



MINUTES

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY SPECIAL BOARD MEETING & WORKSHOP

Wednesday – April 10th, 2024 – 2:30 PM

CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS

100 NW 1st Ave, Delray Beach, FL 33444

1. Call to Order of the April 10th Special DDA meeting and Roll Call – 2:30PM

Members Present: Richard Burgess, Vera Woodson, Christina Godbout, Mark Denkler, Brian Rosen, Cole Devitt, Aaron Hallyburton.

Members Absent: None.

Staff: Laura Simon, Liliana Fino, Suzanne Boyd, Marusca Gatto, BJ Sklar, Danielle Morien, Devin Dewane, Alexandra Cosenza, Quentin Morgan.

2. Approval of Special Meeting Agenda

Motion by Mark Denkler, seconded by Christina Godbout, to approve the Special Meeting Agenda as presented. Motion carries (7 - 0) through roll call:

Aaron Hallyburton – Yes

Cole Devitt – Yes

Brian Rosen – Yes

Mark Denkler – Yes

Christina Godbout – Yes

Vera Woodson – Yes

Rick Burgess – Yes.

3. Public Comments & Partner Reports – limited to 2 Minutes

Ms. Mavis Benson (previous DDA Board member) comments that the DDA Board members are appointed by the City Commission. However, the DDA Board answers to the property owners within the DDA taxing district and not to the City Commission. She informs that on Wednesday the 17th, at the Courtyard, there will be a merchant meeting, and invites the DDA Board to attend. She comments that the DDA acts as a facilitator at these meetings, as one of the DDA's mission is to advocate for the downtown businesses. She adds that the merchants do not have to agree with the DDA's position and vice versa, and therefore conversation and feedback are keys to achieve solutions. During these meetings, the DDA team shares its activities with the merchants and listens to any questions or concerns the merchants might pose.

Mr. Ron Plat (Delray Beach resident) comments that it is not polite for the DDA Board members to be texting while the board meetings are taking place. Also, he highlights the importance of board attendance at these meetings. He also comments that he does not understand the low values that were given to Ms. Laura Simon for her performance review, stating that he has known her work for a long time, that he considers to be of great performance.

4. Approval of March 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Mark Denkler comments, regarding the DDA Board minutes of March 11, 2024, on item 6B, where it reads “repat” on page 4, it should read “report”.

Ms. Vera Woodson comments regarding the DDA Board minutes of March 11, 2024 on item 4A, to add to her speech.

“Ms. Vera Woodson comments that she is in line with Mr. Mark Denkler’s concerns. She adds that Mr. Rick Burgess has the right to be heard regarding the issues with his application, but if there is an issue with his application that needs to be addressed, (adding) it should be addressed by the City Commission. “

Motion by Mark Denkler, seconded by Vera Woodson to approve the March 11, 2024 minutes as amended. Motion carries (7 - 0) through roll call:

- Rick Burgess – Yes
- Vera Woodson – Yes
- Christina Godbout – Yes
- Mark Denkler – Yes
- Brian Rosen – Yes
- Cole Devitt – Yes
- Aaron Hallyburton – Yes.

5. Approval of the March Financials

Motion by Mark Denkler, seconded by Vera Woodson to approve the March 2024 Financials as presented.

Motion carries (7 - 0) through roll call:

- Aaron Hallyburton – Yes
- Cole Devitt – Yes
- Brian Rosen – Yes
- Mark Denkler – Yes
- Christina Godbout – Yes
- Vera Woodson – Yes
- Rick Burgess – Yes.

6. Adjourn Special meeting to transition to DDA Workshop

The meeting was adjourned at 2:39pm through motion by Vera Woodson, seconded by Mark Denkler.

Motion carries (7 - 0) through roll call:

- Rick Burgess – Yes
- Vera Woodson – Yes
- Christina Godbout – Yes
- Mark Denkler – Yes
- Brian Rosen – Yes
- Cole Devitt – Yes
- Aaron Hallyburton – Yes.

DDA BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING

Call to Order of the April 10th DDA Workshop meeting and Roll Call – 2:39pm

Members Present: Aaron Hallyburton, Cole Devitt, Brian Rosen, Mark Denkler, Christina Godbout, Vera Woodson, Richard Burgess.

