

The DDB's fiscal year ends on September 30. Legally, this Board cannot make binding agreements for the next fiscal year. Traditionally the DDB has approved funding for events in October, November, and December for the practical reasons that those events may not happen if they can't get a prior commitment. It has been a safe bet because it has been rare that a majority of the board did not roll over into the next fiscal year. With the revision of the ordinance, it is no longer a safe bet. Although we hope the Council Members will honor this tradition, we can't guaranty they will do so. If your event is after September 30, I strongly recommend that you approach the new members of the DDB to confirm the grant.

Staff recommendations are governed by the existing funding policy which limits funding to certain types of expenditures and caps funding for those expenditures. The policy allows discretion to the DDB to deviate from the policy but reasons have to be given. Last month's deviation for the policy was justified as follows:

The rationale for the policy no longer applies because it was to provide consistency upon which grantees could rely and ensure that funds would be available for the full fiscal year. Board members coming in as of April, after approval of the ordinance, have cited the policy and failure to spend sufficient funds for events as the basis for taking over the Board. There is no longer a need, or indeed a rational reason, for applicants to rely on a consistent policy as there will be no funding decisions from the current Board members after this meeting. Other reasons for deviations that were event specific were the impact on families, the impact on the DDB district, and the introduction of a demographic not previously targeted by the DDB.

The time limit of 5 minutes for presentation will be enforced. Questions from members follow each presentation so as not to reduce time allowed.

4.3. Summervibes Clearwater event funding request, \$6,000 requested, staff recommends an amount not to exceed \$9,150. Ms. Lopez reviewed the April 2024 event application which has a \$13,250 budget and \$6,000 requested to cover costs associated with City expenses and event DJ. Staff recommends funding up to \$9,150 to cover the event DJ, City fees, and marketing. She introduced William Lewis of I Love Driving Slow, Inc., a safe driving movement presenting car shows. Discussion included the types of cars included, approximately 100 cars, and cars parked from the Capital Theater to the Cleveland extension by Coachman Park.

Upon motion made by Member Emrani, seconded by Member Khodortsov, and carried unanimously, the Summervibes funding request in the amount of \$9,150.00 was approved.

4.4. Hispanic Organization Network of Resources (HONOR) Group Hispanic Heritage Celebration. This application was withdrawn prior to the meeting. Ms. Lopez noted that the group is restructuring and will re-apply at a later time.

4.5. Food from the Soul Festival event funding request, \$140,000 requested, staff recommends an amount not to exceed \$25,000. Ms. Lopez reviewed the November 22, 2024, event application and stated the full budget is estimated at \$200,000. Staff recommendation includes coverage for marketing, entertainment, and City fees. She introduced Kim Jackson who spoke to the types of food that will be available, craft booths with owners who will be introduced to the availability of brick & mortar retail space, and her own experience. Vendors are regional from Florida and surrounding states, and include food, merchandise, and services. Discussion included the discrepancy of \$30,000 between the budget and the request, and concerns about including downtown businesses.

Attorney Winters outlined the options: Limit to \$110,000 as provided in the budget, modify request to include \$30,000 in marketing generally targeting downtown district, or correct the application and submit it at a later meeting.

Upon motion made by Member Emrani to increase the budget by \$30,000 in marketing targeted at downtown with overall approval for up to \$140,000, seconded by Member Zaniboni, and declined unanimously, the Food from the Soul funding request was not approved. Ms. Jackson will work with Ms. Lopez to correct the request and return in the future.

4.6. Salsa at the District Oktoberfest event funding request, \$195,000 requested, staff recommends an amount not to exceed \$25,000. Ms. Lopez reviewed the October 12, 2024, event application and staff recommendation. The total budget submitted is \$205,000, a special event grant application in place, and application for the City of Clearwater High Impact Event Co-Sponsorship has been made. Richard Del Rio spoke on behalf of the event. Discussion included the marketing budget and plan, the atmosphere of downtown versus Coachman Park, and the appeal of the event. It was noted the event takes place in the next fiscal year so the new Board will have control of the contract. Mr. Del Rio understands and is willing to work with all involved.

