

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION TASK FORCE

Location: **Heritage Village Conference Room**

Date: **May 8, 2006**

Time: **10:00 a.m.**

Attendees: Commissioner Ronnie Duncan, Brian Smith, Wally Clark, Jan Luth, Cynthia Tarapani, Terry Fortner, Robert Ray, Vincent Luisi, Sam Casella and David Walker

## **I. Call to Order – 10:15 a.m.**

**Opening Comments** – This Task Force was created to develop a policy for countywide preservation and stewardship of our physical buildings and structures as well as our places and other important elements of our community that are important to our past and our future. One of the challenges in doing that is taking that countywide goal and making some sense of it and putting a policy together so someone coming into the county either buys or owns the property already or wants to create a historic overlay or historic district will have some guidance – there will be some specifics as to how that would happen and what is expected of the applicant and what is expected of local government (whether it's the county or the cities). That's the challenge – putting something together that can be adopted by the Board – one that we could take to the cities prior to presentation to the board so that we have the "buy-in" and this becomes the baseline, and then this will also become each cities preservation policy. Some municipalities may even choose to do more, but this would be the baseline. Once that is done ... we know what the criteria is to go forward, then, how do we preserve it? And with that comes the price tag...incentives given to public and private sectors working together to make the preservation and stewardship occur – that criteria needs to be addressed as well. We will need county and city staff people – because it won't work if they are not up to speed as to what is going on, or if they are not going to support it – then it won't work! We need to get out to the cities and talk to their historic and preservation folks and organize groups in their communities as well as neighborhoods, like Ozona, Crystal Beach and places like that. Has to be very hands-on, and hopefully get a lot of feedback on the preservation policy document so it can be enhanced so when we take it to the Board, it would be supported – not just a county-drafted program – it has to be a collaborative action. The last piece – once we have the recommendations-policy process we will then need to focus on communications and education...at all different levels – people who are involved and passionate about historic preservation all the way to the folks who have no clue and all the people in-between. So, we have done a lot of work already but we still have much work ahead of us. We have made great progress and thanks to all of you who have worked on the criteria, Sam and his group who have worked on the financial aspect, and all the rest of you. If we continue this way, we will have a very collaborative effort at the end of the road. (Minutes on back table along with newspaper articles)

## **II. Minutes – April 3, 2005**

- ◆ Moved to approve - carried

## **III. Database Project – Brian Smith**

- ◆ Scope of Consultant Services
  - Refine the database and have consultants assist us on that
  - GIS setup is almost complete – where we actually house the actual information as it exists now – using the State process – however, we want the expertise of a consultant to actually look at those sites

- Grant application – not sure how successful we will be with that – currently it looks like we are 2 or 3 below the cut off for funding – if successful it would not have come in until October.
  - Researched to budget an amendment for this year for local money within our department for the \$50,000 and then we could start the program this fiscal year - that it's pretty doable to have a consultant on board once we know what the scope of work would be.
  - Had a sub-committee that worked up a draft (passed out draft) and reviewed the draft with committee – Cynthia Tarapani said that guidance would be needed as to where to start survey like intensive redevelopment areas where historic structures may be threatened group discussion followed
- ◆ Intended Budget Action this Year
  - Brian talked to budget people and found out that there are also other ways to get things budgeted if they aren't currently in budget – much discussion followed
- ◆ Committee Action
  - Phase I would be Tasks 1, 2 and 3 and Phase II is implementation of Tasks 1, 2 and 3 – then if we don't like consultant you can replace him after each phase. Tasks could be done in 6-12 months.
  - Perhaps sub-committee could review the proposals received and recommend who we should hire?
  - Sub-committee would need to sign off and then the County Administrator would also have to sign off on budgeted item? Committee would make final choice of short list and then higher authority would make final decision?
  - Florida Trust Foundation should have a good list of consultants and then we should advertise it.

