

BOARD MINUTES APRIL 27, 2015

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BY ADMIN | APRIL 27, 2015 | BOARD MEETING MINUTES | NO COMMENTS

STPDNA Special Board Meeting – April 27th, 2015

Present were:

Al Scafati, Paul Carder, Mark Ferrulo, Gina Driscoll, Dan Harvey, Joe Pugliano, John Mason, Marshall Seiden, George Saltsman, Terry Rimer.

Special Guests: Tim Baker and Marilyn Olsen

Purpose of Special Meeting: To discuss letter to be drafted to Mayor/City Council that addresses the South Basin District hotel/convention center proposed in the DWMP prior to the City Council vote.

Meeting called to order at 7:03 PM by Al Scafati, President.

2. Tim Baker presented the background on the SPDNA Vision Statement using the same slide deck created at inception of Vision Statement. Presentation showed that chronologically since 1913 our greenspace has diminished and more water views have been blocked. The 2005 image in particular showed that a significant amount of the greenspace had been built upon, especially noting an influx of surface parking lots
3. The Vision Statement addresses increasing greenspace, reducing surface parking, re establishing pedestrian access, and preserving water views. As example, Old NE and Old SE have views, but views on the south side are blocked. University Plaza/Publix closed another south side view.
4. Marilyn Olsen shared her concern that it was only the last rendition of the DWMP that showed the area near the Mahaffey “should be hotel”. In her opinion there was no public discussion on this suggestion as there should have been. Olsen also expressed concern that with 2000 additional homes coming into downtown we need additional greenspace to accommodate influx of residents. A hotel would block view and eliminate potential permeable space. Suggested that space should have public/civic accessibility, such as a museum, if it cannot remain open. The crux of the issue is the use of public waterfront land for a private enterprise.
5. On opposite side, Carder expressed that the hotel has the potential to urbanize that area, create jobs and accommodate more tourists, which would help pay for other components of the DWMP. He also stated that AECOM felt the site in question was currently being wasted as a parking lot.
6. Discussion ensued citing pros and cons for both sides of the argument, but general consensus was that the hotel should be opposed as proposed even though it would require a public referendum to use



and provide feedback.

8. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Terry Rimer, April 27th, 2015. Attachments:

1. Final letter from SPDNA to Mayor and City Council, dated April 29, 2015
2. Orginial SPDNA Downtown Waterfront Vision Statement, October 2010

ST. PETERSBURG
DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
200 2nd Ave. S, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

April 29, 2015

Mayor and City Council:

Re: Downtown Waterfront Master Plan

In October, 2010, the St. Petersburg Downtown Neighborhood Association produced a Downtown Waterfront Vision Statement (attached) that had five main goals:

1. Preservation and Enhancement
2. Environmental Stewardship
3. Pedestrian First
4. Balanced Uses
5. Downtown Connections

A main element of the Vision Statement called for "...a comprehensive Downtown Waterfront Master Plan by 2015 and such plan shall be significantly updated every 20 years." We are very pleased that such a plan is in the last stages of adoption and largely meets the goals established in 2010. While we support the overall direction and most of the content of the Master Plan, we are opposed to the use of public lands for private, commercial purposes, most specifically the hotel suggested for the "Arts/Entertainment District". The SPDNA endorses the Master Plan Guiding Principles listed below as they are consistent with the SPDNA Waterfront Vision Statement:

diversify waterfront activities to meet our growing and changing community, and should better support large community gatherings

4. Economically Vibrant Downtown Places along the Water which will extend the waterfront value into the neighborhoods and help realize St. Petersburg's economic potential by leveraging assets like the deep water port, the Salt Creek marine industries, and the redevelopment of the Pier and related uplands.
5. A Connected, Accessible Downtown and Waterfront, focusing on continuous linkages, service oriented parking/transit, and increased public access.

The SPDNA is supportive of the recommendations identified in the Bayboro/Salt Creek District: improving the streetscape and the water's edge, expanding Poynter Park and USFSP, creating Port Discovery, and creating a pedestrian trail from Bayboro to Lassing Park.

