



MINUTES
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING
Monday – June 12th, 2023 – 12:00PM
Downtown Development Authority
350 SE 1st Street, Delray Beach, FL

1. Call to order/Roll Call – 12:05pm

Members Present: Mavis Benson, Dr. John Conde, Vera Woodson, Mark Denkler, Frank Frione.

Members Absent: Christina Godbout and Rocco Mangel.

Staff: Laura Simon, Marusca Gatto, BJ Sklar (via Zoom), Suzanne Boyd, Liliana Fino, Danielle Morien (via Zoom), Devin Dewane.

Guests: Julen Blakenship, C. Ron Allen, Gregg Weiss, Jeanne Tegler, Mykal Banta, Ezra Krieg, Ariana Ciano, Mike Tegler, Alan Costilo, Price Patton, Rodner Guillaume, Judy Mollica, Henry Thompson, Steven Cohen, Jeff Oris, Janice Rustin.

Zoom: Jeff Dash, Michelle Cordes, Debora Dowd, Stephanie Immelman, Edward Glatz, Eric Fernandez, Amy Alvarez, Michelle Hoyland, Alexa DeFranco, Katherina Paliwoda, Anthea Gianniotis, Ron Platt Lee Cohen, Duane D'Andrea.

2. Approval of Consent Agenda:

Motion by Mark Denkler, seconded by Frank Frione, to approve the consent agenda (Items A.i. – May 8, 2023, Regular DDA Board Meeting Minutes, B - Finances of May 2023, and C - Safety Ambassador Report, DDA May Report). Motion carries (4-0). John Conde, Christina Godbout and Rocco Mangel not present.

3. Approval of Regular Agenda – June 12, 2023

Motion by Frank Frione, seconded by Mark Denkler, to approve the regular agenda moving up on the agenda item 8A to position 3A. Motion carries (4-0). John Conde, Christina Godbout and Rocco Mangel not present.

A. Homeless Task Force – Downtown Focus Group – Ezra Krieg

Mr. Ezra Krieg (Delray Beach Initiative to End Homelessness, Chairman) he explains that a group was started about 5 years ago as an advisory group to the Police Department, to address the Delray Beach homeless community issues. This advisory group later became what is now the Delray Beach Initiative to End Homelessness. One of the matters we oversee relates to the homeless community that frequents the Delray Beach Public Library.

Mr. Mykal Banta (Delray Beach Public Library, Executive Director) states that, in regard to some concerns about the presence of homeless individuals at the library, that there is no cause/effect relationship between the services provided at the library parking lot, being them the Caring Kitchen and the Shower Truck, with the presence of the homeless at the library. There has always been a homeless presence at the library even before the presence of the Caring Kitchen, dating from decades back. The library is a public space open, free of charge, to all and everyone has the right to be there, to get verified and solid information to improve their lives. During the year 2020, when everything shut down due to the

pandemic, the Caring Kitchen contacted the library as the parish churches could no longer accommodate them and the library help them in the process.

Mr. Ezra Krieg adds that before March of 2020, the distribution of food was taking place at a different church every day, but that stopped due to the pandemic. We are hopeful that this cooperation can be reestablished in the future.

12:15pm – Mr. John Conde arrives at the meeting.

In Palm Beach County, according to a yearly census made (named “Point-in-Time Count”), the numbers in the homeless community have increased 30%, resulting from the pandemic situation and the current economy. Nevertheless, the homeless community in Delray Beach only increased 5% (101 unsheltered individuals identified in Delray Beach) thanks to the efforts of Ms. Ariana Ciancio’s team (the Service Population Advocate of Delray Beach Police Department) and the Delray Beach Police Department. Ms. Ariana Ciancio’s position is unique in Palm Beach County. Delray Beach is an example to follow, resulting from the corporation in between the different entities in town.

Ms. Vera Woodson enquires about the connection between the different cities in Palm Beach County regarding the homeless population matters.

Ms. Ariana Ciancio answers that only homeless individuals registered in Delray Beach receive services provided by Delray Beach (Caring Kitchen, shower truck). There is a database that can be accessed and if anyone is registered in another city, they will receive services only in the area they are registered in.

