents revealed that many feel unsafe walking by the building, causing them to feel that the Orange Ave area is inaccessible and lacks the safe connectivity that they desire. Mr. Stephenson stated that he was bringing the request to the Steering Committee for discussion and a recommendation to send to the City Commission on what they would recommend for the potential demolition of the structures.

Mr. Stephenson explained that when the demolition was presented to the City Commission, there were different opinions on what should be done with the property from demolishing it to exploring what, if anything could be done with the existing buildings on the site. He stated that property evaluations showed that the value of the property was decreased with the existing structures on the site, as the buildings had no usable life. He remarked that a separate economic analysis from GAI stated that the property had no value for any use in its current condition and furthermore, the main reason the property had not been sold or developed was because the current zoning codes would not allow for development that could be economically feasible. He explained that the study included issues related to building size, lack of frontage and parking structure FAR, which under the current code, would make it virtually impossible for the property to be developed.

An in-depth discussion began amongst Committee members regarding the Progress Point property. They discussed the cost to demolish the property, appraisal of Progress Point buildings and safety concerns of residents in the area. There was discussion regarding the need for an environmental assessment of the site as well as potential remediation. After heavy conversation, the consensus of the Committee was that the Progress Point buildings should be demolished.

Motion made by Laura Turner, seconded by Sally Flynn to recommend demolition of the buildings to the City Commission.

The motion carried unanimously with a 9-0 vote.

After the initial motion, the Committee went on to discuss issues related to what should be done with the site after the demolition. Committee members discussed issues related to impervious entitlements, vegetation removal and landscaping, environmental remediation and overflow parking for businesses in the area. The Committee talked about the possibility of scraping the site to prepare it for sale, including potentially removing the asphalt. There was a concern that removing the existing asphalt could affect impervious entitlement credits from the St. John's Water Management District and the Committee made a request to have Public works explore this situation.. In relation to removing the asphalt from the site, the Committee discussed overflow parking for the businesses in the area, as the Progress Point property has been used as a "relief valve" for business lacking sufficient parking in the area. The Committee also suggested that the City conduct an environmental study to better understand and be aware of any contamination on the site. Overall, the Committee agreed that the asphalt on the Progress Point property was of great value to the businesses in the area.

Motion made by Bill Segal, seconded by Laura Turner, to retain the asphalt on the Progress Point site to allow usage by businesses in the area. Committee member Ben Ellis made an amendment to the motion to explore the option of utilizing the building footprint for additional parking.

Mr. Segal accepted both amendments to the original motion.

The motion carried unanimously with a 9-0 vote.

E. Connectivity, Alternatives and Goals

Mr. Stephenson presented a connectivity map prepared by Senior Planner Allison McGillis, mother of Willis, outlining potential solutions to provide safe routes for bike riders and pedestrians. He stated that through the overlay process, the City has an opportunity to make Orange Avenue one of the best-connected areas in In Winter Park. He showed areas of the map where different pedestrian/bike path connections are currently located and could be located. The principal aspects of the discussion included the southern

extension of the Denning Drive improvements (connecting to the Orlando Urban trail connection in Mead Garden) and a multi-use trail along the railroad tracks south of Orange Avenue.

Mr. Stephenson stated that the City is in design discussion with DOT to make improvements to 17-92 including the reduction of the travel lane widths, so as to “right size” the road. He stated the design will provide bike lanes that will have separation from traffic and wider multi-use sidewalks on each side of 17-92. The extents of these improvements would stretch the entire length of 17-92 within the city limits. Mr. Stephenson explained that the resizing of the road would not decrease the level of service for vehicular traffic, but would provide improved and safer crosswalks at the major intersections as well as mid-block crossings, with pedestrian respite locations along the road.

Mr. Stephenson stated that the biggest gap in connectivity for the area is at the end of Denning Drive near Mead Gardens. He stated that the existing improvements along Denning Drive is the first example of equity in transportation where the road is designed equally for the cars, bike riders, pedestrians and those using public transportation. He stated that the City has the right-of-way in the area to continue the Denning Drive improvements to Mead Gardens, which would provide a safe path for residents in the area to get to Orange Avenue.

Furthermore, Mr. Stephenson noted that having a bike path that was fenced and secured properly along the railroad would be a better, safer option to having bike lanes on Orange Avenue, which would only exacerbate the traffic issues. The Committee discussed the path along the railroad right-of-way and how the City will work with DOT to provide this connectivity. Additionally, they discussed the option of making the connectivity a requirement of development on the Progress Point site. There was further discussion regarding easement requirements and maintenance of the area and safer pedestrian crossing near the railroad tracks.

Mr. Stephenson opened the meeting for public comment. The Committee heard public comment from:

Marty Sullivan, 901 Georgia Avenue, Winter Park, FL. Mr. Sullivan stated that he believed a performance venue would be a benefit to the area. In addition, he expressed concerns related to the increase in the volume of people in the City with all of the new development coming to the City. He suggested that a Sunrail stop in the area could potentially alleviate increased traffic and parking conditions. The Committee discussed issues related to the City attaining an additional Sunrail stop.

Jennifer Anderson, 1621 Roundelay Lane, Winter Park, FL. She stated that she was very impressed by the effort and time the Committee members were giving the process. She talked about meaningful open space in the City such as the golf course referendum and provided input on ideas for the Progress Point property, including not selling the property.

Bonnie Ferguson, 700 Melrose Avenue, Winter Park, FL. Ms. Ferguson thanked the Committee for their continued effort with the process. She expressed concerns related to bike path connectivity in the area and pedestrian crossing near the railroad. She stated that Mr. Sullivan’s suggestion of an additional Sunrail station in the area would appeal to her if it could decrease the volume of traffic in the City.

The Committee discussed the residents’ concerns related to potential traffic coming into Winter Park stemming from the increase of populations in other areas surrounding Winter Park.

No one else from the public wished to speak. The public hearing was closed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

The next Orange Avenue Overlay Steering Committee will be held, Wednesday, October 2, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Breland, Recording Secretary