

## CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING

November 3, 2021 – 5:30 PM – City Council Chambers

1. **Call to Order.** Chairman Morfopoulos called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

**In attendance:**

Chairman Paris Morfopoulos  
Vice Chairman Keanan Kintzel  
Treasurer Festus Porbeni  
Terri Novitsky  
Ray Cassano  
Shahab Emrani  
  
Mayor Frank Hibbard  
Ex-officio Member Mark Bunker  
  
CRA Director Amanda Thompson  
CRA Program Specialist Anne Lopez  
CRA Business Assistance Administrator Howard Smith  
CRA Public Relations and Programs Manager Eric Santiago  
DDB Attorney Elise K. Winters

**Absent:**

Secretary Caitlein Jammo

2. **Approval of minutes of the September meetings.**

- 2.1. Upon motion duly made by Member Porbeni, seconded by Member Cassano, and carried, the minutes of the September 8, 2021, meeting were approved unanimously.
- 2.2. Upon motion duly made by Member Emrani, seconded by Member Porbeni, and carried, the minutes of the September 15, 2021, meeting were approved unanimously.

3. **Citizens to be heard regarding items not on the agenda.** Patrick Raftery inquired as to the status of questions presented to the DCMA at the September 15 meeting. Chairman Morfopoulos stated that answers are expected at the next DDB meeting, currently scheduled for December 1, 2021.

4. **New Business Items**

- 4.1. **August Financial Statement for approval.** Upon motion duly made by Member Kintzel, seconded by Member Cassano, and carried unanimously, the August 2021 financial statement was approved.
- 4.2. **September Financial Statement for approval.** Upon motion duly made by Member Emrani, seconded by Member Porbeni, and carried unanimously, the September 2021 financial statement was approved.
- 4.3. **Intercultural Advocacy Institute's Hispanic Outreach Center (HOC) Update.** CRA Business Assistance Administrator Smith introduced Andrea Fernandez, who spoke briefly and answered questions regarding the HOC's presence and mission. Ms. Fernandez thanked the Board for their support of the September 23 event which saw 125 guests and was followed by that evening's Dine Out for a Difference donation to the Gabe Cazares Scholarship Foundation.

- 4.4. Presentation on Homeless Situation in Downtown Clearwater** - Gabe Parra and Sgt. Fidelis detailed the meal service plan for homeless individuals in downtown at two locations, near the police station and at Peace Memorial Presbyterian, and answered questions about the general homeless population in downtown, available shelters, and the approach to care. Sgt. Fidelis noted the addition of a Mental Health Unit to downtown and recent success with the Going Home Project.
- 4.5. 2021 DDB Election Results** - CRA Program Specialist Lopez stated that three people had run for two seats available on the DDB in 2022, and shared the results of the election: Festus Porbeni with 225 votes; Caitlein Jammo with 190 votes; and Scott Sousa with 111 votes. Mr. Porbeni was congratulated, as was Ms. Jammo in her absence.
- 4.6. Review funding request from Intercultural Advocacy Institute's Hispanic Heritage Month celebration event in the amount of \$24,000.** Andrea Vendetti said the goal is to create a cultural experience and community celebration, noting that vendor applications have doubled from the October market and that the group is pursuing the idea of workshops for beginning businesses. Chairman Morfopoulos noted that marketing is but \$300 of the budget; Ms. Ramos stated they have an excellent graphic designer and are making use of social media and website postings with an eye to increase attendance incrementally.

Upon motion duly made by Member Kintzel, seconded by Member Cassano, and carried unanimously, the funding request from Intercultural Advocacy Institute's Hispanic Heritage Month celebration event in the amount of \$24,000 was approved.

- 4.7. Funding request from Lina Teixeira Productions (LTP) for \$6,000** – CRA Business Assistance Administrator Smith reviewed the project and request, and introduced Michael Mantini, one of the artists from the project. Board discussion included what the actual art entails and where it would be displayed, what would become of it (sale, etc.) and Attorney Winters' concern that LTP is not registered with the State of Florida.

