

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING

February 7, 2024 – 5:30 PM – 2nd Floor Board Room, Main Library

1. Call to Order. Chair Kintzel called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

In attendance:

Chair Keanan Kintzel
Secretary Chiara Zaniboni
Shahab Emrani
Jennifer Frazier
Mikhail Khodortsov

CRA Executive Director Jesus Nino
Senior CRA Division Manager Anne Lopez
Attorney Elise K. Winters

Ex-Officio Member Lina Teixeira

Absent

Vice Chair Terri Novitsky
Treasurer Festus Porbeni

2.1. Minutes of the meeting. Upon motion duly made by Member Frazier, seconded by Member Zaniboni, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the January 10, 2024, meeting were approved.

3.0 Citizens to be heard. None.

4.0. New Business Items

4.1. Swearing in of Newly- and Re-Elected Members. Ms. Lopez led the oath for Jennifer Frazier and Mikhail Khodortsov.

4.2. Appointment of Officers. Upon motion made by Member Zaniboni, seconded by Member Emrani, and carried unanimously carried, the following officers were appointed:

Chair	Keanan Kintzel
Vice Chair	Terri Novitsky
Secretary	Chiara Zaniboni
Treasurer	Festus Porbeni

4.3. Upcoming Events Funded by the DDB. April 13 – 3rd Annual Ukulele Festival, noon – 9:00 pm, 400-500 block of Cleveland Street.

4.4. Special event grant funding request for a Memorial Day Event produced by The Veterans Alliance of Clearwater \$66,000.00 requested, \$20,000.00 recommended by Staff. Ms. Lopez reviewed the item scheduled for the Saturday before Memorial Day. The application estimates attendance of 2,000. The budget expenses were itemized in the budget presented to the Board. CRA Staff recommendation of \$20,000 covers \$15,000 for marketing and \$5,000 for

entertainment. Fr. Robert Swick and several other presenters spoke on behalf of the Veterans' Alliance, offering background and gratitude for the support of the City of Clearwater, and providing details regarding the expected attendance and economic impact on the community. The majority of the requested \$66,000 would go toward cost for the portion of the event in The Sound, the parade route has yet to be determined, and the event will get \$5,000 in support from the City of Clearwater.

The Board discussed the basis for deviation from the current Board Policy which included the impact on families, economic impact on the DDB District, and introduction of a demographic (military and their families) not previously targeted by the DDB. Board members coming in after approval of the ordinance is approved have repeatedly complained about DDB not spending sufficient funds for events and there is no longer a need, or indeed a rational reason, for applicants to rely on a consistent policy from the current Board as there will be no funding decisions from the current Board after March.

Motion was made by Member Emrani to fund the requested \$66,000, noting that the City of Clearwater is funding \$5,000 and he feels "downtown should cover more than that." Member Khodortsov seconded, and Member Zaniboni started discussion with the wish to fund the full \$81,000 based on the impact to families, the economic impact, and patriotism. It was clarified that the additional \$15,000 would be designated in the Grant Agreement for marketing of the parade and the downtown business area. Member Emrani withdrew his motion, Member Khodortsov withdrew his second, and Member Emrani moved to increase the funding to \$81,000, seconded by Member Zaniboni, with the Grant Agreement to be drafted as discussed. In continued discussion, Member Khodortsov asked for clarification regarding the parade and its possible route and promotion. The motion was carried unanimously.

4.5. Special event grant funding request for a Veterans Day event produced by The Veteran's Alliance of Clearwater \$66,000.00 requested, \$20,000.00 recommended by Staff.

This event is a duplicate event of the Memorial Day request. However, higher attendance is expected because November weather is more agreeable than May, hotels are at half-capacity in November, and there will be more time to prepare and market. Also, Veterans Day encompasses and celebrates all veterans whereas Memorial Day is a more somber time of remembrance.

Discussion followed about attendance, expenses, and marketing opportunities. The group expects both events to continue to grow. Ms. Lopez noted that this event will take place in the DDB's next fiscal year.

Upon motion duly made by Member Zaniboni, seconded by Member Khodortsov, and carried unanimously, based upon the economic impact to downtown and the availability of funds in the DDB budget, funding of \$81,000 including \$15,000 toward marketing of the parade and the downtown business area was approved.

The Chair moved to bring item 5.1. forward, and Member Emrani seconded.

5.1. Event Report from Florida Best Promotions, Inc for the Salsa in the District, October 14, 2023. Richard del Rio reviewed the event and his vision of it growing into a full-weekend event in downtown. He shared a video produced in part with DDB funding. He said their digital marketing plan was extremely successful and feels the advertising budget would be better utilized with digital ads only, foregoing other forms including radio.

4.6. December 2023 Financial Statement for filing. Ms. Lopez reviewed the item. Upon motion duly made by Member Frazier, seconded by Member Zaniboni, and carried unanimously, the December 2023 financial statement was approved for filing.

4.7. Review of the 2023 Downtown Development Board Election Results. Ms. Lopez thanked Nicole Sprague, Deputy City Clerk; Vickie Shire, CRA Program Manager; and Chiara Zaniboni, DDB Member for their assistance. The election results are as follows:

- Jennifer Frazier- 153
- Mikhail Khodortsov- 148
- Terri Novitsky- 138
- Scott Brewster- 48

5.3. Ex-Officio Members, City matters regarding CRA and of interest to the DDB. Council Member Teixeira stated The Sound continues to garner accolades and is ranked number 77 in the world in a worldwide evaluation of amphitheaters. City staff presented to the City Council creative ways to bring more retail downtown. She discussed the ordinance to revise the structure of DDB. The Board will continue with seven members including five council members and two members who will be appointed by the council from those recently elected.

5.2. DDB Attorney Updates. Attorney Winters stated:

The second reading of the ordinance that will remove the voice of the DDB taxpayers will occur on Monday, February 12, at a work session. No public comment is allowed at work sessions.

The ordinance is effective on passing.

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

The proposed amendment abolishes all elections and referendums by the freeholders, the DDB taxpayers. Many freeholders are entities as this is a business district, so they will lose their vote entirely. The freeholders will still have to pay the extra tax. The council wants the money, they don't want the input from the freeholders who have to pay the money.

As of March 31, your terms will end. The Board will consist of the city council members and two members appointed by the city council. The initial appointment will be chosen from the three of you who were elected or reelected in the most recent election, and they will serve three-year terms. After that the council will appoint two members who have the same type of ties to downtown as required in the current ordinance. The independence of those members who are subject to the goodwill of the council for appointment remains to be seen.

In summary, when this amendment passes the property owners who pay the tax will lose the right to choose their own representatives and the ability to abolish the tax. This is a very clear example of taxation without representation.

Please remember that DDB members not continuing must file a final financial disclosure.

The DDB as it stands will have one more meeting.

5.4. CRA updates. Ms. Lopez introduced the new CRA Executive Director, Jesus Nino. Mr. Nino was most recently with the CRA in Tampa.

5.0. Chairman's Report.

To see all events happening within Downtown Clearwater please visit:

downtownclearwater.com

4. Adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Approved:

Date

Secretary