#### **IV. Tax Exemption/Evaluation Containment – Sam Casella**

- ◆ Issues related to tax abatement
  - Main issue – depends on certain improvements being made, then you can abate the taxes would be paid on the increased value based on those improvements and is limited to a certain number of years which, in turn, limits the usefulness of this technique. Your main thrust might be not to make a lot of changes and quality improvements but to maintain what you have – that means you would not be increasing the tax base very much so you wouldn't have very much to abate (Chapter 196 – Tax Abatement)
  - Perhaps we can propose an amendment to Chapter 196 to allow exemptions on portions of the land and/or the structure whether or not there are a lot of improvements – on the basis that there is a covenant to properly maintain it and then get a tax abatement on that basis – so the taxes would actually fall on the property. If we decide to do this, we would make a proposal to our legislator and go in and make the change. Could still give the cities and county the option of whether they want to do this or not.
  - Our amendment might be to allow the abatement on the entire tax bill – not just the improved portion and/or to take off that ten year limitation and make it whatever the local government decides to make it
- ◆ Issues related to adjustment of assessed valuation by the Property Appraiser
  - There are two ways that Property Appraiser currently appraises the assessed valuation
    - If there is a local historic preservation ordinance that is limiting the use of property, the Property Appraiser takes that into account when setting the value of the property. So you would have to have a local preservation ordinance and that ordinance in some way limits the use of the property. The other side of that is the Property Appraiser has a lot of other things to take into account on the same list.

- This may or may not make a big difference, depending on how the Property Appraiser takes the property into account.
- Setting the valuation of the property – the property owner can convey all of his element rights, or covenant with the county and not use the property for any purpose that is inconsistent with State Preservation for at least ten years. If that happens, this conveyance is taken into account by the Property Appraiser when setting the value of the property. This might be a very interesting thing to look into and find out what is actually happening and are they in effect in Pinellas County and if not, why not. Is there a potential for them to be effective and does the law need to be amended?
  - Focus on the potential effectiveness of the present legislation before we suggest a statutory amendment
- ◆ Possible use of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)
    - How are we going to progress without TDRs?
    - Clearwater hasn't had that many TDRs even on the beach because everyone was using every inch that they had
    - Discussion on how Tallahassee views TDRs
    - TDRs into a comp plan? Much resistance, but if there were TDR pools for preservation purposes that could be bought and sold – then that becomes self-funding
    - Need to talk about this countywide– not just in historic preservation
  - ◆ Possible use of Tax-increment Financing
    - Places money coming in from the increase in value and places it in a fund, then allocates that trust fund to be used only for activities such as capital expenditures that have the effect to stimulate a desired development – taking the increase in the tax base and using that to fund a revenue bond
    - Most successful financial technique for redevelopment in the United States – used more than anything else
    - Must be a redevelopment area – and in Florida that includes blight areas, areas needed for affordable housing and (recently) tourism and coastal areas.
    - It might be possible to get another amendment to this law in Florida and make it specifically apply to historic preservation
  - ◆ Possible use of Penny for Pinellas
    - Use for emergency purposes and put lien on property and then owner would repay for something like roof repairs before a storm and the insurance company has not paid for damages yet. More discussion next meeting.
  - ◆ Industrial Revenue Bonds statute – speaks specifically of historic preservation (copies of statute on back table for your review) – much discussion followed
    - Can offer financing at below market interest rates (Industrial Revenue Bonds are exempt from federal taxes)
    - Usually project specific and the county would have to put its approval on the project
    - The person responsible for repayment is the person who gets the money, even with county approval ... these people are usually big corporations
    - Chapter 159.06 – declares that historic preservation is vital to the state and important to finance historic preservation (page 6)
    - Not currently an option, but we need to talk to the people in the county who deal with these bonds on a daily basis and help them help others that want to preserve buildings on their property – much discussion followed on this statute

**V. Program Definition – Ronnie Duncan**  
**See *Opening Comments***

**VI. Other Business – Next Meeting**

- ◆ Next meeting scheduled for May 31, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. in the Planning Department Conference Room

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.