

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
June 7, 2017 – 5:30 PM – City Hall – Council Chambers

Members Present:	Paris Morfopoulos	Chairman
	Thomas Wright	Member
	Tony Starova	Member
	Stu Sjouwerman	Member
	Zachary Thorn	Member
	Chelsea Allison	Treasurer
Also Present:	Bill Jonson	Ex-officio/Councilmember
	Anne Fogarty France	Board Administrator
	Seth Taylor	CRA Director
Absent:	Dennis Bosi	Vice-Chairman
	Doreen Caudell	Ex-officio/Councilmember

1. Chairman Morfopoulos called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m., asking the board and Ex-officio members to introduce themselves.
2. Citizens Comments--Items not on the agenda—No comments.
3. Approve the Minutes from the May 3, 2017, Meeting

Member Wright moved to approve the minutes from the May 3, 2017, meeting. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:

“Ayes”: Member Morfopoulos, Member Starova, Member Sjouwerman, Member Allison, Member Wright and Member Thorn.

“Nays”: None.

Motion carried.

4. Adopt April 2017 Financial Statement for Filing

Member Allison moved to adopt the April 2017 Financial Statement for filing. The motion was duly seconded.

Upon roll call, the vote was:

“Ayes”: Member Morfopoulos, Member Starova, Member Sjouwerman, Member Allison, Member Wright and Member Thorn.

“Nays”: None.

Motion carried.

5. Second Century Presentation—Seth Taylor, Community Redevelopment Agency Director, gave the board an update on the Second Century initiative. He stated he will focus on three parts—the Cleveland Street streetscaping project, the wayfinding project and Imagine Clearwater.

The streetscaping drawings are being prepared in-house and construction should start in early 2018, with a completion date of early 2019. The streetscape runs from Missouri Avenue to the five-point intersection of Highland, Gulf to Bay/Court Street.

The wayfinding project is moving forward and Merge, the vendor, will be back in July. Different areas of the city will have different color schemes. The designs will be sent to the board via email.

For Imagine Clearwater, a Request for Qualifications for an engineering firm has been released. A firm should be hired by the time the referendum goes to the voters on November 7th. The referendum text will go before the Council in July for approval. Voters need to approve any proposed changes below the 28-foot contour line of the bluff. Imagine Clearwater will be done in two phases—phase one is everything north of Cleveland Street and phase two is everything south of Cleveland Street.

Discussion ensued on when the Clearwater Marine Aquarium will vacate the building. A question was raised on what will happen with the monuments that are part of the downtown landscape. Mr. Taylor said this could be added to the scope of the work being done by Merge. In response to a question from Member Wright about Ruth Eckerd Hall's involvement regarding its use of the band shell, Mr. Taylor said the City is working with Ruth Eckerd Hall concerning its programming needs. The band shell will be relocated further south on The Green (Coachman Park) and will probably be the first element built. Moving the band shell further south in the park will also require voter approval.

Member Starova stated that there needs to be way-finding signs on major roads directing people to the downtown area. He said Clearwater is the only city that does not do this. Merge will work with the DDB when they return in July to ensure all areas are covered.

Mr. Taylor will update the board on the Mercado (public market) coming to the gateway area after his teleconference at the end of the month.

6. Second Reading—Approve Funding in the amount of \$3,000 for Station Square Park—Bazaar Art with funds from the Future Initiatives line item. Jennie Pearl, Bazaar Art, addressed the board on the request for funding. This request was approved for \$3,000 at the last meeting without her presence and she apologized for not being able to attend the last meeting.

Ms. Pearl advised the board of the components of the event. She currently provides music but would like to include local bands. However, the cost for this is outside her budget, although the CRA does provide assistance for the music.

In July an Art Throwdown is planned for artists to compete for prizes. She advised the board that the \$3,000, if approved, will be used for marketing. Discussion ensued concerning ways to improve attendance.

Member Wright moved to approve funding for the Station Square Park Bazaar Art in the amount of \$3,000 on second reading. The motion was duly seconded.

Upon roll call, the vote was:

“Ayes”: Member Morfopoulos, Member Starova, Member Sjouwerman, Member Allison, Member Wright and Member Thorn.

“Nays”: None.

Motion carried.

