

## CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING

March 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 Ray Cassano  
Caitlein Jammo  
Keanan Kintzel  
Festus Porbeni  
Shahab Emrani  
Terri Novitsky  
  
Mayor Frank Hibbard  
Ex-officio Member Mark Bunker  
  
Assistant City Manager Micheal Delk  
CRA Program Specialist Anne Lopez  
CRA Business Assistance Administrator Howard Smith  
DDB Attorney Elise K. Winters

**Absent:** CRA Director Amanda Thompson

2. **Approve minutes of the February 3, 2021, meeting.** Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, minutes of the February 3, 2021, meeting were approved.
3. **Citizens to be heard regarding items not on the agenda.** None.
4. **New Business Items**
  - 4.1. **January 2021 Financial Statement for Approval.** Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the January 2021 Financial Statement was approved.
  - 4.2. **Auditor presentation.** David Alvarez of CRI addressed to the Board.
  - 4.3. **Presentation on Opportunity Zones.** Edmon Rakipi addressed the Board regarding how the designation helps an area and what this means to downtown Clearwater.
  - 4.4. **Mr. Infinity Marketing Assistance funding request.** Derek Williams addressed the Board, introducing himself and his business. It was determined that more information was needed to process Mr. Williams' request, that CRA staff would work with the DDB and Mr. Williams to gather the information, and Mr. Williams was invited back next month.
  - 4.5. **DCMA Business Assistance funding request.** Carolyn Bradham and Scott Sousa presented an update on the results of previous funding from the Board, and were invited back next month for further updates, and to present a subsequent funding request.
  - 4.6. **Discussion on potential summit with downtown organizations.** Chairman Morfopoulos suggested the creation of a coalition between the four groups primarily concerned with downtown – the DDB, DCMA, Clearwater Downtown Partnership (CDP), and AMPLIFY Clearwater. Discussion yielded unanimous approval of the idea, and a rough process: that each group should appoint an ambassador; the ambassadors would meet to draft an agenda; and in April a date and venue would be determined for the coalition meeting. Member Kintzel accepted the Chairman's invitation to act as DDB Ambassador to the coalition.

## **5. Old Business**

**5.1. Equity Committee Updates.** Member Jammo stated there is an online meeting of stakeholders set for March 31, 2021. In response to her request for ideas to present, Member Kintzel suggested involving area student councils, and Chairman Morfopoulos encouraged investment in minority groups of young or new entrepreneurs.

### **5.2. CRA Updates.**

CRA Business Assistance Administrator Smith noted that the first three events in the Clearwater Jazz Holiday 'Wanderlust' series are fully booked.

**6. Chairman's Report.** Chairman Morfopoulos feels that we are surviving Covid, things are winding down, that we're coming back to some version of normal and moving forward, but urged everyone to continue to stay safe and stay home when possible.

## **7. Board Members to be heard**

Member Cassano is proud of the Station Square Park group, happy that downtown is improving, and feels diversity in downtown is clear.

Member Emrani is excited about spring break and new activity in downtown.

Member Porbeni thanked Assistant City Manager Delk and the DCMA for their work in downtown, Mr. Rakipi for the presentation on opportunity zones, and the CRA staff for their continued support.

Member Kintzel echoed Member Cassano's sentiments, noting the fun of the streets filling up with the murder mystery groups.

Member Jammo stated that she was embarrassed about how the Mr. Infinity presentation ended, that the DDB needs a better process and communication with the applicant, and that she feels the community needs to feel welcome and comfortable. She referred to the funding request policy in the DDB member binder (item no. 6) and clarified that she feels a clearer detail of the level of information the Board wants and how to effectively communicate that need to applicants is the need.

Member Novitsky agreed with Member Jammo that clear guidelines are necessary and looks forward to an outline at the next meeting.

Mayor Hibberd thanked all for their dedication to downtown, noted a City Council special work session done regarding Imagine Clearwater including conservancy for gardens and music venue management; further meeting on issues March 23 will include REH and AEG to review business models.

Ex-officio Member Bunker noted that Friday and Saturday nights downtown were very busy, Station Square Park was beautifully decorated for the CJH music event, indoor music has returned to Downtown Pizza, met people from a downtown tour who were excited to come back for dining and entertainment.

Chairman Morfopoulos stated that he felt badly about the Mr. Infinity presentation and he would be contacting Mr. Williams personally regarding the matter, he was grateful for the information on opportunity zones, and thanked the DCMA for restoring life to the street culture in downtown.

## **8. Adjourned at 7:05 p.m.**