Upon motion duly made by Member Porbeni, seconded by Member Kintzel, and carried 4 in favor and 2 against, the funding request from Lina Teixeira Productions for \$6,000 was approved.

Follow-up with Ms. Teixeira was requested regarding the formal corporation behind the request and the stipulation that funding would be used only for locations in the DDB area.

- 4.8. Discussion about Special Event funding policy** – CRA Director Thompson asked for clarification in funding request guidelines; after discussion, the determination was made that the Board is open to different groups requesting more than once per fiscal year, and is open to requests of larger and smaller amounts to avoid setting arbitrary limits. Ms. Thompson also asked about DDB funding interest in marketing-only requests where no City permit is required; no immediate answer was needed, and gave a presentation on the various types of special events possible in the DDB area and the need for events that will build the audience for the re-opening of the former Coachman Park space. As a final point, Ms. Thompson asked the Board to consider the DDB event funding goals (i.e. DDB visibility, creation of activity in downtown, etc.).

## **5. Old Business**

- 5.1. Downtown Coordination Committee update** – CRA Public Relations and Programs Manager Santiago reviewed the committee's activity history and gave an overview of the SPC Collaborative Labs workshop on October 7, 2021. Mr. Santiago said he would be in touch with the other three

groups regarding further plans. Member Kintzel felt the workshop was beneficial in defining each group's role in the committee.

**5.2. CRA Update** – CRA Director Thompson noted the Clyde Butcher photographs exhibit in the Main Library through May 31.

Mr. Smith highlighted the Jamaican Vybzs Grill opening at 623 Cleveland Street, the Market Marie, Art in the Evening Nov 14, storefront window decorations for the Holiday Extravaganza plans, \$10 voucher program with information on [downtownclearwater.com](http://downtownclearwater.com)

**Chairman's Report.**

- Clyde Butcher's "America's Everglades" Exhibit opens Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup> at the Clearwater Public Library featuring a book signing with Clyde Butcher from 11 am – 1pm. The press will be invited to a sneak peek of this newly constructed art gallery space within the library this Thursday at 1pm.
- On Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup> The Market Marie returns at Court and Myrtle.
- Also on Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup> Clearwater Sangria Festival presented by Aspirations Winery takes over the 600 block of Cleveland Street featuring two stages of live music.
- Clearwater Hispanic Farmers Market returns for its second month the weekend of November 20-21 at Court and Myrtle.
- Clearwater Jazz Holiday's Wanderlust kicks off the first of their 4 run concert series on Saturday, November 27<sup>th</sup> in Station Square Park.
- Saturday, November 27<sup>th</sup> also marks the official beginning of our Downtown Clearwater Holiday Extravaganza array of holiday programming. More details will be announced soon at [downtownclearwater.com](http://downtownclearwater.com).

Also, Chairman Morfopoulos stated that he will be requesting a future agenda item to consider a proactive approach to directing funds rather than simply reacting to fund requests.

**6. Board Members to be heard**

Member Cassano stated that he's excited about construction on Cleveland Street and a new 4,000SF lease signed in that area. Also very happy about having his business windows painted for the Holiday Extravaganza plans!

Member Emrani is excited about the holidays and progress at Imagine Clearwater.

Member Kintzel promoted the new axe-throwing pub near downtown.

Member Novitsky is happy to see all the activity but noted a mention of little activity for children and improvements in that area with holidays, Imagine Clearwater, farmer's markets, etc.

Member Porbeni is looking forward to the Chairman's future presentation, and congratulated the DCMA on their Business Resiliency Award.

Mayor Hibbard offered some perspective regarding Imagine Clearwater's entertainment plans of 2-3 hour events as well as larger events such as Jazz Holiday, bringing attendees closer to downtown's restaurants and shops again.

Ex officio Bunker is excited to discuss plans for live theater coming to downtown, and would like to see DDB move from 'getting homeless out of sight' to 'how do we get homeless into a home?'

Chairman Morfopoulos clarified his feelings on the events at former Coachman Park versus Imagine Clearwater and hopeful benefits to downtown businesses.

**7. Adjourned at 7:20 p.m.**

**Approved:**

---

Date

---

Secretary