

## **CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

May 4, 2011 – 5:30 PM - City Hall – City Council Chambers

<b>Members Present:</b>	<b>David Allbritton</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
	<b>Thomas Wright</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
	<b>Paris Morfopoulos</b>	<b>Member</b>
	<b>Sean Belanger</b>	<b>Member</b>
	<b>Tony Starova</b>	<b>Member</b>
<b>Also Present:</b>	<b>John Doran</b>	<b>Ex-Officio/Councilmember</b>
	<b>Paul Gibson</b>	<b>Ex-Officio/Councilmember</b>
	<b>Geri Campos Lopez</b>	<b>Director of Economic</b>
		<b>Development and Housing</b>
	<b>Anne Fogarty France</b>	<b>Board Administrator</b>
	<b>Courtney Orr</b>	<b>Downtown Manager</b>

**The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.**

### **1. Citizen Comments – Items Not on the Agenda**

There were no citizen comments.

### **2. Approve the Minutes from the April 6, 2011 Regular Monthly Meeting**

**Member Wright moved to approve the minutes from the April 6, 2011 regular meeting. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

### **3. Adopt March 2011 Financial Statement for Filing**

Member Morfopoulos asked when the board will be paying for the Sea Blues Festival to which Ms. Fogarty-France responded that they will be paying after the event.

**Member Morfopoulos moved to adopt the March 2011 Financial Statement for filing. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

### **4. Chairman's Report – David Allbritton**

#### **a. Downtown Coordinating Committee Update**

Chairman Allbritton stated that Ms. Fogarty France had a great idea for the addition of the event parking sign at public parking garages to which Ms. Fogarty France responded that the credit should go to Member Starova since he was the one who requested that the signs be placed at the garages.

Member Starova stated that it would be better if the signs say free parking instead of event parking to which Ms. Fogarty-France responded that the parking division prefers that the signs state event parking instead of free parking.

Member Belanger asked if the parking division gets the final say to which Ms. Fogarty France responded that she can ask them again but they do not like to use the word free in regards to parking. Ms. Lopez stated that the parking division's preferred word is complimentary instead of free.

Member Morfopoulos asked why they have an objection to the word free to which Ms. Fogarty France stated that she does not know why they do not like using the word free but parking is the revenue making portion of the city's budget.

Ex-Officio/Councilmember Doran stated that if they use the word free then people might think that all parking in downtown Clearwater is free to which Member Starova responded that all parking is free on the weekend. Ex-Officio/Councilmember Doran asked if that included metered parking to which Ms. Fogarty France responded yes.

Ms. Lopez stated that they used the parking division's existing signs so there was no cost to the Downtown Development Board (DDB).

## **5. Clearwater Downtown Partnership Update – Bill Sturtevant, Chairman**

Chairman Allbritton stated that he attended the April Blast Friday and it was a great event and introduced Bill Sturtevant, Clearwater Downtown Partnership Chairman.

Mr. Sturtevant stated that they are in the process of coordinating a program where they can bring the real estate community to the Cleveland Street District to showcase the various opportunities for leasing space. He is working closely with Laura St. Clair and Colliers Arnold and believes that with their help they can reach out to the entire bay area.

Mr. Sturtevant stated that several months ago they had an inquiry from a large retail company who has shown interest in the downtown Clearwater area. They are planning on bringing the executives to Clearwater at the end of the month during Blast Friday and will look into providing accommodations for them at Water's Edge.

Mr. Sturtevant stated that the movie 'Dolphin Tale' will be released in September and they are working with Ruth Eckerd Hall to put on an event for opening weekend. It will be good to have an event at Capitol Theatre for the movie.

Mr. Sturtevant stated that small events are critical for the growth of downtown Clearwater and they are going to continue working on making that happen. They are going to reach out to people where they can and try to have small events on a regular basis. He has a friend who is a local entertainer that goes down to Sarasota for the songwriter's festival. It will be nice to host an event similar to that on Cleveland Street District twice a year. This will be a nice event for the Downtown Clearwater Merchants Association (DCMA) to get involved in.

