



TO: Downtown Development Board (DDB) Members

FROM: Anne Fogarty France, Business Assistance Manager and DDB Administrator

CC: Micah Maxwell, Interim Community Redevelopment Agency Director

DATE: February 25, 2019

RE: DDB Special Event Strategy for FY 2019-2020

From 2011 to the present time, the Downtown Development Board (DDB) has funded organizations who submitted funding requests for events or programs that they would like to produce in Downtown Clearwater.

The board has funded merchant promotions coordinated by the Clearwater Main Street program such as the Clearwater Pet Festival (6 years), Clearwater Art Stroll (7 years) and promotions during the streetscape construction that resulted in high participation. Signature events funded were Clearwater Jazz Holiday Festival, Clearwater Super Boat Festival Championship, Blast Friday events, Miracle on Cleveland Street, Fun 'n Sun, Clearwater Farmers Market, Pierce Street Market, Sea Blues Festival and Clearwater Celebrates America. The current merchant association produced Downtown Funk, Sidewalk Sales, Art Walks and events that complemented Blast Fridays and Miracle on Cleveland Street and the board funded these events.

While these events brought people downtown, some throughout the 18-month streetscape construction and the downturn of the economy, they did not produce the desired outcome. The board then gave higher priority to the organizations who held their events on Cleveland Street to bring more people to merchant storefronts. This resulted in more organizations holding events on Cleveland Street and merchants enjoyed more people to market to.

Organizations were asked to provide banners at each end of the event and place free parking signs in various locations. Most recently the DDB requested that organizations provide them with what the return on investment was for their event. While the bigger events bring people downtown, the attendees go to Coachman Park or park their chairs on the street and frequent the food vendors and not the restaurants.

Recommendation:

The primary purpose of the DDB is to promote, facilitate and support activities that sustain, promote and advance downtown revitalization and to attract businesses and residents to relocate and stay in the downtown area. Staff recommends a blended approach with the board funding signature events as they have done to show to support for the concerts and events that Downtown Clearwater is known for and then fund a variety of smaller merchant driven events that are targeted and open to the public. Merchants, if funded, would be responsible for providing feedback to advise the board of their lessons learned.

I recommend funding signature events (Sea Blues, Clearwater Celebrates America, Clearwater Jazz Festival, Craft Beer and Music Festival, Festival Series [Blast Friday, Miracle on Cleveland Street, Cruisin' at the Cap and Arts on the Road] and Super Boat National Championship Festival) in the amount of \$70,000.00 with an additional \$30,000.00 for the merchant association and smaller merchant driven events.

Once DDB members provide direction, I will revise the Funding Request Form. If the board feels that the yearly presentation is helpful, the signature event's organizers can be scheduled as per usual. Merchants interested in smaller events would have to submit their application 90 days in advance of their events, with funds to be paid after the event along with an event completion form. The application will be amended as per the board's direction and brought back to the board at their April meeting.