Members Absent: None.

Staff: Laura Simon, Liliana Fino, Suzanne Boyd, Marusca Gatto, BJ Sklar, Danielle Morien, Devin Dewane, Alexandra Cosenza, Quentin Morgan

7. Downtown Development Authority Board Governance Discussion and Strategic Plan 2030

Ms. Laura Simon opens the discussion with an overview on the DDA organization and its vision.

Ms. Vera Woodson asks what is the role of the DDA Board as a recommending body.

Ms. Laura Simon answers that the DDA role is to provide recommendations to help guiding development and traffic growth to the downtown area, based on the downtown master plan, and City ordinances to the betterment of the downtown area.

Ms. Vera Woodson asks what is the next process after the DDA Board provides its recommendations.

Ms. Laura Simon answers that the DDA then helps guide through the process and reports back while going through the process.

Ms. Laura Simon asks the DDA Board if there is a consensus on the process for updating the strategic plan for the future. Part of the process will be hiring an outside consultant to help guide, as it was done in the past.

Ms. Vera Woodson answers that it is a necessity, seeing that much has changed after the last strategic plan was drafted.

Mr. Cole Devitt asks what is the process to update the strategic plan.

Ms. Laura Simon answers that a consultant will get in touch with the DDA Board, with the City Commission, with the downtown stakeholders to get their feedback and to outline priorities.

Mr. Cole Devitt comments that it is sensible to bring an outside party into this process, to keep the focus.

Ms. Vera Woodson comments that the City is going through a similar process with the Tourism Task Force for over a year, without any results yet, and funds are being paid for this project for two years. Therefore, she asks if it is possible, when this study is done, for the DDA to have access to the results and working in partnership with Palm Beach County and local professionals to get insight for the DDA strategic plan, instead of the DDA having to hire an outside party.

Ms. Laura Simon answers that the DDA can consider recruiting other consultant organizations/individuals. She advises that an outside perspective is more objective than one made by insiders. She highlights that the results from this study are very important as they set a road map for the future of downtown Delray Beach.

Mr. Brian Rosen asks if Ms. Laura Simon can provide the DDA Board with different options for facilitators.

Ms. Laura Simon confirms.

Mr. Mark Denkler comments that the consultant's study will give the DDA direction as to plan for the future. He highlights that people have different opinions, so it is important to have the most feedback possible (between the DDA Board, the City Commission and the downtown stakeholders).

Mr. Brian Rosen comments that a consultant's study is important and from that head start study the DDA can trim down the scope of work if needed, and therefore it is a great tool.

Mr. Mark Denkler comments that the shopability report done and the Placer.AI reports also provide very important data for future planning. He also mentions that the consultant's report will help to connect as

a board to get to common points and help the DDA in defining what the DDA can control and this way the DDA will be able to give better recommendations to the city team.

Mr. Aaron Hallyburton enquires about the role of the DDA in its relationship with the City Commission.

Mr. Quentin Morgan answers that the DDA board is the eyes within the DDA district. Either it is regarding an application from the City that came for review at one of the DDA Board meetings or there is a consensus amongst the board on certain issues happening in downtown area, then recommendations should be sent to the city commission based on the focus of the DDA.

Mr. Aaron Hallyburton asks to give more details on the DDA Board role with the City Commission.

Ms. Laura Simon answers that in matters related to the downtown area, the City team reaches out to the DDA to provide feedback. It is a partnership with the City. She adds that some downtown stakeholders might not agree with some City decisions and the DDA role is about finding a solution together.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Rick Burgess asks what is usually the fee for the consulting group recruitment?

Ms. Laura Simon answers that the fee is usually in between \$5,000 and \$10,000 dollars.

Mr. Rick Burgess comments that it is always good to have a third opinion, but also that as the City Commission votes on many things, he feels that the DDA is accountable not only towards the downtown stakeholders, but also towards the City Commission and City staff.

Mr. Quentin Morgan explains that although the DDA is a dependent district of the City and the DDA Board members are appointed by the City commission, the DDA Board duties are towards the DDA. The recommendations given by the DDA Board to the City Commission have an influence, as they provide expert inside knowledge regarding downtown matters. He highlights that the DDA recommendations are only regarding matters within the downtown area.

