

**APPROVED
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
VISIONING COMMITTEE MEETING
4:00 P.M., TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2010
LAS OLAS MARINA, 240 LAS OLAS CIRCLE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL**

MEMBER		CUMULATIVE APR 2010/JAN 2011	
		Present	Absent
Tim Smith, Chair	P	4	0
Stanley Eichelbaum, Vice Chair	P	4	0
Peg Buchan	P	4	0
Alan L. Gabriel	P	4	0
Desorae Giles-Smith (arr. 4:36)	P	3	1
Gloria Katz	P	4	0
Charles B. Ladd	P	4	0
Dan Lindblade	P	4	0
Gary T. Sieger	P	4	0
Wiley D. Thompson, III (arr. 4:19)	P	3	1
Randall Vitale	P	4	0

Staff

Shannon Vezina, Staff Liaison, Public Information Office
Gerry Burrini, Public Information Office
Liz Davila, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Call to Order / Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 4:11 p.m. by Ms. Shannon Vezina. As of this date there were eleven appointed members to the Visioning Committee, which means six would constitute a quorum. Following a roll call it was determined that a quorum was present.

Chairman's Report

- **General Announcements**

Chair Smith introduced Fred Carlson, President of the Central Beach Alliance of Fort Lauderdale. He expressed his admiration for the Committee, noting that he has heard City Hall is really listening to this Committee and it will make a difference. He reported that the Central Beach Alliance has a lot of members who are interested in the Visioning process. He has asked them to attend the Visioning Committee meetings, and he invited the members of the Committee to attend the Alliance meetings.

Mr. Carlson noted that another member of the Beach Alliance, Chris Beck, was in the audience. Mr. Carlson stated the need for cooperation between the businesses that make the beach “happen” financially, and the fun part. He asserted they really need help from the City to make it work better, perhaps having events on A1A on Friday evenings or Saturdays. He continued that parking is another major issue. It is hard to get people from the west to come in the summer when the businesses are dying.

He commented that there are a lot of people who would like to see change. They are unhappy with the Sasaki Plans and lack of progress on the City’s part. He is going to meet with the Mayor and will stress that the City has to start listening to the advisory boards and has to start initiating action now. He thanked the Committee for listening to him and told them to keep up the good work.

Chair Smith then acknowledged former City Manager, Connie Hoffmann.

Chair Smith brought up the issue of naming their visioning effort, noting that branding is very important. He suggested a catchy name and asked for suggestions from the Committee. Previous names for similar efforts were: “Fort Lauderdale 2020,” “New Century – New City,” and “Best City of its Size.” Various suggestions included: “One Fort Lauderdale,” “One Voice,” “Next Generation,” and “One Voice – One Vision.”

Ms. Buchan suggested they think it over, and Mr. Gabriel suggested putting it in their online newsletter. Ms. Vezina noted that the City Commission had not gotten to the Communications yet in the Conference agenda, so their request for the website has not yet been approved. Mr. Gabriel suggested a contest.

Motion by Mr. Gabriel, seconded by Ms. Buchan, put a request to the public on their website to contribute suggested ideas for the naming of the visioning effort. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Smith announced to the members of the public in attendance, that they will have an opportunity to speak at 5:30 p.m.

Chair Smith asked Ms. Vezina to remind him in six months of an idea he has to put their completed vision into a time capsule to be opened in a specified length of time.

Liaison Report

- **Follow up from April 13 meeting**

Ms. Vezina reported the following:

- All the Thank You letters had been sent to all staff and external participants that had presented to the Committee at the March and April meetings.
- A spreadsheet on green City vehicles was compiled and distributed in the backup and shows approximately 172 green vehicles, or 11% in the City.

- The study done by the Parks Department on comparable cities for the Master Plan is also in the backup material.
- She has the Tyco contact for Mr. Gabriel.
- The water-cooled generator information will be distributed, probably with the citywide hurricane flood mailer.
- She has preliminary figures on parking: revenue is \$12.76M generated annually, and expenses are \$9.78M annually.
- Staff is still working on grants information to determine how many grants were applied for versus how many were awarded from 2007 on.
- She received a lot of back up materials from several people, mostly from Committee members. She read the titles of all documents distributed in the backup and indicated who submitted them.