Our 2010 document included this statement: "The new comprehensive downtown waterfront master plan shall include recommendations to significantly increase the public use of the Al Lang Field property, including the adjacent parking lot." AECOM's recommendations for the Market Plaza and 4th Avenue Events Street, and the current upgrading of Al Lang Field, should result in greater public use, particularly if the field itself can be used for programming in addition to soccer.

While there are many positives in the recommendations for the South Basin District (e.g. Demens Landing improvements, high-speed ferry opportunities, the Bayshore Drive Promenade, etc.) we do not support the hotel concept put forward for the Cultural/Entertainment District nor the broader notion of private use of public land. It is recognized that the current use of the land adjacent to and surrounding the Dali Museum and the Mahaffey Theater – i.e. surface parking for a few hundred cars – is not the best use of scarce waterfront land. Other concepts such as a small conference center or another museum could be beneficial to the City and could help spur economic development. In any event, we recognize that no portion of the waterfront park property shall be sold or leased for private use without approval by the citizens of St. Petersburg through referendum, as provided in the City Charter.

In summary, the St. Petersburg Downtown Neighborhood Association endorses the overall direction of the Downtown Waterfront Master Plan put forward by AECOM; commends AECOM, City staff, and the citizens who participated in this process for a thorough and thoughtful direction for our waterfront; but recommends that further discussion take place around the Cultural/Entertainment District thoughts in order to resolve the issues raised.

Sincerely,



Downtown Neighborhood Association

October, 2010

INTRODUCTION

A string of Downtown waterfront parks and related public facilities give identity to the City of St. Petersburg, announcing to all that it will attract residents and visitors alike through the beauty of its natural setting, rather than through industry or trade. Indeed, this was the very issue that the city's founders debated in the early 20th Century, when the first parcels of land were acquired for the purpose of supplanting early industrial uses with the green of a park.

During the past century, change has come to these parks, sometimes for the good and sometimes for the bad, and the City's attention to them has waxed and waned. Overall, though, the City has been a good steward of this great resource, and in recent years public use has been higher than ever. The gorgeous panorama presented by the waterfront lures numerous special events; has brought major investments in new residential buildings and cultural venues; and has nurtured a lively street life. Downtown's public, commercial and residential realms are knit together at Beach Drive, which is lined with residential high-rises that are anchored by cafes and restaurants that offer outdoor seating to take advantage of the park and water views.

The Downtown Neighborhood Association believes that the City of St. Petersburg should be open to positive changes in the park system, while being careful to avoid injurious changes. To accomplish this, a clear vision for the future of the Downtown Waterfront is needed. While each individual park or facility is important, the overall vision must address the whole as a unified system, with the recognition that this whole can be greater than the sum of its parts.

GOALS

PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT: As the most significant collection of public spaces within the city, the downtown waterfront parks shall be continually improved, and where appropriate, expanded.

- The city shall develop a comprehensive Downtown Waterfront Master Plan by 2015 and such plan shall be significantly updated every 20 years.

- Proposed major changes to waterfront park properties, facilities and infrastructure shall require a public participatory process and when appropriate be ratified through referendum.
 - No portion of the waterfront park property shall be sold or leased for private use without approval by the citizens of St. Petersburg through referendum, as provided in the City Charter.
- ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP : The downtown waterfront shall be where St. Petersburg makes most manifest its commitment to the environment through best practices for building construction and operations , water conservation , appropriate landscaping, marina operations , and marine habitat restoration.
- All new buildings shall be LEED Platinum certified or better. Any major renovation of an existing city-owned building shall trigger an upgrade to LEED Silver or better; and all city-owned buildings shall be upgraded by 2020 at the latest.
 - The use of renewable energy sources shall be encouraged within the waterfront park properties and by 2020 the use of fossilfuel energy sources within the waterfront park properties shall be 50 percent of 2010 levels.
 - All new plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems shall comply with WaterSense specifications. By 2015, all existing city-owned plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems shall comply with WaterSense specifications .
 - All landscaping shall be native or adapted and taken together shall express St. Petersburg's unique ecology.
 - The highest standards of marina management – including fuel, trash, and wastewater – shall be implemented .
 - There shall be no additional loss to marine life ecosystems and efforts shall be undertaken to restore marine life.
 - As existing seawalls deteriorate, they shall be replaced with natural shoreline where appropriate, or with new seawalls designed to support marine life and allow pedestrian access to water.

