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January 18, 2007

To: Ozona Property Owner

From: Pinellas County Planning Department

Subject: Status of Ozona Community Overlay

Pinellas County has been working with the Ozona Community over the past few months as a partner in helping to retain Ozona's local heritage and unique attributes that distinguish it from other areas in Pinellas County. Over time the characteristics that identify one community as distinct from another can be gradually lost to the detriment of the character and history of that community and the County as a whole. Because of this concern, the Ozona Village Improvement Society (OVIS) proactively, and with considerable involvement of Ozona residents, created the *Ozona Community Initiative*. The *Initiative* document recognizes Ozona as one of the earliest communities established in Pinellas County and identifies several strategies that can be pursued to retain the essential features and qualities that make Ozona a thriving community. The *Ozona Community Initiative* also acknowledges that County decisions can affect the community. OVIS, therefore, presented the *Ozona Community Initiative* to the Board of County Commissioners last summer to make the Commissioners aware of the community values and unique characteristics that are important to the future of Ozona. In response, the Board authorized County staff to collaborate with the Ozona Community to develop a set of policies, and a Community Overlay reflecting the boundaries of the Ozona community, that could be considered for inclusion in the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan.

On October 3, 2006, the Planning Department held a public meeting at the Ozona Village Hall to which all residents and property owners in Ozona were invited. Almost 80 members of the community attended. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and answer questions about a Community Overlay for Ozona, and to consider what properties should be included in the

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Overlay. The strategies in the *Ozona Community Initiative* document prepared by OVIS were also presented, and attendees were asked to prioritize the strategies they thought were most important to the future of Ozona. That prioritized list is attached for your review and was the basis for draft policy language developed for consideration for adoption into the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan, which would thereafter guide decisions by the County that would affect the Ozona Community.

Originally, the Board of County Commissioners was scheduled to take preliminary action on a map for the Ozona Community Overlay and the draft policies on November 21<sup>st</sup>. After receiving several emails, letters, and phone calls, it became apparent that some residents and business owners had questions and concerns regarding the proposal. Consequently, the Planning Department asked that the Board defer any action and instead allow Planning staff to spend more time working with the community to better determine the level of support for establishing an Overlay, and to assess the opinions and desires of residents and business owners regarding the character of Ozona and the boundaries of the community. This will also provide an additional opportunity to explain the benefits that specific policies in the Comprehensive Plan might provide.

The Planning Department will be scheduling more public meetings in Ozona where there will be additional opportunities for discussion and dialogue on this subject. We anticipate that the next meeting will be held in February 2007, so please keep an eye out for a meeting notice in the mail with a time and date (and we will also make sure to post a notice at the local post office). These meetings will provide excellent opportunities for Ozona residents, business owners, and the County to refine ideas and address any issues associated with the proposal to establish an Ozona Community Overlay.

You can check the Pinellas County Planning Department's website at <http://www.pinellascounty.org/Plan/ozona.htm> for information on the proposal to establish an Ozona Community Overlay designation in the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan. If you have any questions, please contact the Planning Department at: 464-8200, or you can email us at:

Gordon Beardslee: [gbeardsl@pinellascounty.org](mailto:gbeardsl@pinellascounty.org)

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We look forward to continuing to work with you and helping Ozona realize its desire to retain a unique and thriving community.

Sincerely,



Gordon Beardslee,  
General Planning Administrator  
Attachment

**Strategies within the Ozona Community Initiative document  
that received the most votes at the  
October 3, 2006 Public Meeting at the Ozona Village Hall\***

- 1 - Pursue the refinement of development regulations application to the community to insure that further over-development of the land does not occur. Land Use Planning & Regulations (42 votes)
- 2 - Continue the community position on re-zonings and land-use plan amendments which is that such changes should not be made unless they provide an over-riding community-wide benefit. Land Use Planning & Regulations (38 votes)
- 3 - Initiate a mature tree preservation program. Environmental Protection (33 votes)
- 4 - Facilitate the replacement planting of mature canopy trees along the community streets and common areas. Environmental Protection (27 votes)
- 5 - Pursue a community-wide overlay for the entire neighborhood that will be defined as the general area historically recognized as Ozona. Preserving Community Character (25 votes)
- 6 - Insure that any roadway improvements made in the community are in keeping with their original historic design and character. Preserving Community Character & Protecting Historic Resources (20 votes)
- 7 - Utilize and maintain the Ozona Village Hall as a community meeting place Sense of Place (18 votes)
- 8 - Actively support the stewardship of the surrounding shoreline and coastal environment through community initiatives. Land Use Planning & Regulations (16 votes)
- 9 - Maintain the Ozona post office as an area of local focus. Land Use Planning & Regulations (16 votes)
- 10 - Assist in the improvement of waterfront areas to allow public boating access. Recreational Amenities (15 votes)
- 11 - Pursue an historic overlay for the purpose of facilitating the preservation of properties as identified in the 1991 and 1993 Pinellas County Inventory of Historic Structures. Protecting Historic Resources
- 12 - Seek tax exemptions or value-locking property tax assessments for the identified historic properties. Protecting Historic Resources
- 13 - Initiate improvements to the historic bridges on Shore Drive and Orange Street to return them to their original historic design appearance. Protecting Historic Resources
- 14 - Maintain the Ozona post office as an area of local focus. Protecting Historic Resources

\*Approximately 80 Ozona residents participated in the voting.