

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
October 7, 2015 – 5:30 PM – City Hall – Council Chambers

Members Present:	Paris Morfopoulos Craig Rubright Stu Sjouwerman Tony Starova Thomas Wright	Chairman Treasurer Member Member 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:	Dennis Bosi Chelsea Allison	Vice-Chairman Member

1. Chairman Morfopoulos called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.
2. Citizens Comments: There were no citizen comments.
3. Approve the Minutes from the September 9, 2015 Meeting

Member Wright moved to approve the minutes from the September 9, 2015 meeting. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:

“Ayes”: Chairman Morfopoulos, Treasurer Rubright, Member Starova, Member Sjouwerman and Member Wright.

“Nays”: None.

4. Approve the Minutes from the September 15, 2015 Meeting

Treasurer Rubright moved to approve the minutes from the September 15, 2015 meeting. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:

“Ayes”: Chairman Morfopoulos, Treasurer Rubright, Member Starova, Member Sjouwerman and Member Wright.

“Nays”: None.

5. Adopt August 2015 Financial Statement for Filing

Member Wright 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, Treasurer Rubright, Member Starova, Member Sjouwerman and Member Wright.

“Nays”: None

6. DDB Sponsorship Request Form – Clearwater Community Volunteers (CCV) – Winter Wonderland.

CCV has withdrawn their request at this time but advised they may ask for this to be on a future agenda.

7. Cleveland Street Business Alliance Update

Member Tony Starova introduced himself as the President of the Cleveland Street Business Alliance. He advised the board that there were currently 30 paid memberships and that the last five years merchants have tried to put together an association. Their accomplishments have been a 3-D map of downtown distributed on Clearwater Beach and surrounding hotels/motels and businesses. They are on their second year of producing these maps.

The first goal of the Cleveland Street Business Alliance was for each business on Cleveland Street to be financially strong. The Alliance is shifting its advertising focus to Clearwater Beach as tourists are here to spend money. The second focus will be on the Capitol Theatre. They have put a two-page ad in “The Best of the Bay” showing individual ads for downtown businesses. There are nine bars and 14 eclectic restaurants. The cost of this ad was covered by membership dues. They would be branding the ad “Historic Downtown Clearwater”.

Cleveland Street Business Alliance will be sponsoring their first event on the last Friday of October. It will be a masquerade party and the Capitol Theatre was assisting by screening the Rocky Horror Picture Show. They will not be bringing in outside vendors but showcasing the downtown businesses. Lina Teixeira of Studio 617 will be presenting a fashion show at the Capitol Theatre before the movie. There will be a pumpkin carving contest organized by Bob and Daughter, a DJ in the middle of the 400 block and MJ Gift Basket Store will be selling masks.

8. Homeless Initiative Update

Geri Campos Lopez, Director of Economic Development & Housing presented an update to the board and announced that a previous staff member left for a job with the County and a new person would be hired to take over this initiative.

9. Chairman’s Report

Chairman Morfopoulos commented that the installation of the palm tree lighting was currently taking place and stated the fixtures looked good.

Chairman Morfopoulos reported:

- a) Achieva Box Car Rally took place on October 3, 2015 and it was a great family event. He announced that his grandson won a huge trophy. This is one of the events that he is most proud of that the DDB supports and complimented Achieva Credit Union and their volunteers.
- b) The Chairman advised the Board that there would be a ULI Update meeting on November 2, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. at the Main Library.
- c) He announced upcoming downtown events.

10. Chairman Morfopoulos reminded members that there was an Election Canvassing Committee Meeting on October 13, 2015 at the Supervisor of Elections Office at 3:00 p.m. to count ballots. A brief meeting to announce election results will be held at 5:30 p.m. that same day in City Hall Council Chambers.

11. Final Comments

Treasurer Rubright thanked Member Starova for his work with the Cleveland Street Business Alliance. He felt that everyone was on the same page and headed in the same direction. The planning of the Rocky Horror Picture Show after a Masquerade Party was great and he felt that Member Starova's leadership has shown throughout.

Member Wright congratulated Member Starova on his work with the Cleveland Street Business Alliance. Member Wright stated his frustration when he drives by the variable message board that the DDB has invested in and was supposed to draw people to downtown. When he sees "caution", "hazard", "delays" and no message about Boat Races, Jazz Holiday, Hispanic Festival events it feels that the board has wasted their funds. This sign can be used for traffic issues but can also mention the event taking place. He would like to discuss the DDB crafting the messages for the board otherwise would rather it be shut off.