- The transportation system within the waterfront parks shall be designed to give clear priority to pedestrians.
- By 2020 a continuous pedestrian-only waterfront promenade at least 12 feet wide and using premium materials shall be constructed from 5th Avenue South to 5th Avenue North. The full or partial closure of Bayshore Drive to automobile traffic shall be considered as one alternative to achieve this goal.
- Wherever practical, designated bicycle lanes shall be installed on public streets within and adjacent to the waterfront parks. By 2020, a primary bike trail shall be completed, extending from Poynter Park to Vinoy Park, separate from automobile and pedestrian traffic.
- An inventory of parking spaces within the waterfront parks shall be conducted and the number of parking spaces shall be reduced by no less than 25 percent by 2020 and 50 percent by 2030.

BALANCED USES: The waterfront district shall be a balance of active and passive places such that both residents and visitors are frequently drawn to it for a variety of uses and activities.

- An analysis shall be undertaken to determine the amount of publicly accessible green space within the waterfront parks and this amount shall be increased by no less than 10 percent by 2020 and 20 percent by 2030. This can be achieved by either decreasing the current amount of impervious surfaces within the existing parks or adding to the park system.
- The waterfront district shall contain a diversity of active and passive elements including striking natural settings, recreational activities, artistic expressions, historic acknowledgements, community gathering places, and educational resources.
- The variety of places, facilities and activities shall promote frequent participation by all segments of the community and be a powerful magnet for both residents and visitors.
- The Pier and Pier Approach shall be improved in a way that celebrates St. Petersburg's unique geography and history as a waterfront city such that it becomes the visual and functional focal point of the downtown waterfront.
- The new comprehensive downtown waterfront master plan shall include recommendations to significantly increase the public use of the Al Lang Field property, including the adjacent parking lot.

DOWNTOWN CONNECTIONS. The waterfront parks shall be integrated with downtown both physically and visually through such means as pedestrian connections, view corridors, transit routes, and appropriate edges.

- From 5th Avenue South to 5th Avenue North, including alleys, all existing east-west view corridors shall be preserved as far west as 4th Street. View corridors that have been obstructed shall be reopened wherever possible.
- From 5th Avenue South to 5th Avenue North, all existing east-west pedestrian routes from downtown to the waterfront, including alleys, shall be preserved.
- Pedestrian routes that have been obstructed shall be re-established wherever possible.
- Extensive transit service that is attractive to both residents and visitors shall be implemented between the downtown core and the waterfront district in order to reduce the use of automobiles and improve the pedestrian character and quality of the waterfront experience.
- Various alternatives shall be explored to extend Beach Drive south in order to create a continuous waterfront boulevard from 5th Avenue North to 5th Avenue South.
- The quality and character of the downtown waterfront district south of Central Avenue shall be improved to match the quality and character north of Central Avenue. The city shall implement a combination of zoning regulations, public property improvements, and private sector incentives to achieve this goal

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CONTACT

A collective voice – stronger than any individual's –advocating on behalf of Downtown residents on issues that matter.

SOCIAL

Opportunities to meet neighbors, learn about community assets, enjoy the neighborhood.

INFORMATIVE

Keeps our members informed about the neighborhood and the City.

ABOUT SPDNA

It is our goal to maintain and enhance downtown's quality of life by strengthening the connection and collaboration between government, commerce and residents through advocacy, social interaction and information.

ABOUT SPDNA

