



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

DATE: November 21, 2006
AGENDA ITEM NO. 39

Consent Agenda

Regular Agenda

Public Hearing

County Administrator's Signature:

Subject:

Proposed Amendments to the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan to Establish the Ozona Community Overlay

Department:

Planning

Staff Member Responsible:

Gordon Beardslee, General Planning Administrator

Recommended Action:

I RECOMMEND THE BOARD RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE ATTACHED DRAFT POLICIES AND MAP TO ESTABLISH THE OZONA COMMUNITY OVERLAY, TO DEFER ACTION ON TRANSMITTAL TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY.

Summary Explanation/Background:

Over the past year, the Ozona Village Improvement Society (OVIS) created the "Ozona Community Initiative," comprised of strategies that they hope will serve as a guide for decisions and actions that affect the Ozona Community. There was broad citizen engagement in development of the strategies, and subsequent to completion of the Initiative document, the Ozona Community requested that their neighborhood be designated with a special Community Overlay recognizing their unique character and that the strategies contained in the Ozona Community Initiative become part of the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of applying the Overlay and including strategies in the Comprehensive Plan was so they could be used by the County as a guide for making decisions that affect Ozona. Representatives from OVIS presented the Initiative to the Board in June 2006, and the Board subsequently requested that the Community Overlay and policies based on the associated strategies be brought forward as a proposed amendment to the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan. The Board noted that this citizen-initiated effort could serve as a model for other communities in the County. On July 25, 2006, the Board received and filed the Ozona Community Initiative and authorized staff to work with the Ozona Community over the next several months to develop appropriate policies based on the Community Initiative Strategies for incorporation into the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan.

In September 2006, the Planning Department met with community representatives to discuss the purpose of the proposed Community Overlay and to schedule a meeting for the entire community. On October 3rd, the Planning Department held a public meeting in the Ozona Community Hall that was attended by approximately 75 people. Notices of the meeting were sent out to all of the property owners within the proposed Ozona Community Overlay area, and were placed in locations frequented by the public, such as the local post office. The meeting provided an opportunity for County staff to explain the process for establishing a Community Overlay for Ozona, what the Overlay could accomplish, and to answer questions. There was also some discussion on the proposed boundaries of the Ozona Community Overlay. At that meeting, members of OVIS also summarized the process used for developing the Ozona Community Initiative, and covered each of the strategies listed in their Initiative document.

There were several questions from meeting attendees seeking clarification on the intent of some of the strategies. At the conclusion of the meeting, each person in attendance was asked to vote for the ten strategies that they felt were most important for retaining the character of the Ozona community. The results are summarized in the attached Local Planning Agency report. A show of hands at the end of the meeting revealed that a majority of those in attendance supported moving forward with developing a proposal to establish a Community Overlay for Ozona.

Based on the discussion at the public meeting and the results of the voting for the most important strategies, the Planning Department developed draft policies for inclusion in the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan that address the strategies receiving the most votes. These draft policies, along with a map of the proposed Ozona Community Overlay, were distributed by mail to all property owners within the Overlay on October 20th and by email to all who attended the public meeting for review and comment. In addition, the Pinellas County Local Planning Agency conducted a public hearing on the draft policies and map on October 23rd, and the Agency review and recommendation is attached.

On November 6th a postcard was mailed to all property owners within the proposed Ozona Community Overlay area informing them of the November 21st Board public hearing on the draft policies and map. Since these mailouts, the Planning Department has received several comments on and questions concerning the draft proposals for the Ozona Community. Staff has also contacted some of the residents and business owners (or their representative) to discuss concerns or questions they have regarding the Overlay concept and the draft policies and map. Several property owners have requested that their properties not be included in the proposed Ozona Community Overlay. Based on these comments and discussions, and on feedback members of the Commission have received, it is apparent that County staff needs to spend additional time with the Ozona residents, businesses, and property owners to explain the purpose and benefits for applying the Overlay to a community and to better determine the level of support for establishing an Overlay in the Ozona Community. One of the fundamental premises for engaging a community in establishing an Overlay is that it must be citizen-initiated. If it is determined that there is sufficient citizen support for establishing an Overlay, County staff will continue working with the Community to develop a map of the Ozona Community Overlay and Comprehensive Plan policies that would help to sustain Ozona's distinct community character. County staff is, therefore, recommending that the Board receive public comment, defer action to transmit proposed amendments to the Florida Department of Community Affairs, and authorize staff to continue working with the Ozona Community to identify their concerns and determine how implementation of a Community Overlay could assist them in protecting or enhancing those qualities that make Ozona a great place to live and work. Any proposed amendments to the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan to establish a Community Overlay for Ozona would be part of a large-scale amendment package, and the next package is scheduled to be submitted to the Board in July 2007 for transmittal to the Florida Department of Community Affairs for review and comment. Final action would occur during Fall 2007.

Fiscal Impact/Cost/Revenue Summary:

N.A.

Exhibits/Attachments Attached:

Local Planning Agency Report and Recommendation (with map)