Member Starova thanked Treasurer Rubright and Member Wright for their comments regarding his work with the Cleveland Street Business Alliance. His comment on the electronic message board was that it could read "downtown ahead". He felt that Cleveland Street was just one light so we need another sign saying "you just passed downtown". We have many signs on Cleveland Street but need more on Ft. Harrison and Myrtle. Christmas is coming up and he stated that there should be lights on Ft. Harrison from Drew Street to Court so it looks like a downtown. Member Starova noted that for the last six years he has been talking about signage and he has a picture of a sign on North Greenwood regarding a meeting with no traffic messages at all. If it's the law, the sign needs to be used for traffic but it can mention the event also. This weekend the Hispanic Festival is scheduled and there has been no reference to it at all and it is a huge event. His suggestion was to DDB funds back for the signs. He thanked Anne Fogarty-France and the Super Boat people for placing the signs out. Event coordinators and their volunteers should be obligated to put those signs out for every event downtown. There were people walking from the parking garages down Cleveland Street all day Friday, Saturday and Sunday. If a street is blocked off for an event, Member Starova never sees a detour sign, why? He thinks we should have another agenda item with Traffic Engineering to talk about these issues. Also, if you drive from I-275 to Clearwater from the south, there is not a sign indicating Clearwater's location. He will bring his pictures to the next meeting. Member Starova would like to see a sign over the right arrow at Court/Ft. Harrison that says "downtown" and the addition of more parking garage signs. He ended by adding that the merchants would like to see branding for downtown be "Historic Downtown Clearwater".

Member Sjouwerman advised that he has been discussing an e-mail list for downtown with staff and how we can achieve this. Progress has been made and the next step was for staff to meet with Rod Irwin, Assistant City Manager, to propose the hiring of an intern. Member Sjouwerman stated that preliminary branding data has been received and asked about the next step?

Geri Campos Lopez responded that work on the logo was currently taking place and it will be rolled out to the City Council in the October/November time frame. The logo has been chosen but they are refining it. There has also been work on the tagline, "Bright and Beautiful – Bay to Beach".

Ex-officio Councilmember Polglaze stated that there has been a lot of work put into the branding and probably not everyone will be happy with it.

Member Sjouwerman advised that there was a business incubator in Clearwater called TAFFIE, Technical Arts Facility for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Elaine Mann was chosen to run it. The City, with Business SPARK and KnowBe4 are supporting the incubator and he urges the City to expedite that process.

Ex-officio Councilmember Jonson stated that he feels he should answer some of the sign questions. He has seen the blue circle parking signs working in other cities and noted that we have 15-20 of those sprinkled throughout downtown. He takes significant pride in the push to put the sign on the Garden Avenue Parking Garage. He looks forward to discussing the variable message board messages with the City Attorney. He can see having detour signs if we are blocking off Ft. Harrison or Court Street but on Cleveland St. it would just be redirecting traffic to Waters Edge. Councilmember Jonson thinks that one of the holdups for downtown signage is waiting for the logo and the fonts. He likes the idea of holiday lights on Ft. Harrison. Councilmember Jonson asked about the desire to brand Cleveland Street District as "Historic Downtown Clearwater" and Member Starova, as a business owner, as well as other business owners on Cleveland Street, would like to see it changed to be more descriptive of the location.

Ex-officio Councilmember Polglaze agreed with Member Starova. The Cleveland Street District name for the area has never taken off. He agrees with Councilmember Jonson that we are waiting for the new logo and fonts for new downtown signage to be added. He agrees with Member Wright that the variable message board messages need to be changed. He will be talking to the City Manager and Paul Bertels and thought that maybe the DDB could help craft the message while still using regulatory information. Ex-officio councilmember Polglaze stated that he was happy to report that there is construction going on at the Nolen every day. He noted that most of the Council will be in Japan when the final presentation for the North Marina Plan is presented. The High and Dry Marina looks like it is going forward as the Pinellas County School Board is willing to sell North Ward school property to the City for a very low price. He was happy to report that there was four micro-breweries looking at downtown Clearwater as a possible location. Everyone wants part of all those cranes building on Clearwater Beach right now.

Chairman Morfopoulos agreed with Member Starova's suggestion to change the brand from Cleveland Street District to Historic Downtown Clearwater. He would like to thank Member Starova for his efforts and Member Sjouwerman for his support for the Incubator Program.

12. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.