

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING  
October 2, 2013– 5:30 PM - City Hall – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Council Chambers

Members Present:	David Allbritton Paris Morfopoulos Craig Rubright Tony Starova	Chairman Vice-Chairman Treasurer Member
Also Present:	Paul Gibson Jay Polglaze Geri Campos Lopez  Anne Fogarty France	Ex-Officio/Councilmember Ex-Officio/Councilmember Director, Economic Development & Housing Board Administrator
Absent:	Dennis Bosi John Herndon Thomas Wright	Member Member Member

1. The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. Citizen Comments – Items not on the Agenda. No comments were heard.
3. Approve the Minutes from the September 4, 2013 Meeting

**Member Rubright moved to approve the minutes from the September 4, 2013 meeting. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

4. Approve the Minutes from the September 12, 2013 Meeting

**Member Rubright moved to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2013 meeting. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

5. Adopt August 2013 Financial Statement for Filing

**Member Morfopoulos moved to adopt the August 2013 Financial Statement for filing. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

6. Discussion regarding DDB Support of Referendum

Chairman Allbritton discussed the referendum. He noted that the Downtown Development Board (DDB) supported the original concept of having the Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) here on the City Hall site and now it was being brought to voters to decide.

Member Starova stated that the board needed to back the referendum. If there's any entity that should support the CMA it should be the DDB. He felt it was a game changer

for downtown, the city and the Tampa Bay region. As a business owner on Cleveland Street he noted that he has seen people from all over the world coming to see the dolphins.

Vice-Chairman Morfopoulos felt that the aquarium was the first opportunity we've had to draw large numbers of people to downtown. It's the board's aim and purpose to bring people here. It should bring considerable traffic and revenue dollars. The CMA helps make us a tourist destination.

Treasurer Rubright said his perspective is a little different. As a resident, he hopes the referendum goes through but hoped that the organizers and the city will consider the questions the residents have. He thinks it's a tremendous game changer and it would be a wonderful thing for downtown Clearwater. The Capitol Theatre renovations are a tremendous start. Across the board he would love to see the CMA come with the caveat that the city or aquarium considers residents' concerns.

Chairman Allbritton said this is a gift given to us for downtown. The aquarium will be built somewhere, hopefully here. The referendum on November 5<sup>th</sup> doesn't guarantee it will be built here because they've got a tremendous job to raise capital. He knows many of the people involved and knows they will listen to the residents. Traffic flow and the parking garage location are also important issues. Wholeheartedly he welcomes this project and hopes the referendum will succeed.

Chairman Allbritton asked if there were any citizen's comments.

Frank Dame, representing the CMA, appreciated the support of the board. He said they have been listening to the neighbors who didn't want an aviary, so that component was removed. They didn't want to hear the stadium and CMA is looking to enclose it. He hopes that everyone will look at the facts because there's a lot of misinformation being communicated. The CMA has shared all their information with the city. Unfortunately, the group that doesn't want the CMA downtown doesn't have to share their information. Traffic is an issue and studies have shown there will be times when traffic will be bad, as it already is bad at certain times and during certain events. The CMA has proposed the extension of Pierce Blvd. This is a suggestion the residents would like and taxpayer's money won't be used although opponents have said it will. The extension of Drew Street with a roundabout would be a circulator for the vehicles, especially when there are events in Coachman Park. He said that the people coming downtown would be family oriented and hopefully able to enjoy a redeveloped Coachman Park, new restaurants and shops. There were 750,000 people in attendance at CMA last year and there's no doubt we can bring in over 1 million to the downtown area. There would be more opportunity for rescuing and rehabilitating injured animals.

Miguel Hall, 628 Cleveland St., stated that he wrote a letter to the Tampa Bay Times to refute the misinformation that is out there. He said he thought it will have a big impact to the downtown area. Some businesses are waiting to make a commitment to see what will happen. He supports downtown and will support this also.

**Member Starova moved that the DDB formally support the CMA referendum. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

## 7. Clearwater Downtown Events Update

Bill Sturtevant, representing Clearwater Downtown Events, gave an update for Super Boat weekend, Blast Friday and Star Spectacular. The Boat parade on Friday was well organized. Jeff Hartzog, with Ruth Eckerd Hall, estimated over 4,500 people attended Blast Friday.

