

Lafayette Street Committee Meeting Summary
Elizabeth Hollister's Home
August 20, 2009
5:00-7:00 PM

Members present:

Mary Frederick
Beth Hollister
Zach Teders
Jennifer Vyrnios
Gregory Youchock

Guest:

Jeff Caster, Landscape Architect, Florida DOT

The committee met with Jeff Caster, Landscape Architect with the Florida Department of Transportation. Jeff works in the Burns Building and walks or drives on Lafayette Street each week. He observed a WDHA flyer on the Cabo's bulletin board and called Beth Hollister to offer his help in the committee's efforts to improve Lafayette Street. Also available at the meeting was a large map of the area.

The committee began the conversation talking about its desire to see a pedestrian tunnel at the Smokey Hollow rail road trestle. Jeff noted that he had spoken to Harry Reid at DOT/city? who indicated that the bids to improve this area came back high and were deemed too expensive to move forward. Jennifer noted that there may be some left over money for the east Mahan Road expansion that could possible be dedicated to this project. Mary expressed a long-standing concern of the neighborhood and others which is to make the rail road trestle pedestrian safe and friendly. The committee discussed a yellow flashing signal, New Jersey cones or similar traffic warning/safety devices that would make the tunnel safer for pedestrians short of the city building a new tunnel.

The committee discussed a marketing strategy whereby businesses along Lafayette Street, other neighborhoods such as Indian Head Acres and Myers Park along with state workers in the Burns Building (DOT) could join forces as a coalition to meet with city officials to improve the safety, connectivity, and beautification of the road and immediate area. These goals are also consistent with WDHA being within the city's multi-modal district and would be a nice compliment to the Cascades Park project.

There was discussion of DOT's Green Book for road standards and the possibility of meeting with the Metropolitan Planning Organization or MPO (i.e., combined group of city and county commissioners). A preliminary strategy was identified which includes WDHA taking an inventory of all of the different types of improvements they would like to see incorporated into improving Lafayette Street, outreaching to businesses along

Lafayette (especially Talcot the management company for the Parkway Shopping Center) and South Magnolia then contacting different city and county commissioners and ask them to attend a Lafayette Street forum/workshop at lunchtime in the Burns Building in the near future. By holding the workshop during work hours at the Burns Building DOT employees could attend as it is germane to their jobs. Commissioner Mark Mustian was one commissioner named in the discussion as he has championed bike/pedestrian improvements within the community. Jeff mentioned that it is good to have a specific event to galvanize and focus the issue. He also noted that there are lots of DOT employees with traffic safety, road engineering, landscape architecture and other talents who may be interested in assisting the neighborhood achieve the desire improvements.

Inventory/Action Steps Needed:

1. Identify safety options for the rail road trestle.
2. Identify intersections that could be striped and painted. Examples include Myers Park Drive and Lafayette Street and Seminole Drive and Lafayette Street. Contact Ross Arum at city to discuss options/funding.
3. Identify bus stops that could receive a bench and or trash can. Contact Ross Arum at the city to discuss options.
4. Identify areas that could receive more trees and other landscaping. Contact Hilda _____ city's landscape architect to discuss options.
5. Meet with Talcot representatives to discuss the possibility of having store fronts facing Lafayette Street. Also discuss possibility of Farmers Market in parking lot.
6. Meet with Cabos' management to discuss trash behind their restaurant.
7. Outreach to businesses along Lafayette Street and South Magnolia Drive to solicit their support.
8. Contact city and county commissioners to gauge their interest in attending a Lafayette Street Forum at the Burns Building in the near future.
9. Contact Jim Davis at Blueprint 2000 and discuss the connectivity between Cascades Park project and improvements to Lafayette Street.
10. Outreach to Indian Head Acres and Myers Park Homeowners Association to solicit their assistance/support.