Mr. Mark Denkler comments that regarding any items brought to the table by the City team, these items are ultimately under the City Commission's authority, no matter the directions on the DDA Board recommendations.

Mr. Brian Rosen comments that the purpose of the DDA Board is to vote according to how each item coming to the table will affect the downtown area rather than according to individual opinions.

Discussion ensued.

8. OLD SCHOOL SQUARE Management and Programing – ILA renewal discussion for FY24-25

A. Team Presentation of OSS Overview

Ms. Laura Simon gives an overview timeline on the Old School Square project, as well as details on attendance and other data regarding the Cornell Art Museum and Old School Square campus (Amphitheatre and Vintage Gym). She also gives an overview of the current plans regarding marketing and future planning of the Old School Square project. She comments that the DDA needs feedback on how the City team sees the Old School Square project moving forward and feedback from the DDA Board on the decision of proceeding with an extension or terming the current lease.

B. Discussion regarding moving forward as management organization for the Old School Square Campus

Mr. Mark Denkler comments that, technically, the contract has been renewed because the 180 days' notice mark (to give notice to the City Team) has passed.

Ms. Laura Simon comments that either the City or the DDA can still change the plan if they so decide. She suggests having a meeting workshop between the City Commission and leaders to understand their vision and feedback regarding the Old School Square plan.

Ms. Vera Woodson voices her concerns regarding the DDA being preparing a future plan for the Old School Square Campus while this project might, potentially, be turned over to someone else, concerns regarding the future funding for this project and concerns regarding bringing in a third party to take over the Crest Theatre facilities.

Ms. Laura Simon comments that all these concerns should be vehiculated to the new City Commission to perceive their vision for this project moving forward.

Mr. Cole Devitt asks what is the DDA team's opinion on proceeding with the Old School Square project.

Ms. Laura Simon answers that the DDA, so far, has had success and momentum in the implementation of this project. She adds that the DDA should give continuance to this project, expanding the team.

Mr. Brian Rosen comments that while, in the past, the Old School Square Campus was not operating, it was detrimental for the downtown area. He comments that regarding liability issues, in the future, maybe the DDA can look into another options.

Ms. Laura Simon comments that purchasing or leasing equipment in the future, instead of doing it for each concert, is more sustainable in the long-term plan.

Mr. Brian Rosen congratulates the DDA Team on the great job in marketing and public relations that has been done regarding the Old School Square project.

Ms. Vera Woodson comments that the DDA has been putting much effort into this project and adds that it is better to grow the current team than to hire an outside group to run the project. She adds that there is a lot of momentum right now that should not be dismissed.

Mr. Mark Denkler agrees with Ms. Vera Woodson that it has taken much effort and time to achieve the success that the project has achieved, and therefore he is excited about continuing this project and planning for the next 5 years.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Brian Rosen comments that, based on the DDA focus (to promote and lead development of the downtown area), the DDA does not have, so far, been looking for returns for this project. He also comments that for all that this project involves the budget is light.

Ms. Vera Woodson enquires on the possibility of getting, from the consultants that will develop the DDA's strategic plan, an estimate amount on the returns each visitor brings to the downtown area, with the execution of the Old School Square project events.

Ms. Christina Godbout comments that a workshop with the City Commission regarding the future of the Old School Square project is a great idea. She also comments that the DDA is doing a great job on the execution of this project.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Rick Burgess comments that the DDA has two businesses running right now (the DDA project and the Old School Square project) and he is concerned about the amount of time spent working on the Old School Square project comparing to the DDA projects and how to separate the time spent between the two projects for accountability purposes. He also asks what can the DDA Board do to facilitate the process. He is also concerned that the funding for his project might fall through at some point and that if the Crest Theatre building will be managed by a third party, and something goes wrong that the DDA will be the entity to be blamed for. He comments that it is a lot of work to be put on the DDA staff.

Ms. Laura Simon answers that the DDA has a great team, and with the takeover of the Old School Square project three more members were added (two contractors working full-time, and a part-time contractor). She adds that if the DDA continues running this project in the future it would be beneficial to hire more staff such as a facility manager and event staff. She adds that the budget can, perhaps, be geared more to funding operations and less on events.

