

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING  
May 7, 2014 – 5:00 PM – Walk from Corner of Cleveland Street and Myrtle Avenue to City  
Hall – Council Chambers

Members Present:	Paris Morfopoulos	Chairman
	Thomas Wright	Vice-Chairman (Arrived 5:45 p.m.)
	Craig Rubright	Treasurer
	John Doran	Member (Left 7:12 p.m.)
	Stu Sjouwerman	Member
	Tony Starova	Member
	Dennis Bosi	Member

Also Present:	Bill Jonson	Ex-Officio/Councilmember
	Jay Polglaze	Ex-Officio/Councilmember
	Anne Fogarty France	Board Administrator
	Geri Campos Lopez	Director, Economic Development & Housing Department

Absent:	Dennis Bosi	Member (attended walk only)
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1. Chairman Morfopoulos called the Walk Down Cleveland Street to order at 5:03 p.m. Members were reminded to hold their comments until they convened in City Hall Council Chambers.
2. Chairman Morfopoulos called the Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and introduced the new Ex-officio Councilmember Bill Jonson. Ex-officio Councilmember Bill Jonson asked to address the board and advised that he asked to be appointed to the board because he cares about the downtown and feels there is a lot of opportunity.
3. There were no Citizens Comments.
4. Chairman's Comments - Chairman Morfopoulos advised that there would be a budget policy discussion later in the meeting to get ready for the upcoming budget discussions. He also stated that there would be a Downtown Coordination Committee Meeting next week with Assistant City Manager Rod Irwin, Bill Sturtevant and Bob Clifford of Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce and he would give an update at next month's meeting.

**5. Comments/Observations from Walk Down Cleveland Street**

During the walk on Cleveland Street members observed the following:

Member Rubright noted that a couple of the signs for the Station Square parking garage could be moved closer to Cleveland Street so that people can see them better. He wondered what was going on in 500 block buildings under construction.

Chairman Morfopoulos noted that there were unattractive vacant storefronts that project a blighted look. He felt there was a need for a solution to enhance the look.

Member Starova commented on the absence of people on the street and in businesses. He added that he agreed with Member Rubright that the directory kiosk near Post Office was placed at the wrong orientation. He felt the sign for Station Square Parking garage was too far from street and also commented on the need to find a better way to get people to walk on the street and the need to hang signs to identify businesses.

Member Sjouwerman felt that in addition to comments raised by the other members, the 400 block was doing fine and that the 500 block needed a lot of work.

Member Doran felt that the glass was half full. He commented on the two rehabilitation projects currently going on. The project on the 500 block will have inverse bay windows with historic photos and renderings of downtown. The project next to Angie's Restaurant is positive cosmetic work on housing for Church of Scientology members. He continues to be pleased by the attractive public art and felt the City Management team has done a great job on the medians as it provides a nice walking or driving experience.

Ex-officio Councilmember Jonson advised that he visited the street the day before the meeting to look at what makes downtown special. He felt that our downtown has authenticity with the historic Post Office and Telephone buildings and the new sign for the Skyview condominium project reflects our history and creates interest as does the fountain at Station Square Park. There are many pleasant views on Cleveland Street with great plantings and good color which softens the landscape. The movable tables and chairs in front of storefronts add a lot to the area. Our downtown is walkable, not just plain concrete. He noted that some businesses had their doors open and they appeared welcoming when he stopped in. The Path Bicycle and Ride Shop had fascinating people there as well as a friendly dog. The negatives that he noted were empty stores, some with multiple for lease signs, and storefronts with maintenance issues such as mastic dripped over front top of facades. He added that downtown was a fun place, one that makes him smile and that the dolphins have an amazing way to make you smile and agreed that it would be nice to see more people.

Ex-officio/Council Member Polglaze stated that when he drives or walks downtown he sees opportunity and forward progress. The downtown has all the ingredients for a character district and everyone made points where this can be done. He noted that Cathy Panagoulas had a good way to display furniture in a vacant storefront to make it more attractive.

Members talked about seeing people have their photos taken with public art and dolphins.

Member Sjouwerman commented on the addition of over 700 units if Prospect Lake and former Strand project could be developed as soon as possible. They would add the rooftops for the retail.

Member Starova stated that downtown should be more bike friendly and that we didn't have enough bicycle racks. He added that our street was beautiful but lacked a welcome sign.

Member Doran agreed for the need for more bike racks but was not sure if we could have more and considered buying bikes to place on the racks to show more activity. He felt that Station Square Park was a great park but the board can't make people use it. The board

does have the ability to set aside money only for people to use this park as it is a delightful venue and he would like to see more people there.

Member Wright added that his office overlooks the park and he would like to see more people there as it is an underutilized asset. Most of the furniture there was removed because of the people who stayed there all day.

Member Rubright agreed that the board should earmark money for the events and get the furniture out there before the event but not leave it out there.

Member Starova questioned if they could put a coffee truck or hot dog vendor there?

Anne Fogarty France advised that she was involved with previous vendors before the park was renovated. When there were vendors in the park the downtown merchants felt the vendors took business away from them. There were also maintenance issues with cleaning up after the vendors and their customers.

Chairman Morfopoulos stated that in the past items were brought up by the board that didn't seem to go anywhere. The board needs to distinguish between a comment and an actionable item. There are things that the board can do and things that we can recommend.

Ms. Lopez stated that the board could make a recommendation to the CRA Executive Director.

Ex-officio/Councilmember Jonson suggested one way to address this is when the board comes up with an idea, the board could discuss at the next meeting. The board could also request appropriate city department to come to the next meeting to discuss the issue.