7. Funding Request for Sidewalk Sales/Downtown Clearwater Merchants Association (DMCA) — Carolyn Bradham, DCMA Vice President addressed the board concerning the upcoming sidewalk sales. In an effort to keep the momentum generated by Blast Fridays going during the summer months, DCMA came up with the idea to do a sidewalk sale on the last Friday of the month in June, July, and August. Merchants will put tables outside their shops with food samples, merchandise, and vendors will be recruited to sell their wares. They are also considering creating a kid's zone. The event will run from 5 to 8:30 p.m.

The Association is asking for assistance from the board to expand its marketing campaign. Member Sjouwerman asked if Ruth Eckerd Hall was helping with the promotion since they have a large mailing list. She said they were assisting the DCMA. The DCMA is asking for a total of \$3,000 for \$850 each for three Morning Blend segments and \$450 for social media advertising. The sidewalk sales will proceed with or without the monies from the DDB. Discussion ensued.

Member Starova asked for an item to be placed on the DDB agenda to discuss whether money from the DDB should be matched with whatever the event organizer already has available.

Member Sjouwerman moved to approve funding for the Sidewalk Sales/Downtown Clearwater Merchants Association in the amount of \$3,000 on first reading from the Advertising line item. The motion was duly seconded.

Upon roll call, the vote was:

“Ayes”: Member Morfopoulos, Member Starova, Member Sjouwerman, Member Allison, Member Wright and Member Thorn.

“Nays”: None.

Motion carried.

8. Adopt Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Preliminary Budget — Chelsea Allison, Treasurer addressed the board on the proposed 2017-2018 budget. She advised the board that the millage rate has been changed from .9651 to .9700. This will provide an additional \$1,320 in funding. The Property Appraiser provided the taxable value which is a 6.91% increase over last year. Another figure will be provided on July 1st which will include the tangible personal property taxes.

The preliminary budget must be adopted this month. In July the Board will hear from all those who have requested funding. In August the board can make changes to the budget which will be finally adopted in September. Additionally, the board must adopt the preliminary millage rate in July which also will be adopted in September.

Member Wright moved to approve the preliminary budget. The motion was duly seconded.

Upon roll call, the vote was:

“Ayes”: Member Morfopoulos, Member Starova, Member Sjouwerman, Member Allison, Member Wright and Member Thorn.

“Nays”: None.

9. 2017 DDB Funding Requests — Anne Fogarty France, Downtown Manager, advised the board members that before the next meeting they needed to review the requests provided to them in the binder. Everyone requesting funds will have three minutes at the July 12th meeting to make a presentation. Please note that the July meeting has been changed from July 5th to July 12th due to the July 4th holiday.
10. Downtown Clearwater Direct Mail Advertising Proposal — Chairman Paris Morfopoulos addressed the board concerning its advertising budget. He stated that although the board now has a budget for advertising and marketing, no one has come forth with a formal proposal on how to use these funds. He provided a cost analysis comparing direct mailing of postcards to mailing a newsletter which could include advertisements for downtown merchants.

A lengthy discussion ensued concerned the use of direct mailings versus the use of social media and emails. If the board did a pilot program over the next three months and sent out 5,000 newsletters each month to select addresses, it would cost approximately \$4,707.00. Several board members felt that direct mailings are a waste of time and money because people tend to just throw them away. They felt that Facebook ads would be a better return on investment.

The Pierce Street Market was cited as a prime example of how social media and forward-moving technology can grow a business. Once the new website is up and running, a monthly mailing will be available. This could include upcoming events sponsored by the DDB. After further discussion, no action was taken at this time.

11. **Chairman’s Report** - Chairman Morfopoulos advised the Board of upcoming events. These events are listed on the web site at www.clevelandstreetdistrict.com.

12. Final Comments

Member Starova stated that the last Blast Friday had about 4500 people in attendance. He said the sales for the merchants in the 400 block of Cleveland Street are up from last year.

Member Sjouwerman thinks we should have an integrated advertising campaign with both direct mailings and the use of technology. It should be done professionally with Seth Taylor and hit the same demographic as the new website.

Member Allison agreed with his comments. She requested merchants open doors during events.

Ex-officio Member Jonson said he attended the last painting in the park event. He and his wife then went to dinner at Chiang Mai and it was packed. After listening to the discussion about marketing, he suggested the board may want to consider having an open session to discuss strategy.

Mr. Taylor said the recent beer fest was a great success. He thanked Jay Polglaze and the Dunedin House of Beer for making it such a success.

Chairman Morfopoulos stated the recent events have been well-attended and very successful.

13. The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.