



# CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD

December 3, 2008 – 5:30 PM – Marriott Residence Inn

Members Present:	David Allbritton	Chairman
	Bob Fernandez	Vice-Chairman
	Josee Goudreault	Member
	Geri Arango	Member
	Dennis Bosi	Member
	Charles Lykes	Member
Absent:	Dean Nichols	Member
Also Present:	Doug Linder	Member-elect
	Carlen Petersen	Ex-Officio/Councilmember
	John Doran	Ex-Officio/Councilmember
	Rod Irwin	Assistant City Manager/CRA Executive Director
	Geri Campos Lopez	Director of Economic Development & Housing
	Anne Fogarty France	Board Administrator/Downtown Programs Coordinator
	Jim Donnelly	Assistant Director of Economic Development & Housing

1. **The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm at the Marriott Residence Inn on Court Street.**

2. **Message from our Host – Residence Inn by Marriott**

Cori Johnson, Director of Sales, explained that the Marriott has accommodations of 150 suites/studios with 1 or 2 bedrooms. The meeting room can seat up to 30 people comfortably. Ms. Johnson stated that they are excited to be in the area and have been well received. They have a bit of a break in rates because they are not on the beach, but close. They have a really good relationship with the City of Clearwater. Ms. Johnson stated there will be a Grand Opening on January 14, 2009, and requested all present to leave their business cards so that she could include them in the Grand Opening festivities. She also announced that after the meeting someone would be available for a tour of the facility.

3. **Citizen Comments – Items Not on the Agenda**

Pat Fernandez – Farmer's Market presented a Letter of Resolution dated December 3, 2008, asking the board to deliver to City Council recommending the relocation of the Farmer's Market to the 500 block of Cleveland Street. The chair inquired about the petition needed with signatures of merchants on the 500 block of Cleveland St. Ms. Fernandez stated she had all the signatures needed on the petition, as requested by the board.

**Member Goudreault moved to recommend to City Council the relocation of the Farmer's Market for their consideration. Motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

**4. Approve the Minutes from the November 5, 2008, Regular Monthly Meeting.**

**Vice-Chairman Fernandez moved to approve the minutes of November 5, 2008 as submitted in written summation to each board member. The Motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

**5. Adopt October 2008 Financial Statement for Filing**

**Member Goudreault moved to adopt October 2008 Financial Statement for Filing. Motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

**6. Adjourn Regular Meeting**

**Vice-Chairman Fernandez moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 5:50pm. Motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

**7. NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION/PLANNING SESSION**

**The Chair called the New Member Orientation/Planning Session Meeting to order at 5:51 pm.**

**8. Board Member Responsibilities – Elise Winters, Board Attorney**

Anne Fogarty France advised the board that Elise Winters apologized for being unable to attend due to illness, but would be present for the January meeting for new member orientation and discussion.

**9. Year in Review – Geri Campos Lopez, Director, Economic Development & Housing**

Ms. Lopez advised Doug Linder would not take over officially until January 2009. The meeting was a good opportunity for an open discussion and overview of the DDB goals. Ms. Lopez stated in her overview the mission of the Economic Development and Housing Department was to improve and expand the city's economic base by expanding existing businesses; attracting new business and real estate investment. Also, maintaining a quality residential base and providing affordable housing. There also is focus on dealing with the challenges related to a built-out city. She spoke of the City's redevelopment focus for the downtown area, which encompassed the business and community development. She discussed enhancing the downtown destination, which includes beach walks, parking garages, encouraging hotel development, beach strategies, boat slips. Courtney Orr, Downtown Manager, was unable to attend so Ms. Lopez gave her presentation. A walking map is being developed by Anne Fogarty France. Courtney Orr has been focusing on actively recruiting restaurant/retail businesses for the downtown area. Focus has been on strengthening the Toolbox. (a "Doing Business Guide") A need for a representative with the different entities in order that the board can be more involved. Acknowledgement was made by Vice-Chairman Fernandez of the Sunshine rule and the privately funded Downtown Partnership. They

are able to move quickly with events/activities because they are not constrained by the rule.

