

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
November 4, 2015 – 5:30 PM – City Hall – Council Chambers

Members Present:	Paris Morfopoulos Dennis Bosi Craig Rubright Chelsea Allison	Chairman Vice-Chairman Treasurer Member
Also Present:	Bill Jonson Jay Polglaze Anne Fogarty France Geri Campos Lopez	Ex-Officio/Councilmember Ex-Officio/Councilmember Board Administrator Director, Economic Development & Housing Department
Absent:	Stu Sjouwerman Tony Starova Thomas Wright	Member Member Member

1. Chairman Morfopoulos called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. Citizens Comments: There were no citizen comments.
3. Achieva Box Car Rally Post Event Report.

Chelsey Wilson provided the post event report to the board. Board members thanked Achieva Credit Union for holding the event in the district and for Ms. Wilson for the report.

4. Clearwater Brownfields Intention to File Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Grant.

Denise Sanderson, assistant director for Economic Development and Housing Department advised the board about the EPA grant and asked for the board's support.

Member Rubright moved to have staff draft a letter in support of the intent to file the grant. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:

"Ayes": Chairman Morfopoulos, Vice-Chairman Bosi, Treasurer Rubright, and Member Allison
"Nays": None.

Motion carried.

5. Approve the Minutes from the October 7, 2015 Meeting

Vice-Chairman Bosi moved to approve the minutes from the October 7, 2015 meeting. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:

"Ayes": Chairman Morfopoulos, Vice-Chairman Bosi, Treasurer Rubright, and Member Allison
"Nays": None.

Motion carried.

6. Adopt September 2015 Financial Statement for Filing

Treasurer Rubright moved to adopt the August 2015 Financial Statement for filing. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:

“Ayes”: Chairman Morfopoulos, Vice-Chairman Bosi, Treasurer Rubright, and Member Allison

“Nays”: None.

Motion carried.

7. DDB Election Results

Chairman Paris Morfopoulos reported that the top two candidates receiving the most votes for a 3 year term beginning January 2016 were Zachary Thorn of the Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce and Thomas Wright of Merrill Lynch.

8. Chairman’s Report

Chairman Morfopoulos reported that on Monday there was a special meeting with the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), DDB, Clearwater Downtown Partnership, Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce and Clearwater Neighborhood Coalition. The group met to hear updates from ULI study and work that has been undertaken and discuss next steps. He also advised that the CRA voted to fund Blast Friday along with the DDB. Seven events are funded. Chairman Morfopoulos advised viewers of the upcoming downtown events.

9. Final Comments

Craig Rubright had two questions for councilmembers and asked if the Post Office land was owned by the Post Office and what is the process for divesting the property and secondly, what is the status of the bayfront tennis courts and where they will they will go.

Ex-officio Councilmember Polglaze advised that regarding the Post Office there is no set defined protocol. The Post Office assesses their needs and the property goes on a surplus list but they don’t have to sell it. There are a series of recommendations that can be made. They can recommend that if there’s a local municipality to preserve and maintain the building they can transfer property rights. The Cleveland Street property was on the surplus property list and it survived the cut. Currently the postal service is leasing out their retail. He wanted the city to help with finding a location because only one fifth of the Cleveland Street building is being utilized. Should the city get this building, the city can issue a Request for Proposals/Request for Qualifications for the property to choose the right business tenant. He was not totally sure how we get to this point and has asked if it can be included on ULI list. He stated that he talked to Representative Jolly about getting his help.

Regarding the tennis courts, Ex-officio Councilmember Polglaze stated that the first step was to get the approval on where the City can move the courts. The consultants will assist us in determining where they should be moved and the location is not limited to that area.

A question was raised regarding the motivation to keep them on the waterfront and both ex-officio councilmembers stated that the answer was to be determined.

Ex-officio Councilmember Jonson advised that there was a proposed charter amendment to move them to the north side of Cleveland Street and put them between the library and the Harborview center. He stated that there was no discussion of them being removed totally.

Vice-Chairman Bosi noted that the Cleveland Street Business Alliance held their first event. Over 300 tickets were sold at Capitol Theatre for the fashion show and Rocky Horror Picture Show. There was a costume contest and it was great family event. He looks forward to their next event.

Chairman Morfopoulos advised that there were 240 votes in the election and that 17 were ineligible due to missing or wrong signatures. He added that the ULI status meeting was upbeat and positive and that city staff and management are leading the efforts.

Member Allison congratulated Zachary Thorn and Member Wright on winning the election. She thanked Anne Fogarty France for the new Shopping and Dining Guides.

Ex-officio Councilmember Jonson wanted to give an update on how he voted at the CRA meeting. He stated he voted against funding Blast Friday funding at \$100,000 but would have agreed to fund at \$75,000. He felt it should be more of a street festival versus a concert and still supports Blast Friday but not the funding. He agreed that the Monday ULI meeting had a very positive format. Ex-officio Councilmember Jonson still has concerns about the referendum requirement and is trying to be overly cautious that we involve the public and get to the positive comments. That was why he made comments about enhancing the Request for Proposal objective. The other thing that he thought of after Howard Warshauer asked if the RFP could be commented on, was because he felt that was a valid request. He noted that in the past a report was made by the Business Alliance where they want to change the Cleveland Street District name to Historic Downtown Clearwater. He advised he spoke to the City Manager and that there was a cost involved. He stated that this keeps being brought up and he thinks it should be placed on an agenda and discussed. He added that he spoke to a property owner about improving the gateways on Court Street past St. Cecelia's School and the park and noted that when you get to Missouri Avenue there are no signs.

Chairman Morfopoulos stated that the reason the board hasn't put this on an agenda was because we were waiting for the completion of the branding.

Geri Campos Lopez advised the board about the branding rollout. The company who is assisting us are meeting with all city departments. She noted that her department has two of the areas that will be affected by a name change – the downtown and the east gateway and stated that we need third party feedback. Changing the Cleveland Street District to downtown and changing the website will be expensive and they will be getting these questions answered.

Ex-officio Councilmember Polglaze gave kudos for the new shopping and dining guide map. He noted that there are a lot of businesses on the map and we are not seeing a lot of turnover of businesses. For those that say that Blast Friday is not opening businesses this map is testimony. He stated that there are more and more businesses that are interested in coming downtown. He supported the seven events as he thinks more events are needed although he doesn't think it's the city's job to perpetually support the events. Events were the primary tool to get the people downtown. Shifting direction and the positive ULI meeting was due to the perception that things are happening. The councilmembers are truly listening and concerned about getting it right. He originally wanted sign guidance and the stakeholders wanted additional flexibility for the Downtown Plan. They don't want to be restricted on bluff plan and how it affects downtown. Michael Delk is happy that the whole downtown is being addressed and is very pleased to have an open canvas to move forward. He asked everyone to be patient as we are on the right track.

Ex-officio Councilmember Jonson noted that one of the challenges of being on the council was that councilmembers can't talk about things when sitting next to each other. They want the same end point but may get to it in a different way.

Ex-officio Councilmember Polglaze advised that Michael Delk stated that there was very little that they couldn't do with what they were bringing forward. Everyone with a concept should put it on the table and if Planning can be flexible they will. He ended by stating that the monument sign for the Bank of America building is now approved.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.