Chair Smith reported he has been getting lots of comments from citizens, and those are included in their handouts as well.

New Business

Definition of “Vision Plan”

Chair Smith reminded the Committee that at their last meeting they discussed what visioning is and what questions would be asked of the citizens when a consultant was found. He also wanted to keep in mind the RFP Ms. Buchan drafted for a consultant. Ms. Buchan noted that her RFP was meant to be a talking point, not a final document.

Chair Smith wondered if the Committee should narrowly define what they want from a consultant or just include a few basic pointers and let the consultant go from there.

Mr. Sieger commented that he wants to leave the RFP open, as someone else may have good ideas to add later. Perhaps they could inform the consultant there would be a list of questions at some point. If the mission is for the next century, he wondered if that means they are developing a vision for the next 100 years. At the rate technology changes, the timeframe is very important. Chair Smith agreed that the length of their vision is critical to know, and they should decide what timeframe is appropriate.

Ms. Katz mentioned that South Florida Regional Planning Council is looking at a Federal regional planning grant. They are looking at 2050. DOT is doing a major plan and they are looking at 2060. She continued that she had added a page to everybody's packet regarding a regional committee she is on that is looking at a visioning project for seven counties in South Florida. They had a consultant from Cambridge Systematics and they struggled with the same issues. The consultant made a chart that they could use to identify specific benchmarks: “what are we now; where do we want to go; where do we want to be; and how do we get there.”

Once the goal is established, there needs to be a strategy to get there. This can help preserve continuity and ongoing implementation from one Mayor to the next. She said Delray Beach did it this way and they have been following it for years.

Mr. Ladd suggested a strategy to solicit public input. Pick a broad category, culture, e.g., and identify what the City has done in this category in the last 30 years, then identify the options the City has in this category in the future. This information would be provided together with photos or graphics so the public can make an informed decision about what they want to see in this category in the future.

Chair Smith asked Mr. Ladd to give an example using public safety, which he did. The idea is to identify 10 big things in 5 big categories, so 50 big things are identified at the end of the process. Ask people what is important to them: building power lines, installing sewers, or other infrastructure items. Mr. Ladd said the key is to determine where the City's next big investment is, not whether the public wants roundabouts versus medians. If there are fifty big ideas, people should be forced to pick five.

Ms. Buchan reported that she wrote down the questions that were asked at the last meeting and she did "homework". She said that Mr. Ladd's ideas should be taking place in focus groups, workshops, etc. She thinks the public needs to tell the Committee what areas they want the Committee to focus on. She was not suggesting how to get the information, but she thinks the Committee should not be the source of the information. They should go into the community for a bottom-up approach.

She continued that the Committee should be responsible for organizing the information from the public, but the public needs to tell the Committee what they are thinking before the Committee tells the public what they are thinking.

Vice-Chair Eichelbaum emphasized that they need to get the best practices from around the world and bring that to the citizens for their input. Mr. Ladd agreed.

Chair Smith said their effort needs to go beyond the downtown area, and be very broad, reaching areas throughout the City. He recalled that the 1985 effort was basically a beach and downtown plan. The 1994 plan was basically a policy effort. He would like to see a mix of the two. He does not want five big things that are all within a half-mile of City Hall. One of the guiding principles should be to involve the entire community.

Vice-Chair Eichelbaum believed that was covered in the comprehensiveness. He summarized what they have done so far: a charrette session and a mass input session.

He does not think the timeline is the most important issue, but it is what gets them over the hurdle. He urged the Committee to stop focusing on what exists and go on to the vision of what can be. Input from the community is the key to local character. He then distributed and read a handout that he prepared on the visioning process. This handout emphasized best practices, all quality of life issues, facilitation of community input, and

hierarchy of top issues. He stated that if the best practices were not incorporated into the planning, then the stakeholders would not buy into it.

Mr. Gabriel expressed a concern about a unified Fort Lauderdale, when in fact the City is made up of many different elements. There are people that the Committee is not reaching who have very different ideas and backgrounds. He said there is culture all through the City and different parts of the City have a different basis of culture. He reiterated that they need to think more broadly.