#### 10. **Cleveland Street District Big Picture – Rod Irwin, CRA Executive Director**

Rod Irwin praised how the downtown had come a long ways.

The CRA is involved in a larger five-year economic picture. Affordable housing, retail recruitment are also being focused on by the CRA. A re-population of the community due to the large number of vacancies downtown. Mr. Irwin advised the board that they are conducting a traffic study to see where the city needs to be in the future. Better identify city public parking lots.

The Chair thanked Mr. Irwin.

#### 11. **Planning: Topics for Discussion**

Member Aranjó discussed this list for the board and if they would be interested. Per Vice-Chairman Fernandez, the board is interested in everything. Rod Irwin suggested designing retail standard guidelines that are consistent with the downtown design guidelines.

- a. Communication and coordination between the DDB, City/CRA, Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Partnership – Working Together and Common Goals
- b. Updates on policies and projects at future meetings (Street Closures, Panhandling, and Streetscape Phase II)
- c. Guest Speakers
- d. Getting more involved
- e. Business assistance i.e. marketing, buy-one-get-one coupons, cooperative advertising.
- f. Welcoming businesses
- g. Role in future of Capitol/Royalty Theatre

#### 12. **Final Comments**

**Member Aranjó** stated it's very important that the DDB is more informed because the merchants look to them as a resource. She looks forward to the future and the board.

**Vice-chairman Fernandez** congratulated the new members and stated that it's very positive about the things that are happening.

**Member Linder** said he is happy to be a new DDB member and is looking forward to providing whatever input he can. He suggested that he could give an update of what the chamber has been working on, for instance. He mentioned that a couple of months ago the Chamber's Tourism Committee was strongly urged to look at the convention center and the Harborview Center, which will be closing the end of January 2010. He was asked to form a Task Force to keep the HarborView Center open. There will be a convention center someplace in Pinellas County and he said the City would like it here. Bids have been coming in from several companies for an exploratory study and he thinks now is the time to put the plan together so that the task force can move forward.

A stadium in all likelihood will be going to St. Petersburg so a lot of bed tax will be going to south county. Now is the time, he said, to bring some of that back to Clearwater.

**Member Lykes** stated that the convention center sounds like a really fantastic idea and that the DDB could really get behind it. He thinks this is the only place in the county that has professional space so close to the beaches. He mentioned that he'd accept any promotional materials like posters that he could put up in his office. He looks forward to learning from the board's attorney about getting involved with other boards so the DDB can work with other groups.

**Ex-Officio Councilmember Petersen** welcomed the new board members. She said that the bed tax is a substantial amount of money and she is very supportive of a convention center. She stated that what has happened in the last four years is phenomenal. Everyone should pat himself or herself on the back. She said a friend of hers was astounded by the transformation of the downtown.

**Member Goudreault** stated that the Rio Grande changed hands and is under new management. She said they had a very bumpy start but now they are standardizing the menu and the pricing. She commented that they are not just trying to sell food. They have pride. She thinks there is so much more pride downtown now, especially with the art, the sculptures, etc. It is all making a big difference.

**Chairman Allbritton** stated that one word that best describes downtown to him is optimistic. When he first came to the board it wasn't optimistic, he thought. He remembers the downtown when it had a lot of energy. Since he has been looking from the inside out, there are so many people working together. That's the biggest thing that impacted him. Everybody had a common goal/vision to get where we are now and it's coming together. He stated that we have such a great city and that our area is one of a kind. He commented that he would take a drive around other cities that have made a change and then comes back here and it's so much better. He thinks the board has that vision of what Clearwater will be.

### **13. Adjournment**

**Vice-Chairman Fernandez** moved to adjourn at 7:12 p.m. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

**CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING ACTION AGENDA**  
**December 3, 2008 – 5:30 PM – Residence Inn by Marriott – Meeting Room**

**12.03.01**

**Member Goudreault moved to recommend to City Council the relocation of the Farmer's Market for their consideration. Motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

**12.03.02**

**Member Vice-Chairman Fernandez moved to approve the minutes of November 5, 2008 as submitted in written summation to each board member. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

**12.03.03**

**Member Goudreault moved to adopt the October 2008 Financial Statement for Filing. The Motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**