We do not count them separately.

Mr. Alan Costilo (public comment, Big Al Steak’s, Director) enquires if the homeless population derives from addiction hardships.

Mr. Ezra Krieg answers that the definition of homelessness is “not having where to live”, and there are different paths to get to homelessness.

Ms. Ariana Ciancio answers that the team, as of late, has not seen individuals consuming on the streets, instead she adds that alcoholism is a concerning issue that has been increasing amongst the unsheltered community.

4. Public Comments and Delray Beach Partner Reports (City, CRA, Chamber, etc.) – Comments limited to 2 Minutes

City Partners Reports:

- Report by Stephanie Immelman, Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce, Chief Executive Officer;
- Report by Sgt. Guillaume, Delray Beach Police Department, Sergeant;
- Report by Henry Thompson, City of Delray Beach, Clean and Safe Department, Administrator.

Ms. Vera Woodson reports that someone, at some point in time, brought a dining room table to the bus shelter in front of the Fairfield Inn. Also, she reported that during the precedent weekend a group of people were hanging out there.

5. DDA Monthly Activity Presentation – DDA Team

Ms. Suzanne Boyd reports on May’s DDA activities and initiatives (Mother's Day Orchid Give Away, economic development - new and closed businesses, placemaking and clean and safe initiatives,

ambassador program report, DDA Town Hall event, First Friday Art Walk initiative, Art and Jazz on the Avenue event, Summer of #LoveDelray campaign, DDA website analytics, social media results, email marketing report, and public relations initiatives.

Ms. B.J. Sklar gives updates on the Visitor Information Center activities and stats.

Mr. John Conde enquires about the criteria factors for choosing the influencers for the Summer of #LoveDelray campaign.

Ms. Suzanne Boyd answers that the first condition is to have great engagement to their content and secondly to have great following.

Mr. John Conde enquires if the influencers are being paid for their collaboration.

Ms. Suzanne Boyd answers that there is a payment associated with their services, with a 50/50 split between the business that they will be representing, and the other half will be covered by the DDA.

Ms. Vera Woodson enquires if there is a call for vendors for any other events apart from the Art & Jazz events.

Ms. Suzanne Boyd answers that there will be a call for vendors also for the Summer Concert Series events.

6. Development Services: Downtown Delray Beach Site Plan review and approvals:

A. Atlantic Avenue Historic District - (2021-278) – Designation - Historic District

Ms. Michelle Hoyland (City of Delray Beach Development Services Department, Planning & Zoning, Historic Preservation Division, Principal Planner) presents item Atlantic Avenue Historic District - (2021-278) – Designation - Historic District (via Zoom communications).

Mr. Steven Cohen (public comment, property owner in Downtown Delray Beach) it was stated that the designation of these buildings as historic will prevent economic development in downtown Delray Beach and will not increase the properties' value. Mr. Steven Cohen emphasizes that different tenants have different needs and, therefore, the buildings must be allowed to go through modifications (within the current rules and regulations) to facilitate their needs. Mr. Steven Cohen adds that the changes allowed so far to those buildings transformed, and facilitated the economic development that is now being valued by the visitors of Delray Beach.

Mr. Price Patton (Delray Beach Preservation Trust, President) observes that there are multiple advantages of having an area being designated as historic district as explain on the provided presentation and documents. Changes to the buildings can still be made even if they are designated as historic, such as the adaptation for different uses. The historic designation will allow the property owners to apply for grants (specific to designated historic buildings) when restoring these buildings or when fixing broken features. The designation does not deprive the owners of any of the property rights.

Ms. Vera Woodson observes that Delray Beach is known amongst its visitors more for the beach and vibrance of the town than for its historic value. She adds that it will become cumbersome to implement new projects if the historic designation is implemented. Ms. Vera Woodson also adds that the city has already in place rules that regulate changes to existent buildings and rules to new developments for the downtown area (in terms of setbacks, allowed architectural styles, height limitations) that contribute to maintain the character and contribute to the authenticity of the area. She also adds that the increasing challenges of climate change will bring changes to the rules in terms of renovations and new construction rules. Ms. Vera Woodson enquires if these buildings will be allowed to request for in-lieu parking.