**Member Starova moved to have appropriate staff address the possibility of having vendors in Station Square Park at the next meeting. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:**

**“Ayes”:** Chairman Paris Morfopoulos, Vice-Chairman Thomas Wright, Treasurer Craig Rubright, Member Doran, Member Stu Sjouwerman, and Member Tony Starova.

**“Nays”:** None.

**The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.**

**6. Approve the Minutes from the April 2, 2014 Meeting**

**Member Doran moved to approve the minutes from the April 2, 2014 meeting. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:**

**“Ayes”:** Chairman Paris Morfopoulos, Vice-Chairman Thomas Wright, Treasurer Craig Rubright, Member Doran, Member Stu Sjouwerman, and Member Tony Starova.

**“Nays”:**      **None.**

**7.      Adopt March 2014 Financial Statement for Filing**

**Member Wright moved to adopt the March 2014 Financial Statement for filing. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:**

**“Ayes”:**      **Chairman Paris Morfopoulos, Vice-Chairman Thomas Wright, Treasurer Craig Rubright, Member John Doran, Member Stu Sjouwerman, and Member Tony Starova.**

**“Nays”:**      **None.**

**8. Blues Walk and Sea-Blues Post Event Report – Brian Craig**

Brian Craig thanked the board for their eighth year of support and provided a presentation on the results of the Sea-Blues Walk and festival. He advised that they had done an Economic Impact study. Members asked that he provide them with a copy of the study.

**9. Clearwater Downtown Partnership & Clearwater Downtown Events Update.**

Bill Sturtevant, Chairman, Clearwater Downtown Partnership (CDP), President of Clearwater Downtown Events advised and Dave Allbritton, presented the update to the board along with a calendar for with their proposed dates. Mr. Sturtevant was also requested to include the budget year that the events would be held in.

Mr. Sturtevant also provided an update for the June 16<sup>th</sup> Momentum Awards to be held at the Capitol Theatre with Congressman David Jolly as the keynote speaker.

**10. DDB Budget Policy Discussion**

Chairman Morfopoulos stated that the board was going to be starting the budget process in place and discussed having policies in place to help guide them. He asked for members to review the draft he had distributed. Members provided comments and revisions to the policy distributed which will be reviewed again by the board before its approval. (Updated policy is included at end of document.)

Questions were raised concerning the Prospect Lake project. Ms. Lopez advised the board that she could provide an update to the Prospect Lake project at the next meeting. City staff would be finalizing the Development Agreement and the CRA would be voting on it at the June meeting.

**11. Final Comments**

Member Rubright thanked Brian Craig for his great recap of the Sea-Blues Walk and Festival. The Momentum Awards being at the Capitol Theatre was a nice venue, situation and having David Jolly and welcomed Ex-officio/Councilmember Jonson.

Vice-Chairman Wright apologized for missing the walk due to a scheduling error festival. He welcomed Ex-officio/Councilmember Jonson.

Chairman Morfopoulos agreed that the Sea-Blues Walk & Festival event and presentation was good. He thanked members for staying late to participate in the policy discussion and for their suggestions.

Member Starova requested that a Cleveland Street District website discussion regarding web traffic be provided to the board.

**Member Starova moved to place Cleveland Street District Website discussion on the agenda for the next meeting. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:**

**“Ayes”:** Chairman Paris Morfopoulos, Vice-Chairman Thomas Wright, Treasurer Craig Rubright, Member Stu Sjouwerman, and Member Tony Starova.

**“Nays”:** None.

Ex-officio/Councilmember Bill Jonson advised the board that he stopped at Gala’s Gelateria before the meeting and for a quick and tasty bite to eat. He noted he was happy to be at the meeting and observed some of the board meetings from the past and felt the board was trying to be more disciplined. He reiterated that after a discussion the board could make a recommendation to the CRA. He also distributed two photos of the Path Bicycle and Ride Shop and noted that they weren’t aware of the merchant’s association. Member Starova stated that there would be a merchants meeting next week that he would advise him about. The merchant was not aware of the Parking Validation Program and was advised to speak with Ms. Fogarty France.

Ex-officio/Councilmember Jay Polglaze was glad that Clearwater Downtown Events, in cooperation with David Allbritton and Whirlwind Events have come up with a strategy to benefit the whole Cleveland Street District. I know the east end of the district has been patient waiting for some event activity and event activity brings exposure. They have great plans for the future with all that is taking place in the district.

**12.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

**Policy:**

1. To prioritize the revitalization of Cleveland Street, as its success will then spread to the rest of the district.
2. To fund other groups and events where there is a demonstrable expectation that it will primarily benefit the business climate in the Cleveland Street District.
3. To provide funds and support to event and functions that take place primarily on Cleveland Street.
4. To maintain a reserve fund to be used only in emergencies, which emergencies can't really be predicted in advance.
5. To discourage imprudent use of reserves, a policy requiring a second reading at a subsequent meeting before any funds can be allocated that have not been designated in the annual budget.
6. Petty case expenditures would not have to comply with our general spending rules. For example, a second reading would not be required for allocations of less than \$100. In order to respond in a timely fashion, the Board should be able to direct the purchase of flowers, recognitions and commendation type awards as the occasion arises as long as the expense is limited to the above maximum.
7. To set a maximum grant per budget line item for future requests or a sliding scale depending on how well the proposal furthers DDB goals and purposes. This could be a dollar figure or a percentage of our discretionary budget. Could be a firm rule or just a guideline. Suggest just a guideline until we see how workable it is in practice.

Revised 5/7/14