He stated that Star Spectacular was rejuvenated with Terry Schmidt as the organizer. The Saturday night the Eagles Tribute band brought an estimate of 2,000 people to the district.

Tony Starova organized the Rock the Block party. It was a great event and showed that smaller events will work. It featured four bands, including the Black Honkeys, directly across from the Beer House. An estimated 1,500-2,000 people attended from 3:00 – 8:00 p.m. on a Sunday night. At the end, people poured into the restaurants.

Mr. Sturtevant stated that their goal was to make Star Spectacular as big as Blast Friday, so something will be going on every weekend. He added that Terry Schmidt was looking into bringing back the Christmas parade.

Mr. Sturtevant said he was fortunate enough to attend a press conference where Michael Preston of Frenchy's donated \$350,000 to the Capitol Theatre for a rooftop café. There will be Frenchy's signature items served there. The first year the theatre is open there will be an open house when there's not a show. Citizens can stop in and see the theatre.

Chairman Allbritton asked if there were any Citizen's comments.

Member Starova said that as a business owner on Cleveland Street, he felt that the events were very well organized and thanked the organizers of Super Boat weekend. He added this thanks to Parks and Recreation staff and Bay Star Restaurants. He and Councilmember Polglaze put out signs for Event Parking and asked for help from the City of Clearwater Parking staff with this.

In regard to Blast Friday, Vice Chairman Morfopoulos commented that the vendors were so close together that attendees couldn't travel in between them. Areas were taped off and the vendors formed a barrier between themselves and the businesses and the public couldn't get through to the businesses.

## 8. Chairman's Report

Chairman Allbritton did not give a report.

## **9. Canvassing Committee Meeting and Election Results Meeting.**

Ms. Fogarty France stated that the canvassing committee would meet on October 8, 2013 at the Supervisor of Elections Office, at 3:00 p.m. to count ballots. A brief meeting to announce election results will take place at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers. She added that Member Wright has already volunteered to assist and asked if anyone else could step in? Chairman Allbritton and Treasurer Rubright agreed to help.

## **10. Final Comments**

Treasurer Rubright said it would be tremendous for downtown Clearwater if the referendum goes through. He was very heartened by the numbers of people downtown on Friday night during Super Boat weekend and noted that everyone seemed to have a good time. He added his Congratulations to Frenchy's for donating to the Capitol Theatre and congratulated the Ikajevs family for buying the Bank of America building

Vice Chairman Morfopoulos said Blast Friday was very packed. The Boat Parade went very well. It was a great event and he was glad that the board supported it.

Member Starova said that two years ago he stated his goal was to see Cleveland Street active from Ft. Harrison down to the waterfront and noted that this weekend his goal was achieved did that and it was a great event.

Councilmember Gibson said that he also received the mailer with misinformation and misstatements. He stated that the CMA was actually paying double what the land is worth and they will not even own the land at the end of the lease. He felt that truth and justice usually prevail and time will tell.

Councilmember Polglaze said exposure is important and you can't buy better exposure than what the CMA is giving the city. Investors are waiting to make their move, they want a thriving and successful downtown. He felt it will pass on November 5 and we'll move forward. The impetus of the Capitol Theatre is helping, along with the partnership of Ruth Eckerd Hall. Blast Friday helps bring people to the core and the investors won't see the success at the start. We are into our event season and encouraged viewers to attend the Jazz Holiday Festival. He also encouraged everyone to pay attention and get the facts. The folks at CMA are willing to come to you and share the facts. He ended by urging viewers to vote with the facts not on hearsay and rumors.

Chairman Allbritton said the people in this room are very tied into downtown and in the eight years he has been on the board he hasn't seen anything like this come forward. He felt it really was a game changer. The property values will go up and an increase in property values will bring in more revenue to the city. It will bring in more residents, businesses and make downtown thrive. We'll be a destination; there is not a downside to this.

## **11. The meeting was adjourned at 6:10pm.**



CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING ACTION AGENDA  
Wednesday, October 2, 2013

10.02.13.01

**Treasurer Rubright moved to approve the minutes from the September 4, 2013 meeting. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

10.02.13.02

**Treasurer Rubright moved to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2013 meeting. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

10.02.13.03

**Vice Chairman Morfopoulos moved to adopt the August 2013 Financial Statement for filing. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

10.02.13.04

**Member Starova moved that the DDB formally support the CMA referendum. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**