Mr. Mark Denkler explains that in-lieu parking requests are allowed depending on what uses are being requested.

Ms. Anthea Gianniotis (City of Delray Beach, Development Services Department, Building, Planning & Zoning Division, Director, AICP) the city team is discussing on changing the rules for in-lieu parking requests approvals to allow approvals only for future change of use on historic structures and not for new projects.

Mr. Mark Denkler shows his support for this designation seeing that it will help preserve the character of the buildings and their integrity. He observed that some of the buildings along Atlantic Avenue (as example he mentions the old Arcade Tap Room) lost their character with some of the architectural changes authorized so far.

Ms. Mavis Benson shows her support for this request paraphrasing a quote from a speaker at one of the International Downtown Association conferences she has attended, regarding the importance of preserving the character and heritage of a place, which makes its users, visitors and community feel that they have been in a memorable location. As people seek deeper connections with their surroundings, context can serve as a tool to drive economic and community development efforts.

Mr. Frank Frione does not support this request, expressing the importance of places to be able to adapt in order to allow for growth in the future. He highlights that history in Delray Beach is not such a key point as in Savannah, GA or Charleston, SC. He also highlights that some of the studies done in Delray Beach, such as the Bob Gibbs report, express the importance of adaptation as a crucial element for successful economic growth in the future.

Mr. John Conde observes that the rules and regulations in place, already, cause hurdles to projects being presented before the City. He adds that if proceeding with the historic designation, any modification requests to those buildings will be even more difficult to get approval which will impede future development and growth.

Motion by John Conde seconded by Frank Frione to **DENY the Atlantic Avenue Historic District - (2021-278) – Designation - Historic District as presented.** Motion carries with 3 votes in favor and 2 against, through roll call vote (Rocco Mangel and Christina Godbout not present):

- John Conde – Yes
- Frank Frione – Yes
- Mavis Benson – No
- Mark Denkler – No
- Vera Woodson – Yes

7. OLD business

A. Goal Setting Meeting FY23-24 Date – L. Simon

Ms. Laura Simon proposes to the DDA Board to have the DDA Goal Setting FY23-24 Board Meeting on Wednesday, July 19th, 2023, from 9am to 3pm. It is the DDA Board consensus to have the DDA Goal Setting FY23-24 Board Meeting on Wednesday, July 19th, 2023.

8. NEW Business

B. Art & Activation Request FY23/24 – C. Ron Allen

Mr. C. Ron Allen (KOP Mentoring Network, Chief Executive Officer) presents item Art & Activation Request. This request is to apply for a grant for the for the 2024 Night Of Black Excellence Under The Stars, taking place on February 3, 2024 in celebration of Black History Month. The request is for funding in the amount of \$10,000.

Mr. Mark Denkler observes that under the rules of the DDA Grant program the ceiling amount of funding is \$2,000.

Motion by Mark Denkler seconded Frank Frione to approve the Art and Activation Grant Request for the 2024 Night Of Black Excellence Under The Stars, taking place on February 3, 2024 for the amount of \$2000, with the caveat that this amount is used toward the event activation costs. Motion carries (4-0). (Rocco Mangel and Christina Godbout not present; Vera Woodson recused due to conflict).

C. DDA FY23-24 Tentative One Mil Tax Levy – L. Simon (Presentation)

Ms. Laura Simon presents item DDA FY23-24 Tentative One Mil Tax Levy. As per the State Statute House Bill 299, the DDA board is required to set the millage rate for the DDA district annually. Section 8. LEVY OF AD VALOREM TAX. —For the fiscal year of the Authority an ad valorem tax is levied annually for the purpose of financing the operation of the Authority on all property in the Downtown area that is subject to ad valorem taxation. The rate shall be no more than one mill on each dollar of tax base by written notice to the County tax collector at such time as he or she shall specify, may set a rate of less than one mill for the ensuing fiscal year. It is required by vote of the DDA Board of Directors to assess the millage levy. Ms. Laura Simon reviews with the DDA board options to reduce the millage rate and how it would relate to the operating budget.