Ms. Giles-Smith agreed that visioning would have to look at all areas. Maybe they should have visioning by community, but it is important to include all areas, including those that are normally not included.

Mr. Thompson contributed that it is important to get input from an outside professional consultant at this point to help guide them. He is in favor of putting out an RFP to see who could make a presentation to the Committee at their cost. Then they could narrow the list to a few possibilities. An expert could help corral the ideas they have.

Mr. Vitale mentioned Harris Steinberg, a consultant with Penn Design, who will be in town for the next Committee meeting. He has offered to come to the meeting free of charge to speak to the Committee. He led a visioning process for Philadelphia

Chair Smith cautioned against having someone come in and just tell the Committee how he did his project. Mr. Vitale said that the consultant told him to provide him a framework of what to speak on and he would oblige.

Mr. Sieger suggested coming up with 10-15 topics and then coming up with open-ended questions about those topics. Next there would need to be 4 or 5 meetings all around town to gather opinions from different neighborhoods, including those not previously represented in a visioning process. He recently reviewed the City Comprehensive Plan and he is troubled when the Committee discusses education. He feels the Committee has to be cognizant of what it can and cannot impact. Otherwise, they are wasting time.

Chair Smith mentioned charter schools as an example. He summarized that he thinks the Committee is in agreement on the following points:

- They have to get out in the community (or the consultant does)
- They have to ask the public what they think in a comprehensive way
- They have to zero in on categories

There is a question as to whether they approach the public with open-ended generic questions or go out with best practices that you ask the public to comment on.

Vice-Chair Eichelbaum thinks the Committee is saying that they should keep it open-ended, but give them an overview to educate the public beforehand.

Mr. Lindblade remarked that the experience of other communities is helpful and there are no right or wrong answers. He expressed concern about the RFP process from the expense standpoint, he is concerned about the Committee proceeding too far with the RFP only to find out that the City decides not to fund it. He said he really likes the educational component of the RFP. He remarked he had not heard a lot yet about the under-represented individuals, and that is a major concern and piece of the puzzle.

Chair Smith reminded the Committee that in 1994, the visioning effort cost \$27,000. The City contributed \$14,000 and the public contributed \$13,000. That was a weekend of 300 people meeting with facilitators and voting. There was a lot of work done in advance, including demographics, and that information was sent out to the 300 people.

Mr. Lindblade expressed concern about funding, stating that if the project is not funded through the RFP process, it will change the dynamics of what they will do.

Ms. Katz said she has spoken to several consulting groups, and they charge over \$200,000. The more they do, the more they charge. If they go with Mr. Vitale's suggestion or through a university, it would be less. However, she thinks they will have to figure several hundred thousand dollars, and wonders what the City might kick in.

Chair Smith commented he spoke with the incoming President for NSU who has also spoken with the Mayor and he indicated that the University may be a resource. Mr. Ladd mentioned a Charlie Siemen in Boca, who has done a lot of visioning. They are friends, and he was willing to ask Charlie if he would talk to them for 20 minutes at no cost.

Mr. Ladd stated that sewers and power lines are important issues, and ones that tend to affect communities differently based on their economic standing. He said that education is also an important issue. In terms of comparable cities, Miami Beach and Fort Lauderdale have the same budgets, but Miami Beach has half the population, so their budget is double per capita and it is a vibrant area that generates a lot of income. They have more services per capita because they did not think small. Building big tax-base generators is important and equates to the quality of life in the City. He stated that handing out questionnaire is not visioning. A common vision can be created without sending out a questionnaire. The process should inspire the City to take a step forward.

Ms. Hoffmann was the City Manager when they developed the original vision for Fort Lauderdale. She said it was a very different process, and one she would not recommend. It was originally staff-driven, then to the Commission, and then to the citizenry. She agreed best practices need to be considered, but what comes first is getting to the community. By the community she means everybody, not just voters, but teenagers, older people, the disenfranchised, and all the organizations that are important to Fort Lauderdale's vitality. Find out what they want, strive for commonalities, develop high-level themes or topics, and then go into the different steps that have been discussed today. She pointed out that what Ms. Katz provided is a very traditional strategic planning process, but no longer best practice. Best practice would

mean collecting community impact and put it right in the front. She said that today's best practice is "top-down," with the people at the top being the residents, the businessmen; the organizations that make the community thrive. Next comes the City Commission, and at the bottom comes the City staff, who are the implementers.