Member Khodortsov moved to fund an amount not to exceed \$195,000.00 with the deviation from policy based upon the rationale for the policy no longer existing, the surplus of funds from the prior year, this is a proven event, and more funding will enable the event to attract more people. The motion was seconded by Member Zaniboni, and carried unanimously.

4.7. Clearwater Jazz Holiday event funding request. Part A - Jazz Holiday, \$50,000.00 requested, staff recommends an amount not to exceed \$21,000. Part B - CJH Presents Holiday Experience, \$6,000.00 requested, staff recommends an amount not to exceed \$8,500. Ms. Lopez reviewed the application and staff recommendation, stating that the request totaled \$56,000 (Part A and Part B), and introduced Gary Hallas from the CJH Foundation. Mr. Hallas stated that this October's plan includes four days of free downtown celebration before the evening shows, and December plans include downtown presentations as in the years since COVID.

Upon motion duly made by Member Zaniboni to fund Part A in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 as shown in the budget submitted based upon the attendance generated by this event, the amount of marketing planned, the surplus of DDB funds from the prior year, and the DDB policy has become irrelevant, seconded by Member Emrani, and carried unanimously, the CJH Part A funding request was approved in the amount of \$50,000.00.

Upon motion duly made by Member Emrani to fund Part B in an amount not to exceed \$8,500.00 as recommended by staff, seconded by Member Khodortsov, and carried unanimously, the CJH Part B funding request was approved in the amount of \$8,500.00.

5.1. CRA updates. Ms. Lopez noted that Executive Director Jesus Nino apologized for his absence. She also thanked the Board on behalf of the CRA staff for their service over the years.

5.2. DDB Attorney Updates. Attorney Winters stated that final financial forms are due from members rotating off. Members remaining on the Board should contact the City Attorney regarding financial filings.

Attorney Winters further stated:

The City Council has chosen to destroy something that was unique to Clearwater. This board has

existed to represent an independent taxing district and has been answerable to those who pay an additional tax to support it for over 50 years. I served as chair of the DDB from 1995 through 1997, and have represented it for most years since then so I am very familiar with its history and accomplishments. To say I am disappointed in the City Council, and particularly the two members who used to sit on the DDB, is an understatement.

If you own taxable property in the DDB district, you pay extra taxes to fund the DDB. Under the current ordinance, you have had the right to choose the representatives who determine how that additional tax is spent, replace them if you didn't think they are doing their job, and dissolve the Board and its extra tax if it no longer served its purpose.

The proposed amendment abolishes all elections and referendums by the freeholders, the DDB taxpayers. Going forward, the Board will consist of the city council members and two members appointed by the city who have the same type of ties to downtown as required in the current ordinance. The council members do not.

When the ordinance was amended the property owners who pay the tax lost the right to choose their own representatives and the ability to abolish the tax. This is a very clear example of taxation without representation.

I am very disappointed and I think it is hypocritical.

5.3. DDB Member Final Comments.

Member Emrani has been proud of his service on the Board and that connection to downtown. He thanked the attorney, the CRA, and the other members for their work.

Member Zaniboni stated that it has been an honor to be a part of this group, to work with the CRA and the attorney, but mainly to support our city. She stated, "If the City Council asked us to come back, I would be willing."

Member Khodortsov noted the uniqueness of this concept from anything in his homeland, and stated his pride in this group of citizens dedicating their time and effort to improving the city.

6.0. Chair's Report. Member Kintzel thanked everyone, including the attorney for her guidance, and Ms. Lopez, noting that to him she represents all of her staff and previous manager Howard Smith, and the work they have all put in over the years to support the Board and the citizens of the district. He stated that we have an amazing city with amazing people, he is happy to be in Clearwater and involved in charities and other groups, and he hopes the events approved will continue to grow and see success.

7.0. Adjourned at 7:29 p.m.