



## Legislation Text

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### **SUBJECT/RECOMMENDATION:**

Discussion on guidelines for future DDB funding requests

### **SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this discussion is to receive direction on how the Downtown Development Board wishes to modify (or not) its adopted policies, procedures and workplan for awarding grant funds. Board members have expressed a desire to provide more clarity to CRA staff and potential grant applicants as well as build consensus among board members on what and how the DDB wishes to provide funding to outside organizations. The Board has agreed to suspend hearing funding requests at the upcoming May and June meetings to address potential amendments to the funding process.

### Background

The DDB has been engaged in a multi-year process of updating its ordinances, policies and forms to allow the board to support the revitalization of downtown more effectively. In 2020, the Board adopted a new workplan, funding policy and funding request forms to guide its decisions on the kinds of activities and projects it wished to fund. These documents are attached. Prior to 2020, the DDB primarily funded special events, required a verbal post event report and the special event request form served as the funding agreement. Funding requests were submitted in April/May and after two public hearings were awarded in July/August. The old process was not well advertised and resulted in the same events and groups of people being funded year after year with varying levels of effectiveness on downtown revitalization.

### Current Process

With the adoption of the FY2020-2021 workplan on August 27, 2021, the DDB identified three main goals to guide funding requests:

- Marketing Goal: Increase awareness of downtown as a fun destination for clearwater residents, employees, and visitors
- Business Assistance Goal: Retain current businesses and attract new businesses
- Policy and Project Goal: Create a more welcoming downtown

Requests for funding that meet one of the three goals listed above are considered on a rolling basis. Applicants fill out a funding request form, the board provides requests for more information via email prior to a public hearing, the request is voted on at a public hearing and a grant agreement is executed by CRA staff based on adopted DDB funding policies. The grant agreement outlines the specific grant activities, payment schedule and reporting requirements. The DDB establishes a budget amount for each goal that determines how much grant funding is available. The DDB can amend those amounts at any regular meeting through budget amendments.

Proposed Discussion Items

In April, CRA staff will review the current funding process and proposed items for discussion in May and June. We would like to have any amendments to the process prepared for your consideration no later than the July 2021 meeting to enable us to advertise the funding process and inform applicants of what to expect. The DDB Attorney will present any legal issues that need to be considered at the May meeting.

Staff recommends the DDB consider and provide direction on the following discussion items in May and June:

- Does the DDB want to modify its current workplan to change the goals?
- Should the DDB adopt minimum and maximum grant funding amounts?
- Should the DDB institute some type of matching requirement or other financial requirements?
- Should the DDB incorporate diversity and equity considerations into its funding process?
- Is the DDB comfortable with the current funding policy?
- Are there types of activities or projects the DDB does NOT want to fund?