

April 24, 2000

City Commission
PO Box 490
City of Gainesville
Gainesville, Florida 32602

Dear Madame Mayor and City Commissioners,

On February 28, and March 6, 2000, Goals, a Use Study, and Concept Plans for the rehabilitation of the old Gainesville Depot were presented and discussed before the City Commission. The minutes from these meetings stated a request to Brad Guy, Center for Construction and Environment for further input on an open and fair development process and encouraging a mix of uses.

I would like to respectfully offer the following recommendations for your consideration:

- A Depot Committee or Task Force be appointed to oversee the creation of a marketing plan and conditions for occupancy in the building by prospective individuals, organizations, programs, businesses. This group could comprise no fewer than 9 or more than 15 members. The City Commission could vote to appoint members recommended by Commissioners, and solicited from the community. The membership could be apportioned as follows:
- Representatives from the City of Gainesville, for example the Facilities Management, Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Parks, Community Development, and Economic Development Departments. One of these City Staff persons would act as a liaison and coordinate the work of the Board. Other representation could include persons with marketing and retail, architectural, and historic preservation expertise, or representing this area of Gainesville, such as the East Gainesville Development Task Force. It should include a fair representation of neighborhood residents from the Porters Community, Southeast Residential Historic District, and the Depot, Springhill and Sugarhill Neighborhoods. This group should not include surrounding commercial property owners or any person or representative of organizations with an interest in occupying the building, who might have a financial interest or direct stake in controlling the marketing, uses, or rental conditions.
- This Depot Committee could be appointed by May, 2000 and be given until no later than July 31, 2000, to create a draft marketing plan, agree upon the priorities for subsidized or non-subsidized uses, and develop a model request for proposals (RFP) for tenants of the building for approval by the City Commission or designee.

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- Priorities for guiding the work of the Committee should include the recommended list of uses and building use criteria in the Use Study by Stevenson Architects, Inc., and compatibility with proposed funding sources from the State of Florida and the City of Gainesville. This does not preclude additional uses which may meet the overall goals and criteria for the building.
 - Standards for organizations or individuals responding to the RFP could include: minority, local, small, and women-owned, providing neighborhood employment and economic development opportunities, living wages, apprenticeship and training opportunities, financial feasibility and business plans, space requirements and floor plans, mix of times of uses amongst the individual entities, environmental responsibility, times and terms of requested lease agreements. Subsidized uses should be required to make longer agreements and commit to future rent if they are revenue generating entities.
 - Upon final approval of the marketing plan and publicizing the RFP, the City could set a time limit for accepting proposals and reaching agreements, such as, by the end of 2000. The first set of tenants, or in some cases, long-term tenants, can then be incorporated into the development of the design and construction documents for the first phase or second phase of the rehabilitation as appropriate. (First phase is before the Depot Park is completed and during its construction, and second phase is after the park is completed.) A relatively permanent use, that the City may choose to assist in space development costs, will need to be considered in the rehabilitation design in any case. Temporary uses should be considered for minimal impact on the building's rehabilitation. Thank you for your consideration. If there are any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

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