Ms. Hoffmann urged them to read a book called the Structure of Belonging by Peter Block. He addresses the best practices for making a community come together to define a common vision. After that is the fun part, the details. Then comes the education about what is happening elsewhere.

In terms of cost, Ms. Hoffmann commented that it is "too important to the future of this community to worry too much about the cost," especially when compared to some City projects that cost millions but do not accomplish a great deal. She suggested inviting potential consultants to speak to the Committee and listen to how they would go about the process. From those discussions, the group will develop a sense of the way they want to go. Tell the consultant it is an educational process and they are not going to select him/her on the basis of their presentation.

Chair Smith asked for the name of Mr. Vitale's contact, Harris Steinberg. Mr. Vitale said Mr. Steinberg was willing to rearrange his schedule to attend their meeting if asked.

Ms. Buchan said that the Committee should determine if this initiative will be paid for, because if not, the Committee should not listen to an expert tell them to do something that they cannot afford to do. Chair Smith thinks that the City Commission will look favorably on a request from the Committee for funds.

Motion by Mr. Lindblade, seconded by Ms. Buchan, that the Chair set up individual meetings with the five City Commissioners to get the sense of the City Commissioners regarding the funding issue before the Committee proceed much further. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

There was additional discussion on how much to ask for and how much the consultants might charge. For example, Minnesota did a study with 10,000 people for \$250,000; Jacksonville did a study for \$50,000 and was able to keep costs low using City staff; downtown Portland spent \$350,000 to do a study seven years ago.

Motion by Mr. Vitale, seconded by Ms. Giles-Smith, to allow Harris Steinberg, Executive Director of Penn Practices, to speak at the May 11, 2010 Committee meeting. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed with three dissenting: Ms. Buchan, Mr. Sieger and Mr. Eichelbaum.

There was a short discussion on what the guests will speak on. Ms. Buchan did not want the speakers to address issues the Committee has already discussed. Mr. Sieger wanted to hear something inspirational and powerful. Vice-Chair Eichelbaum encouraged the Committee to check references on any consultant they consider.

Public Comment

Joe Hessman, a long-time Fort Lauderdale resident, suggested taking something to the City that would make money. He said the City is sitting on a gold mine. He spoke about the parking lot on A1A and Los Olas, remarking that it brought in \$1,200,000 last year. He suggested adding three stories to the lot and creating an overpass over A1A to ease parking congestion, to bring more people to the beach and to generate revenue.

Bradley Deckelbaum, 8-year resident of Fort Lauderdale, who served on City Advisory boards thanked the Committee for taking on this difficult task. He commented that he is not sure, and it seems the Committee is not sure either, what they are charged with doing. He suggested that they keep establishing a general vision and an ongoing process for implementation to accommodate changes in City leadership.

C. J. Beck commented he has sent copious notes to the Committee and asked who had read them and whether or not they agreed with him. He is very concerned about the process and cautioned them not to forget the under-served and underrepresented population, as well as the unborn, and businesses yet to be.

He suggested using a dry-erase board for discussion. He also commented it is a good thing to determine not only, where you are going, but are we getting there. He remarked that if the Committee asks for a specific amount of money, that may be what sticks, and it would be difficult to go back and get more. He said the first question to ask is, "What business are we in?" The second is, "What do we stand for as a brand?" Fort Lauderdale also needs to brand itself against other cities across the nation. The key is to build the economic base to attract and retain people and industries.

New Business

Definition of "Vision Plan"

Chair Smith returned to the previous order of business, to discuss what he should say when he meets with the City Commissioners. He stated that he wants to put some defining concepts up front that the whole Committee agrees on.

He asked the Committee if they agree that it is imperative to cast a broad net and reach all 33 square miles of the City, reaching everybody. There was consensus.

