

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN PROSPERITY GROUP MEETING

June 30, 2021 – 9:00 AM – City Council Chambers

Call to Order. Mr. Kintzel called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and thanked Mayor Hibbard for his attendance. The Mayor thanked the group for their dedication to downtown, and asked for three-four recommendations on which the committee might request assistance or attention from City Council.

1. Review of Goal. “Ideas to harmonize downtown and the groups working for its betterment.”

2. Introductions. Group members and attendees introduced themselves:

Keanan Kintzel, DDB
Caitlein Jammo, DDB
Scott Sousa, DCMA
Sheila Neisler, DCMA
Lina Teixeira, CDP
Janelle Branch, CDP
Amanda Payne, AMPLIFY Clearwater
Jeni Borrow, AMPLIFY Clearwater

Mayor Frank Hibbard
Councilmember Kathleen Beckman

Assistant City Manager Michael Delk
CRA Program Specialist Anne Lopez
CRA Business Assistance Administrator Howard Smith
Current CRA Public Relations & Programs Manager Rosemary D’Amour
Incoming CRA Public Relations & Programs Manager Eric Santiago
DDB Attorney Elise K. Winters

Attorney Winters reviewed the DDB’s relationship to downtown and the Sunshine Law as it applies to the DDB in attendance.

3. Current successful activities, events, etc. Mr. Sousa stated that the Sip ‘n’ Stroll events each bring 250-300 people to downtown, the Dine Out program has contributed to seven local charities, and Ms. Neisler noted that neighborhood associations are included in Dine Out to expand the introduction of downtown offerings.

Ms. Teixeira noted the organic changes to the 500 block of Cleveland Street as it brings the “later crowd” for drinks and dancing after dinner on the 400 block. More businesses are coming to the area, and Wearable Art is having great success and attendance.

Ms. Payne commented that Market Marie has had great success and attendance, Chalktoberfest will be repeated this year, Taste Fest will take place at the Aquarium, and outdoor viewing of the hockey finals is arranged for the 500 block.

4. Promoting each other’s groups. Mr. Kintzel suggested ‘cross-referencing’ of calendars to create an all-inclusive calendar that could be linked to each website. Meeting frequency was considered.

5. **Recommendations for Cleveland Street road closure.** Mr. Sousa recommended beautification efforts to the barriers, trash receptacles, and empty storefronts. It was noted that the street is closed through the end of the year, after which any extension becomes a City Council matter.

Other issues mentioned were parking, sign codes, and bollards. Mr. Delk commented that bollards are not yet ordered but consideration is being given to aesthetics as well as public safety (vehicle in crowd; emergency access).

Most attendees prefer the closure continues, though Councilmember Beckman stated that other retail/dining areas in the city have voiced concern that they do not have the advantage of using public property that the downtown businesses have. Discussion followed about downtown's connection with various charities and neighborhood groups for their events, and possible additional public relations regarding same.

6. **Attracting more businesses to downtown.** Ms. Payne stated that a full-time recruiter is key; St. Petersburg's recruiter is a private organization paid for by local businesses. Discussion included Mr. Santiago's role in the CRA, recent DDB funding to the DCMA, and the DCMA's suggestion that a marketing agent be retained by the DDB. Mr. Sousa suggested tabling that item for a future meeting.
7. **Imagine Clearwater and Streetscape Phase III.** Ms. D'Amour presented an overview of Phase III, beginning at the gateway at Gulf to Bay. She discussed regular CRA 'office hours' at Nature's Food Patch. The community kick-off is planned for Tuesday, July 20, 2021, at 8:00 am and 6:00 pm.

Mr. Delk stated that the Imagine Clearwater project is seeing many of the 'bells and whistles' added back to the plan, and could see a referendum item in March 2022. Support for the marina is key during construction.

8. **Marketing and advertising.** Ms. Jammo highlighted the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Group's work, noting that volunteers are welcome and activities are needed. Ms. Payne suggested the AMPLIFY Clearwater small business diversity program would be a good fit for a partnership.

Ms. Teixeira stated that World Innovation Week presents opportunities for engagement.

Discussion included a 'common' website or calendar to easily share events between groups; Mr. Kintzel suggested his company has the right tool, Wabam. It is managed separately but easily inserted to individual websites.

9. **Combining downtown events.** Item covered in previous discussion.
10. **Event permitting process.** It was agreed to table this topic for a future meeting.
11. **Meeting facilitator.** After discussion, the CRA agreed to arrange for a session in September with SPC's Collaborative Labs.

Regular meeting schedule, association name. Ms. Lopez noted that meetings involving DDB members must be advertised two weeks ahead of the date. It was agreed that the group would meet monthly in August and September, after which meetings would take place quarterly. Ms. Payne suggested a doodle poll to coordinate dates.

Mr. Kintzel suggested the name Prosperity Group for the committee.

12. Closing remarks.

Mr. Sousa suggested members consider a mission statement, and asked for a volunteer to present to their ideas at the City Council's July meeting; Ms. Jammo offered.

Action items:

- A recruiter to fill downtown businesses
- Diversity outreach programs
- Calendar combining all groups' activities
- Participation in World Innovation Week (traditionally mid-April)

Adjourned at 11:07 a.m.