

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING

August 27, 2020 – 5:30 PM – via Zoom

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

In attendance were:

Treasurer Venkat “Vincent” Devineni
Keanan Kintzel
Fetus Porbeni
Shahab Emrani
Vice Chairman Ray Cassano
Mayor Frank Hibbard
Ex-officio Mark Bunker
Chairman Paris Morfopoulos

CRA Director Amanda Thompson
CRA Program Specialist Anne Lopez
CRA Business Assistance Administrator Howard Smith
DDB Attorney Elise K. Winters

Not attending was:

Caitlein Jammo

2. **Approve the July 8, 2020 Downtown Development Board Meeting Minutes**

Discussion included representation of individuals in meeting minutes, comments not appropriate to topic, and length of minutes. CRA Director Thompson and Attorney Winters noted that minutes of other organizations are shorter, showing forward movement and official actions.

Member Emrani agreed and suggested shorter minutes in the future.

Chairman Morfopoulos reviewed items: correction July minutes in Item 4.3 (to “CRA returns funds to DDB”) and deletion of his comment in CRA Updates, paragraph 4; and suggested going forward from this date with the shorter format minutes.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the amended minutes of the July 8, 2020, board meeting were approved.

3. **Citizens to be heard regarding items not on the agenda**

Ms. Holly Thompson, a resident of seven years and artist with Sunsets at Pier 60, stated her wish to create an entrepreneurial-style skills school at the former North Ward Elementary campus. Mayor Hibbard suggested Ms. Thompson bring her ideas to the 6:00 p.m., September 3, 2020, City Council meeting. Ex-officio Member Bunker also noted the possibility of a downtown connection with available spaces.

4. **New Business Items**

4.1. Adopt the June 2020 Financial Statement for Filing

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the June 2020 Financial Statement was adopted for filing.

4.2. Adopt the July 2020 Financial Statement for filing

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the July 2020 Financial Statement was adopted for filing.

4.3. Adopt Resolution 20-02 Adopting City of Clearwater Investment Policy Per Florida Statute

Requirements

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Resolution 20-02 Adopting City of Clearwater Investment Policy Per Florida Statute Requirements was adopted.

4.4. Approve Jazz Holiday Funding request

Presentation moved to September 16, 2020, meeting.

4.5. Approve Jolley Trolley funding agreement

Cassandra Borchers of the PSTA presented an overview and answered questions regarding ridership and routes. Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Jolley Trolley funding agreement was approved.

4.6. Approve CRA/DDB Interlocal Agreement

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Jolley Trolley funding agreement was approved.

CRA Director Thompson suggested moving the proposed budget discussion to follow the work plan for information purposes; there were no objections.

4.8 Approve FY20-21 work plan

CRA Business Assistance Administrator Howard Smith presented an overview and answered questions regarding distribution of survey invitations, and survey responses. Mayor Hibbard suggested a broader survey next round, reaching beyond the district boundaries. The dining certificate program was reviewed.

Citizen Comments: Ms. Holly Thompson stated the perception of downtown as shared to her by visitors to the area is largely one of supporting Scientology rather than downtown business, and her view is that funding decisions could be informed by those perceptions.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the FY20-21 work plan was approved.

4.7. Approve proposed FY20/21 DDB annual budget

CRA Director Thompson stated that the proposed budget would be read at three public hearings: today, August 27; September 9; and September 16, 2020.

Citizen Comments: None.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the FY20/21 DDB proposed annual budget was approved.

Old Business

5.1 Nominating Committee Update

Currently two candidates: current Member Ray Cassano, Terri Novitsky – both of whom are confirmed owners of property within the district. The deadline for nominations is September 4, 2020, and ballots will be mailed out by September 14, 2020.

5.2 CRA updates

More redemption program numbers, and Cleveland Street closure information will be available at September 9 meeting.

One response for Cleveland Street lighting project.

Imagine Clearwater work session will be September 15, 2020.

Homeless response report from community policing at Sept 16 meeting.

Main library construction to begin will affect meeting schedule.

6. Chairman's Report

Pleased that the road closures in downtown Clearwater are extended to mid-January 2021.

7. Board Members to be Heard

Treasurer Venkat "Vincent" Devineni reminded everyone to stay safe, and wear masks always.

Keanan Kintzel feels the downtown Clearwater outdoor dining is better than any food plaza in the country at the moment and is happy to see it extended.

Fetus Porbeni would like to see city zoning changed to increase density and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) standards in order to be more competitive with nearby areas like St Pete, and he would like to add this item to next agenda. Member Devineni would like to send a letter of recommendation to the City Council to move this item forward. CRA Director Thompson noted that new downtown zoning ordinance was updated, the County then changed allowable standards, and plans are with the City Council now; CRA will add this item to the next agenda and draft a letter for review by the DDB.

Shahab Emrani complimented CRA Director Thompson, CRA Business Assistance Administrator Smith, and the CRA staff on their assistance to the DDB; asked for an agenda item to address signage to direct traffic from Court and Chestnut (to and from the beach) to downtown; and stated the ticketing of cars in the empty former-City Hall parking lot is bad messaging to visitors, asking the DDB to request the City Council to remove restriction of parking on those three rows. Vice Chairman Ray Cassano stated that coast-to-coast news coverage [of difficulties around the country] makes him proud to be from Clearwater as he feels our police and City Council are doing a stellar job.

Mayor Hibbard thanked the DDB for its dedication to helping downtown move forward, addressed Member Porbeni's zoning and density question as one the council has prioritized, and

recognized Member Emrani's concern of signage as an ongoing issue as well. He was unfamiliar with parking issues at the former-City Hall location but commented that parking has been a longtime and continuing concern in downtown Clearwater which will continue to receive attention, and that he looks forward to continuing to work together for the betterment of downtown Clearwater.

Ex-officio Bunker noted that he works to keep his comments constructive, positive, and limited regarding Scientology per the DDB's new rule; however, he believes community perception as noted by citizen comments this evening should be a serious consideration because of its importance to the success of downtown Clearwater. Mr. Bunker acknowledged the tragic deaths around the country that have provoked incidents in a movement for change and stated his support for those citizens peacefully protesting. He also encouraged everyone to please keep wearing masks and stay safe!

Chairman Paris Morfopoulos thanked everyone for their patience, attendance, and contributions.

8. Adjourned at 7:11 PM