

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING

March 4, 2020 – 5:30 PM – Main Library – Council Chambers

Members Present:	Paris Morfopoulos	Chairman
	Ray Cassano	Vice-Chairman
	Venkat “Vincent” Devineni	Treasurer
	Shahab Emrani	Member
	Festus Porbeni	Member
	Keanan Kintzel	Member
Also Present:	Amanda Thompson	CRA Director
	Anne Lopez	CRA Program Specialist
	Rosemary D'Amour	CRA Public Relations and Programs
	Howard Smith	CRA Business Assistance Administrator
	Elise K. Winters	DDB Attorney
Absent:	Caitlein Jammo	Member
	David Allbritton	Ex-officio Member/Councilmember
	Jay Polglaze	Ex-officio Member/Councilmember

1. **Chairman Morfopoulos called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.**
2. **Approve the Minutes from the February 5, 2020, Meeting and the Minutes from the February 5, 2020, Work Session**

Member Emrani moved to approve the minutes from the February 5, 2020, Meeting and the minutes from the February 5, 2020, Work Session. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call the vote was:

Ayes: Chairman Morfopoulos, Member Cassano, Member Devineni, Member Porbeni, and Member Kintzel.

Nays: None.

Motion carried.

3. **Citizens to be Heard Regarding Items Not on the Agenda.** None.
4. **New Business**

- 4.1. **Adopt the January 2020 Financial Statement for Filing.** CRA Program Specialist Lopez noted: \$296,540 January 31 ending balance; \$234,285 Cash In Bank; and that all county taxes – the quarterly income – were not yet received.

Member Emrani moved to adopt the January Financial Statement for filing. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call the vote was:

Ayes: Chairman Morfopoulos, Member Cassano, Member Devineni, Member Porbeni, and Member Kintzel.

Nays: None.

Motion carried.

- 4.2. **Presentation of Free Rides.** Co-owner Jasper Klein presented an overview of his company (attached) which offers free rides around and between Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, and Island Estates for only the cost of a tip from the customer, and for a flat rate of \$10 per vehicle (up to six passengers) for

one-way to/from downtown Clearwater. The company's six vehicles are wrapped in ads from sponsors (\$3,400 to wrap; \$1,900/month to sponsor) for a minimum of one year, and vehicles are leased by drivers who then provide free rides for tips.

Mr. Klein stated that Free Rides receives 30-40 calls per week about transportation to downtown but many clients decline due to the \$10 fee. He would like to return to the DDB with a funding request, possibly seeking to partner with the Board to partially cover or remove the \$10 cost to downtown thereby increasing the number of rides on that route. Over next 7 months is the peak season for Free Rides.

The Board discussed various options for supporting Free Rides, and how Free Rides would benefit downtown. The Board concluded they will be happy to hear from Mr. Klein again at the April meeting.

4.3. Discussion on DDB Financial Policy and Procedures. CRA Program Specialist Anne Lopez reviewed the current procedure requiring approval by Board for funding and sign-off by Chairman or Vice Chairman and Treasurer for disbursement. CRA Director Thompson reviewed proposed changes, including approval by Board for funding but sign-off by CRA Director or designee for regular expenditures under \$10,000 and by Chairman or Vice Chairman for grant disbursements (see attached).

Upon discussion, the Board agreed to reduce the amount to be signed-off by the CRA Director (or designee) to \$5,000, and include 'controversial items' with grants for sign-off by the Chairman or Vice Chairman.

Member Cassano moved to adopt proposed Financial Policy and Procedures with amendments as discussed. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call the vote was:

Ayes: Chairman Morfopoulos, Member Devineni, Member Emrani, Member Porbeni, and Member Kintzel.

Nays: None.

Motion carried.