Mr. Brian Rosen comments that for the future planning for this project funds should be allocated to hiring staff, if the DDA plans to expand the team.

Mr. Rick Burgess comments that the funds given to support the Old School Square project are insufficient. He suggests recruiting donations, seeing that it is a big operation. He also comments that the public do not understand all the moving pieces unless they have knowledge about it.

Mr. Cole Devitt welcomes the idea of having the joint workshop with the City team, adding that after the meeting workshop the DDA will be able to prepare the budget more accurately.

Mr. Rick Burgess asks what will happen if the funds being requested for the Old School Square project are not approved by the City team.

Mr. Brian Rosen answers that, in that case, another plan will need to be considered for the project.

Ms. Vera Woodson comments that bringing an outside group to run the project takes time on training and therefore it is better to expand the existing team.

Mr. Aaron Halliburton comments that the DDA needs to get all downtown involved, from East or West of Swinton Avenue. He comments that the vibe when walking on Atlantic Avenue is not the best, with the visible homeless issues, landscaping, and trash issues. He also mentions that it is hard for the DDA team to oversee both the DDA and the Old School Square projects, when there is so much involved.

Mr. Cole Devitt answers that there is so much the DDA can do within its scope of work.

Mr. Rick Burgess comments that the public thinks the DDA is responsible for fixing the homeless, landscaping and trash issues.

Ms. Vera Woodson comments regarding Mr. Rick Burgess's comments that therefore it is important to talk about accountability.

Mr. Aaron Hallyburton adds that is where the DDA Board/organization work lies in the role with the City Commission.

Ms. Laura Simon comments that the DDA works closely with the City Commission whenever there are issues. She also comments that if the DDA Board perceives some issues, even if they report them on the *My Delray Beach App*, they should also report those issues to the DDA executive Director so that she can share those with Mr. Jeff Oris.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Jeff Oris (City of Delray Beach, Assistant City Manager) comments that there are things the City team does not see on a regular basis as they have limited resources and staff and that's why the City team asks for public collaboration, for example with the use of the Delray beach app.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Jeff Oris adds that the City team needs the insight of the DDA regarding the downtown area related matters. He adds that the relationship between the City Team and the DDA is a partnership.

Mr. Rick Burgess asks what is the percentage of time used by the staff for the Old School Square project related matters on a day-to-day basis.

Ms. Laura Simon answers that it is of about 60 on DDA matters and 40 for the Old School Square project matters in her case. She also adds that some of the DDA staff only work on DDA work, while some others only on the Old School Square project work, and others they collaborate on both.

Ms. Vera Woodson comments that it is hard to quantify, as it is kind of fluid.

Ms. Laura Simon clarifies that while some of the staff might work on both, others work specifically for one.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Vera Woodson comments, regarding projects in the West Atlantic area, that the CRA was supposed to do the complex sports, the container project, but nothing has been happening regarding those projects. She highlights that the City has been longing for these projects to come to light for a long time, and the fact that those projects are stagnant is not the DDA's fault.

Ms. Laura Simon answers that the DDA should work with the City Commission to perceive whet the DDA can help to make these projects happen or if the DDA can help make an impact on that area any other ways, such as with the what the DDA has been doing with the addition of decorative lighting on Northwest 5th Avenue, or the street pole banners the Art and Jazz on the Avenue event taking place on West Atlantic.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Christina Godbout asks if a date can be arranged for the workshop between the DDA and the City Commission by the next DDA Board meeting in May.

Ms. Vera Woodson wants to add discussion on the possibility of fluidity of payments regarding the Old School Square project funding coming from the City to the next DDA Board Meeting Agenda.

Mr. Rick Burgess asks if the DDA Board can have a list of the top 5 or 10 fixings to be done at the Old School Square campus.


Ms. Laura Simon answers that amongst others some of the fixings refer to paint projects, lighting fixtures, upgrading the grounds in front of the Amphitheatre, landscaping upgrades around the campus and the Vintage Gym and the Cornell Art Museum.

Discussion ensued.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned through motion by Cole Devitt seconded by Vera Woodson at 4:31pm. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Liliana Fino



Cole Devitt, DDA Secretary



DATE