Mr. Sturtevant stated that the Momentum Awards is going to be held on May 25, 2011 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and the key speaker is DDB Chairman David Allbritton. The annual meeting will be held in the Atrium Lobby this year and everyone is invited. The Momentum

Awards provides an opportunity to recognize downtown businesses and individuals who make a difference in their community. This is a nice time to come together as a business community and make plans for the coming year.

Mr. Sturtevant stated that he is very excited about the Blast Friday event for this month. Atlanta Rhythm Section will be performing at the event. They are a great group that will help bring more people to downtown Clearwater. He thanked Ruth Eckerd Hall for organizing this event.

Member Belanger stated that he did not make it to the last Blast Friday but one of the pictures he saw looked like Rick Derringer was performing inside the Capitol Theater at one point and asked if that was the case to which Mr. Sturtevant responded no. Ms. Orr stated that the picture he was talking about made it look like Rick Derringer was inside Capitol Theater but in actuality the Blast Friday pictures were combined with pictures from events that took place in other venues.

Member Belanger asked if the large retail store is a name they would recognize to which Mr. Sturtevant responded yes and stated that Ms. Lopez's office has a lot of information to share with them. The economic base on Island Estates and Sand Key will have to pass through downtown Clearwater and this new retail store will bring business from residents of these areas to downtown Clearwater.

Member Morfopoulos asked if they are considering new construction or taking over an existing building to which Mr. Sturtevant responded that they want to take over an existing building that can be completely remodeled. They would prefer a building that is listed on the Historic Registry. He will know more about their plans in the next few weeks before they arrive in Clearwater.

Member Belanger stated that everyone on the board will assist him in any way they can to get the executives excited about downtown Clearwater.

Chairman Allbritton stated that there was a huge crowd in downtown Clearwater as well as in the restaurants during Blast Friday which is the very reason that these events are held. They are organized to get people to come downtown and familiarize themselves with the district and what it has to offer. Events provide the opportunity to bring new people to downtown Clearwater. It also helps support existing businesses. These events are critical for the next twelve months because it will help build a brand that does not exist anywhere in the bay area. He also stated that he does not have a head count for the previous Blast Friday but the Cleveland Street District was packed. He feels that the Atlanta Rhythm Section could help bring an extra fifteen hundred people to downtown Clearwater.

Member Starova stated that Blast Friday is a great idea and it helps get businesses involved. Three businesses in Cleveland Street District have live music during Blast Friday. The attitudes of businesses are changing for the better. As they make improvements more businesses will want to move to downtown Clearwater.

Member Starova asked if they might be able to have carousel rides for the children during the

week of July 4, 2011. This will bring a lot of people and families to downtown Clearwater. Member Belanger asked if he was referring to a carnival to which Member Starova responded yes. Member Belanger stated that he thinks carnivals are for profit organizations but felt it was a good suggestion. He also stated that the snow during the Miracle on Cleveland Street event brings more people to downtown Clearwater than any other event right now. Mr. Sturtevant stated that he will look into the possibility of having a carnival during the week of July 4, 2011.

Member Belanger stated that the initiative to get new businesses to open in downtown Clearwater is vital to their success. People who work in the downtown area love being there and the business rental cost is very good as well. If they can get businesses who are considering moving to take a look at the area they are sure to lease some space.

Mr. Sturtevant stated that if they can stay the course for the next twelve months it will be a whole different climate in downtown Clearwater. Water's Edge will be sold out, there will be more businesses in the area and Station Square Park will make progress. He thanked the DDB for their continuing support.

#### **6. Follow-Up on Banner & Signage Discussion – Courtney Orr**

Ms. Orr distributed a memo from Paul Bertels, Traffic Operations Manager, to DDB members and stated that the memo outlines the cost of installation of the banners plus Progress Energy's take on using their poles to anchor the banners. Since Mr. Bertels will be attending the June meeting, the board can further discuss this topic then.