4.4. Discussion on process for grant funding agreements. CRA Business Assistance Administrator Howard Smith presented an overview of grant funding and a proposal for updates (see attached). This proposal included expanding services to areas outside Cleveland Street, and labeling funding as one of three categories: Marketing (Jazz Festival, Santa & Suds), Business Assistance (Jolley Trolley, holiday lighting), and Projects (tree lighting, marina).

Mr. Smith has been introducing himself and the DDB to business owners and residents in the downtown District and discussing the topic of how to support them and the area.

Board discussion included a monthly DDB newsletter, and growing the email list for distribution/participation. Chairman Morfopoulos offered background on previous projects and grants by the DDB to support the downtown. Upon request from Member Emrani, CRA Director Thompson stated that the wayfinding program has been approved and funded; further information will be shared when it is available.

Chairman Morfopoulos commented that the Work Plan workshops are valuable; categorizing funding requests can help clarify expenditures and focus future decisions; and, a pre-determined grant amount would be a problem with the greatly different types of requests.

Mr. Smith concluded that the application process for funding needs redefined. Updates to process include allowing CRA staff to clarify request before the proposal presentation to the Board, the

opportunity for requests to be presented throughout the year rather than all at once in May for planning, and expanding the area of interest for requests outside of Cleveland Street.

Chairman Morfopoulos suggested a FAQs sheet so the 'hot buttons' are addressed and the applicant is more likely to get a favorable result from the Board.

5. **Old Business items**

5.1. DDB Bylaws update. CRA Director Thompson stated that the discussion will continue in April.

5.2. DDB Work Plan (WP) Updates. CRA Director Thompson requested confirmation on Board's opinion via email discussion that they prefer CRA staff managing in-house facilitation for Work Plan. The result: distribute survey and invite public to April meeting for feedback, Board workshop to review and draft plan in May, and adopt the plan in June for work through 2021.

After discussion regarding topics and direction for the workshop, including distribution of \$175,000 discretionary funds, a workshop at 3:30 before the April 1 regular meeting was agreed upon for the workshop.

5.3. Community Redevelopment Agency Updates - CRA Director Thompson.

Amplify Clearwater is the combined Clearwater Regional and Clearwater Beach Chambers of Commerce. CRA is requesting assistance for applicants with the special events paperwork and process management and a minimum amount of marketing.

6. **Chairman's Report.**

March 1-31, K-8 Youth Art Month exhibit, Clearwater Main Library.

March 7, Wild Splash, Coachman Park.

March 17, Election Day.

March 25, free electronic recycling day, Solid Waste, Hercules Avenue.

March 26, 10:30a-noon, CRA monthly meet-up, Clearwater Main Library.

March 27, Blast Friday, 5:30 pm, Pablo Cruz.

A full calendar of events is available at

7. **Board Members to be Heard.**

Member Cassano is very excited about interested group of people who could ignite downtown. CRA Executive Director Thompson clarified that the request for information for the sites on the bluff is under way for end of March, referendum in November, then RFP issued and City selection.

Member Emrani felt it was a good meeting.

Member Porbeni requested more information on the wayfinding project from CRA Executive Director Thompson, who reviewed the projected quickly and will provide the information to members by email.

Member Kintzel noted a new restaurant downtown, Vera's Kitchen. He also suggested that Mr. Smith coordinate efforts with the Chamber [now Amplify] volunteer ambassadors.

Member Devineni is excited about the next Work Plan session, and added an item: 'additional restrictions on homeless in Station Square Park'. He feels progress has been made and the DDB could compare ordinances of other nearby cities to see what Clearwater can do as well as current efforts. He would like the result to be more than a letter of support; possibly a draft of an ordinance to share with the City Council to move things forward.

Chairman Morfopoulos would like an email list of downtown property owners/tax payers so the DDB can better serve them and communicate with them; possibly a letter specifically asking for email addresses and explaining why. CRA Executive Director Thompson explained there is a general hesitancy against sharing email addresses due to list sharing with advertisers. The Chairman requested a count of the number of emails currently available to the DDB.

8. **The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.**