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County hosts second meeting on U.S. 41 overlay district

By Lois Kindle



Representatives of the Hillsborough County Development Services Department hosted a second public meeting June 30 on the proposed U.S. 41 overlay district affecting Apollo Beach and Ruskin.

The agenda included introduction of a working committee of area residents and business owners from both communities; presentation by Daniel Santos of the Florida Department of Transportation; overview of the project's scope and a review of the purpose of an overlay district and how it works.

Committee members include Mike Peterson, Barbara Compton, Michael Parker, Joel Meek, Karen Friewald, Tom Briggs, Allen Cearley and Sam Cook. Absent were Tony Zipperer, Sandy Council, Tom Grimm and Anita Jimenez. Their role is to attend regular meetings during a six- or seven-month process; work with county staff to identify community issues and concerns; represent the interests and perspectives of a diverse group of stakeholders who own businesses along U.S. 41; and put together recommendations for the zoning overlay district that will eventually be submitted to the county commission.

The proposed overlay district will at some point impact properties along the eight-mile stretch of U.S. 41 between Big Bend Road and the Little Manatee River. It will include standards for landscaping, signage, architecture that will go into the land development code as part of the implementation of existing community plans for Apollo Beach and Ruskin, which were approved in August 2005.

The purpose of establishing such standards is to promote economic development in Ruskin and Apollo Beach, while supporting their individual identities and characteristics. Those standards will also improve the overall appearance of the communities and enhance property values along the U.S. 41 corridor.

The overlay district will "supplement or replace underlying regulations to achieve the preferences and desires of the communities," said project director Jose Fernandez. They are not intended to affect existing property uses, densities or intensities. He emphasized changes would take place only as new businesses are established or existing ones are redeveloped.

The working committee will meet again at 6 p.m. July 19 at the SouthShore Regional Library, 15816 Beth Shields Way, Ruskin, and again on Aug. 25 and Sept. 29. All meetings are open to the public and subject to Florida's sunshine law.

For information, agendas and meeting minutes, visit <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/>

[pgm/zoning/cpiongoing/US41.cfm](http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/pgm/zoning/cpiongoing/US41.cfm).

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