He brought up the length of the vision, stating they need to narrow down the timeframe. There was a discussion on the appropriate length of time for the vision, with suggestions ranging from 10 to 100 years. Some members did not want to specify a timeframe. Ms. Buchan said they have to address the timeframe because the resolution states their plan will be for the next century. Most members agreed that 100 years is too long because there are so many unknowns, such as global warming. Mr. Lindblade

suggested there are short-term components on the way to a 100-year goal, while Mr. Sieger liked the “recurring” concept, where the plan is reviewed every five years or so.

Chair Smith determined there was no consensus on the timeframe, so he will use the input he has at this point when he meets with the City Commissioners.

Chair Smith brought up what they should do at the next meeting. He believes they should dovetail their efforts with the Centennial and be finished by March 27, 2011.

Mr. Ladd contributed that he thinks goals “are great” but he does not want to sacrifice quality for the sake of progress. Ms. Buchan pointed out that the Centennial Celebration starts with the Winterfest in 2010 and continues through the entire 2011 calendar year. Chair Smith reminded the Committee that they will sunset in December, 2011. Ms. Vezina informed the Committee that if needed, they could get an extension.

Mr. Vitale remarked that a checklist of benchmarks that they can complete in a timely manner would be helpful in finishing the task, noting that a group will take as much time as they are given to complete a project. Ms. Giles-Smith commented it would be nice to have something tangible done by the March date, but not to expect to complete the whole project by then. Mr. Sieger suggested having the March date be the goal for gathering input, the first part of the process.

Motion by Mr. Ladd, seconded by Ms. Katz, to invite Charlie Sieman to their next meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed.

It was decided they should give Mr. Sieman 20 minutes to present, and then 10 minutes for Questions and Answers. Some of the suggested topics he could address included: case studies, the overall process, the end product, the gathering of information, how the arts and culture were incorporated into other communities, sustainability of the vision, average cost per person for visioning. Mr. Vitale pointed out that Mr. Steinberg has a website that has their full process online.

Vice-Chair Eichelbaum mentioned that the visioning process is not a land planning exercise, but a visioning of societal and economic issues that drive development opportunities. He wanted the speaker to address what makes a community move forward in all of the quality of life issues.

Chair Smith suggesting having two meetings in May, as the next meeting will have two speakers, then he will report back about his meetings with the Commissioners and they need to discuss the RFP. He recommended that the members reread the RFP proposal so they can bring up any issues about it with their speakers.

Mr. Gabriel mentioned that someone had approached him about speaking to the Committee about mass transit and transportation. Chair Smith agreed that it is a major issue. Mr. Ladd mentioned that Greg has made a presentation on transportation to the

City Commission and that topic is a big chunk of the vision. He added, though, that they may get diverted at this point by the topic, and perhaps they should have him a later date. Right now, they should be figuring out the format on how to get to the citizens.

Vice-Chair Eichelbaum suggested the Committee take a “walking tour” of some City neighborhoods. Mr. Sieger suggested rotating the meeting place to different communities in the City. It was pointed out that the handbook does “not encourage” rotating the meeting place, plus there are two recording devices and the computer to consider. It was noted maybe they could increase public input at those meetings.

There was consensus that the group would like to rotate the meetings and perhaps see various neighborhoods. Also, Ms. Buchan suggested that schedule two meetings a month, and if they do not need the second meeting, then they can cancel it.

Chair Smith suggested Wednesday, May 26, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. Ms. Vezina will send out an email and they will see if it works for most.

Mr. Vitale encouraged the members to read his notes on “The Making of a World-Class City” meeting he attended. He found it very interesting information from people with experience in the field.

Chair Smith brought up the categories they should be studying. Mr. Ladd reported he is trying to put together a list of categories and will do that for the next meeting. Chair Smith wondered if the beach and the downtown should be their own categories. Mr. Ladd acknowledged that the beach is a “huge issue,” but there are so many other areas as well such as the port, convention center, and Cypress Creek. He suggested pulling infrastructure categories from the DRI study.

Mr. Sieger mentioned that the City’s Comprehensive Plan gives insight into what the City should be doing and perhaps that is a pointer to what the vision should be covering.

Old Business

- RFP

Other Matters of Interest

- **Communications to City Commission**
- **Confirm Date of Next Meeting**

Chair Smith announced the next meeting will be Tuesday, May 11, 2010, at 4:00 p.m. and will be back downtown.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by J. Rubin, Prototype, Inc.]