Member Wright asked if Mr. Bertels approached Dunedin to find out the total cost of their banners to which Ms. Orr stated that there was a phone conversation that mentioned Dunedin and it looked like they spent approximately fifty thousand dollars for them.

Board members were asked to review the memo in preparation for discussion in June.

#### **7. Cleveland Street District Website Demonstration – Courtney Orr**

Ms. Orr stated that they launched the new website on April 11, 2011 and she wanted to make sure that the DDB knew all the amenities that are on the website. Staff continues to encourage businesses to submit any events they might be having online. Doing so generates an e-mail to both Ms. Fogarty France and herself so that they can enter this information and inform people of these events.

Ms. Orr stated the main pages on the website consist of events, dining, shopping, living and news. The events page lets people know of events happening in the district. The dining and shopping pages have directories with dining and shopping options available in the district as well as an interactive map showing the store's location and parking areas nearby. Each business has their own unique page with their hours of operation and the interactive map. The living directory pertains to people living in the area. District happenings are updated on a regular basis.

Ms. Orr stated that above the main pages are more menu items that give information about

visitors, residents, business owners and developers. Businesses such as Casanova, Blue Dahlia Marketplace, Tony's Pizzeria, and Peter Gillham's are highlighted on the website currently and staff will be changing those out to keep the website looking fresh.

Member Wright asked if a business that offers services can develop a page to which Ms. Orr responded yes.

Ms. Orr stated that if anyone is an avid tweeter on twitter they can actually input someone's username so that whenever they use the hash tag for CRA it will feed into the website's twitter box.

Ms. Lopez stated that they anyone who tweets will be entered into a drawing to win two free reserved seating tickets to the Sea Blues Festival

Member Belanger asked if anyone, including the general public, can tweet to which Ms. Orr responded that she would have to be given their username in advance in order for them to do that.

Member Morfopoulos asked if they are only allowed to tweet about the district in general or if they can tweet to promote their own business to which Ms. Orr responded that they can promote their own business if they would like.

Member Belanger asked how many followers they have to which Ms. Orr responded that they do not have a twitter account yet and that the tweets they are getting are from individual people tweeting directly to the website.

Member Wright asked if there is a link to radio DDB to which Ms. Orr responded yes and that it is hyperlinked the DDB's page.

Ms. Orr stated that analytics shows that the website has had eighty visits per day since launch. People are spending at least three minutes on the website and visiting at least three pages, the home page being the most popular.

Member Morfopoulos asked what response they have received from businesses regarding any information for the website to which Ms. Orr responded that they have received responses from ten to fifteen businesses.

Member Morfopoulos asked how big the mailing list was to which Ms. Fogarty-France responded eighty to eighty-five.

Member Belanger stated that maybe Ms. Orr could keep the board up to date on the analytics on a monthly basis.

Member Belanger asked if there is a lot of linkage to other sites to which Ms. Orr responded that the tourist organization and the Beach chamber is directing a lot of traffic to their website. They are trying to cross reference as much as possible to increase business.

Member Starova stated that another way to drive traffic to their website is by using Google AdWords. It is very economical and they can do it on a fixed budget.

Member Belanger asked how they plan on promoting the website to drive more traffic to it to which Ms. Orr responded that they are trying to push the address by putting it on all collateral material. They are ordering a few hundred window cling signs with the URL that can be applied to merchants' windows as well as the bumpers of cars. Their newsletter has a 'forward to friend' button at the bottom of the page. She also stated that they officially launched the website at the last Blast Friday event with the rocket ship car that they rented and drove down Cleveland Street. There were banners on each side of the car with the URL on it. Children joined Bay News 9's anchor, Jennifer Holloway, on stage to help distribute giveaways.

