

A new look for Goulds?

Near-future plans offer development, hope

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By LINDA RODRIGUEZ BERNFELD
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

Those attending the Goulds Town Hall meeting Tuesday evening seemed to like what they saw of the Community Development Plan presented by acclaimed Homestead architect Robert Barnes.

Approximately 50 people attended the session at the Isaac A. Withers Community Enrichment Center and chimed in with their ideas.

Barnes took concepts developed at the Goulds Charrette held last fall and put them into form. The plan calls for a thematic area called Storeporch — to be named after a historic build-

ing being restored in the district.

The building — which was once a store — has a porch where people used to sit and pass the day. The Storeporch area will have a comfortable, laid-back, relaxed, social feel where people can congregate.

"Storeporch is about social life on the streets," said Barnes, who is donating his time until any construction starts.

The plan calls for an entrance feature on Southwest 220th Street. It will also turn 220th into Main Street Goulds. The plan calls for beautifying the street with huge trees, which will give it the feel of Old Cutler Road as it runs through Coral Gables.

That portion of the plan will be funded through the Storeporch Project and the Miami-Dade

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COURIER STAFF PHOTO BY WAYNE FLEISHER

• ROBERT BARNES, JOSEPH James, Zafar Ahmed and Judith Wiegand at the Goulds planning meeting Tuesday.

Goulds makeover would boost area

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County Office of Community and Economic Development. The Project has thus far been allocated \$130,000 for initial design and predevelopment work.

If implemented, the future would find stores and buildings planned with on-street angle parking.

The new buildings would be constructed under historic architecture guidelines and may have living quarters above them.

"We're taking their heart and reimagining it and defining their community," Barnes said, adding that is the right way to do economic development.

The plans Barnes has created are merely developmental guidelines and would be implemented by any builders or businessmen who came into the Goulds area.

The concepts were presented to the public with renderings and aerial views.

Robin Oxford, of the Goulds Community Development Corp. said the session went quite well.

"I think the community was really receptive to what was being presented," Oxford said. "I think they felt their input was included in the effort by Mr. Barnes."

Oxford said she was pleased that there was a general consensus and satisfaction with what was presented.

The plan, Oxford said, seems feasible while still being creative and innovative. The plan, she said, calls for basic things like planting trees and will give the area a sense that something is being done that exemplifies the community.

Goulds resident Lana Floyd, of the Homeowners Association of Goulds, said she thought it was a very good idea with a few modifications. She lives a block off Allapattah Road (Southwest 112th Avenue), so she's concerned about the concept of anything but residential development along that road.

"That's the only problem I have with the plan," Floyd said.

"I think it's very feasible. I told Mr. Barnes it brought tears to my eyes."

Like other Goulds residents, Floyd wants to maintain the character of her hometown, which has been around since 1903.

"People who live there have been there generation after generation," Floyd said. "It's a small town. And we want to preserve that."

Floyd said she likes the way Barnes has preserved the old and integrated new concepts

in his proposal.

"I like the way he did the plan because he understood what we told him," Floyd said.

The next step in the redevelopment process is another planning meeting tentatively scheduled for May 23.