Mr. Mark Denkler suggests keeping the rate at One Mill and if next year the funds are not used in total, then the DDA Board can get that adjusted.

Ms. Vera Woodson suggests decreasing the rate to “.95” seeing that there was an increase in the previous year and that this growth can offset the rate decrease and also to plan, in the future, to apply for grants.

Motion by Mark Denkler, seconded by John Conde, to maintain the current rate at One Mill for the Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024. Motion carries 4-1, through roll call. Christina Godbout and Rocco Mangel not present.

- John Conde – Yes
- Frank Frione – Yes
- Mavis Benson – Yes
- Mark Denkler – Yes
- Vera Woodson – No

D. DDA Bylaws Amendment - J. Rustin

Ms. Janice Rustin presents item “DDA Bylaws Amendment”. She suggests the DDA board to amend the DDA Bylaws as following:

- Adopt the DDA Board members terms’ limits same as the ones used by the City Commission;
- Adopt the requirements for DDA Board Meetings attendance same as the ones used by the City Commission;
- Define the City Commission as the certified appointer and remover for DDA Board members;

- Delegate the DDA Board members the ability to sign contracts;
- Adopt the signage of checks by an officer and the DDA executive director;
- Allow for electronic banking transfers.

Mr. Mark Denkler enquires about the possibility of allowing digital signatures for online payments.

Ms. Janice Rustin explains that is up to the DDA Board to change the bylaws according to their needs.

It is the DDA Board consensus in moving forward with changing the DDA bylaws as discussed during the present meeting.

E. DDA Personnel Policy Amendment - L. Simon

Ms. Laura Simon suggests the DDA Board to change the DDA Personnel Policy as below, to be similar to the City's personnel regulations:

- To reduce the probationary period from 6 months to 90 days
- To grant the employee access to the company's medical coverage after a period of 31 days, instead of six months.

Ms. Vera Woodson suggests keeping the probationary period at 6 months.

Motion by Mark Denkler, seconded by John Conde, to reduce the probationary period for the DDA employees from 6 months to 90 days. Motion carries 4-1, through roll call. Christina Godbout and Rocco Mangel not present.

- John Conde – Yes
- Frank Frione – Yes
- Mavis Benson – Yes
- Mark Denkler – Yes
- Vera Woodson – No

Motion by Mark Denkler, seconded by Vera Woodson, to grant the employee access to the company's medical coverage after a period of 31 days, instead of 1 year. Motion carries 4-1, through roll call. Christina Godbout and Rocco Mangel not present.

- John Conde – Yes
- Frank Frione – Yes
- Mavis Benson – Yes
- Mark Denkler – Yes
- Vera Woodson – No

9. Non-Agenda items.

Mr. Mark Denler suggests, going forward, as one of the agenda items, having a representative from the merchants' committee, voicing their concerns and suggestions for the downtown area.

Ms. Mavis Benson, Dr. John Conde, Mr. Frank Frione and Mr. Rocco Mangel are congratulated by the DDA Board and DDA staff for their dedication and service to the DDA and presented with a service award.

As Ms. Mavis Benson (Chairwoman) and Mr. John Conde (Vice-chair) are ending their terms as of June 31st, 2023 the DDA Board votes to nominate Mr. Mark Denkler as Chair and Ms. Vera Woodson as Vice-Chair.

Motion by Frank Frione, seconded by John Conde, to nominate Mr. Mark Denkler as Chair and Ms. Vera Woodson as Vice-Chair. Motion carries with 4 votes in favor, through roll call vote (Christina Godbout and Rocco Mangel not present):

- John Conde – Yes
- Frank Frione – Yes
- Mavis Benson – Yes
- Mark Denkler – Yes
- Vera Woodson – Yes.

10. Board Comments

There were no Board comments.

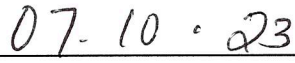
11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:22pm through motion by Mark Denkler seconded by John Conde. Motion carries (5-0). Christina Godbout and Rocco Mangel not present.

Respectfully submitted,
Liliana Fino



Vera Woodson, DDA Vice-Chair



DATE