Ms. Orr stated that the Cleveland Street District newsletter had a good delivery rate. They compared it to the entertainment and events industry. The industries standard for an open rate is 12.6% and the Cleveland Street District newsletter has a 24% open rate which means that people who are getting their newsletter are opening it far above the standard industry rate.

Member Starova asked when they will get a Facebook page to which Ms. Orr responded that they have one but she still needs to build it and start feeding information to it. She reserved the name so that no one else would be able to use it.

## **8. New Business**

Ms. Lopez stated that they received a letter from the Property Appraiser's office informing them of what their taxable value was. They are expecting a seven percent decrease in the property values for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Lopez stated that she had to update their revenue because it was lower than their projection. Their estimated revenue was \$235,000. Based on a seven percent decrease next year their revenue will drop to \$230,000 which is a \$5,000 decrease. She calculated the revenue based on a six percent decrease and an eight percent decrease as well because the appraiser's office stated that the decrease could be off by one percent in either direction. At a six percent decrease they are looking at a \$2,500 deficit. At an eight percent decrease they are looking at a \$7,500 deficit.

Ms. Lopez stated that they will begin their budget discussion next month and requested that the board members think of what their priorities are going to be in terms of improving downtown Clearwater.

Ms. Lopez stated that they will also have presentations from all the organizations that are requesting sponsorships from the DDB at the July meeting.

## **9. Final Comments**

Member Wright stated that he wanted to remind everyone that the Police Department will be having a memorial service on Friday, May 6, 2011 at Station Square Park.

Member Starova stated that the DDB is doing a great job and is heading in the right direction.

Member Morfopoulos had no comment.

Member Belanger stated that it is important to stay on course in order to make big strides. Downtown Clearwater is getting better and he is glad to be on the team.

Ex-Officio/Councilmember Doran stated that he encourages everyone to read Mr. Bertels letter regarding the banner discussion. There are a lot of opportunities to take advantage of. He also stated that he had the opportunity to attend the last two Blast Friday's and noticed that there are a lot of people attending the event on a regular basis. The Key is to ensure that everyone has a good time so that they keep coming back. He asked if there were two more Blast Friday's before they break for summer to which Mr. Sturtevant stated that they plan to move Blast Friday to Capitol Theatre in the summer months.

Member Morfopoulos asked if Blast Friday moves to Capitol Theatre will it continue to be a free event. Mr. Sturtevant responded that he is not sure but it probably will not be a free event and that it will not be covered under the old budget.

Ex-Officio/Councilmember Doran thanked Member Belanger for his comments on urban Clearwater being ignored. He stated that there was an article in the paper today regarding conflict. If all people ever hear are negative remarks about downtown Clearwater then that is the only impression they will have. It is the DDB's duty to get the word out that Clearwater is a great place to be. People will listen to what the board has to say. If they keep the momentum going, downtown Clearwater will have a very bright future.

Ex-Officio/Councilmember Gibson stated that the debate in the newspaper was about low income property in downtown Clearwater. It was a tough discussion and Mr. Irwin was not in favor of moving forward with this project. Funds recently were spent to tear down the Economy Inn. There is a lot of land in downtown Clearwater and in order to really make the area thrive they need to bring in more hotels, retail stores and restaurants.

Chairman Allbritton stated that the Sea Blues festival will be held at Coachman Park on Friday, May 6-7, 2011. It is a great event and is free to the public. Member Belanger reminded people that they can come by boat and stated that the dock was full during the Jazz Festival.

## **10. Adjournment**

Chairman Allbritton adjourned the May 4, 2011 regular meeting of the Clearwater Downtown Development Board at 6:39 p.m.

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING ACTION AGENDA  
Wednesday, May 4, 2011 - 5:30 pm

05.04.11.01

**Member Wright moved to approve the minutes from the April 6, 2011 regular meeting.  
The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

05.04.11.02

**Member Morfopoulos moved to adopt the March 2011 Financial Statement for filing.  
The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**