



Downtown Investment Authority
Redevelopment Plan Committee

City Hall at St. James
117 West Duval St., Lynwood Roberts Room

Wednesday, October 9, 2013 – 3:00 p.m.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT

Board Members Present: Chairman Oliver Barakat, Melody Bishop, Tony Allegretti

Office of General Counsel: Jason Gabriel

Council Member: Lori Boyer

Attendees: Alex Rudzinski, Director of Development, OED; Karen Nasrallah Downtown Development and Redevelopment Manager; Aundra Wallace, DIA CEO; and Karen Underwood, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Board Member Melody Bishop, Chair of the DIA Redevelopment Plan Committee, called the meeting to order at approximately 3:10 p.m.

Board Member Bishop asked everyone to introduce him- or herself. She stated that input was needed from each member to consider a plan to be formulated for stakeholders meeting.

SHORT-TERM INVESTMENTS PROJECTS Lara Diettrich/ Tony Robbins Consultants

Lara Diettrich welcomed the public, and introduced Jim Catlett, IGS; Jim Gilmore, IGS; and Josh Cockrell, IGS.

Board Member Bishop recognized Council Member Boyer and stated that the Board appreciates her fearless leadership and attendance to all of the meetings.

Lara Diettrich read a quote from the Metropolitan Revolution by Bruce Katz. Bruce Katz is an Urban Developing Philosophical intellect genius and was a speaker at the One Spark event.

“The Federal and State governments, driven by outworn notions of legislative horse-trading, prefer one-size-fits-all solutions that serve to frustrate rather than placate. They spread resources across the landscape of the nation and their states like peanut butter on a slice of bread, diluting return on investment and diminishing public confidence in public action. Cities and metropolitan areas are by contrast, aligned, and attuned to the differentiated nature of their economies. They build on their distinctive strengths, buttress and leverage their specific assets, attributes, and advantages. They follow Dolly Parton's maxim: "Find out who you are and do it on purpose."

Tony Robbins presented the Downtown Jacksonville Community Redevelopment Plan Amendment Workshop. He discussed identifying projects and actions DIA can undertake with minimal cost, projects that will start in 2014. The goals are for small-scale changes to public spaces that could lead to big changes down the road.

Strategic Objectives

- Make Downtown More Balanced and Livable (beautify, more housing, cultural diversity)
- Build Capacity (diversify revenues, foster alliances)
- Improve Downtown Mobility (trolley, more walkable)
- Protect and Enhance Open Space.

Where should we focus?

- Laura Street (Monroe to Bay)
- Brooklyn/Riverside
- Bay Street (Liberty to Ocean)
- Riverside Boulevard

Chairwoman Bishop stated that the plan would have to go through City Council, DOT, Public Works, and JTA. Mr. Robbins responded that the Action Plan limited a few steps but there was not enough detail. The update to the plan and the list of projects would have necessary steps in sections. Lara Diettrich noted that that would be fully vetted in the Business Investment Development Plan.

RPC Ranking of DT Action Plan

- Enhance Event Programming
- Convert Downtown One-Way Streets to Two-Way Streets
- Initiate A Downtown Marketing Strategy that emphasizes Downtown Districts
- Development and Implement a Comprehensive Streetscape Plan
- Engage in Active, Targeted Retail Recruitment
- Improve Downtown Connectivity by an Enhanced Trolley System & Complementary BRT

Short-Term Investments

- Infrastructure Improvements
- Remove directional mast arms from Bay Street, return two-way movement
- Create a shade canopy along Bay Street
- Prioritize people replacing one vehicle land with wider sidewalk, bike lane & landscaping
- Reduce vacant City-owned properties by waiving rental fees for first two years of a multi-year lease.

Board Member Barakat stated that is up to this board to make sure each application is reviewed carefully. If empty storefronts were in better shape, deals could be done. It would cost so much to get the spaces modernized into code and he has seen many deals fall apart despite of the interest of the businesses that would like to be located in the area.

Aundra Wallace pointed out that previously the city had a retail enhancement program. He is looking into how to revamp that for storefronts. By the time the DIA meets during the first quarter of 2014, the retail enhancement would be one of actual incentives that will roll out with action plan. On the residential component piece, he wanted to know how would the board get a balance for sales and rentals in the downtown area. He will also look into how to develop some type of a down payment assistance program to assist people on a home ownership side as well rental assistance.

Council Member Boyer commented that the bullet points doesn't identify retail versus office but the answers heard were with respect to retail and nobody approached the idea of using city-owned property office space for free for two years.

Pam Smith commented that the City has been helpful with incentivizing some office properties.

Alex Sifakas commented if incentives were given to the developers and owners, it should not create a problem. That would create a demand and activity, which would then raise prices in the end.

Aundra Wallace asked how long would the developer be able to offer that particular incentive to the next renter. Mr. Sifakas responded that if the costs spaces were lowered on the property, it should be forever. Mr. Wallace stated that would be the challenge in the development of the community once that that incentive is provided.

Lara Diettrich noted that Mr. Wallace and the DIA would be structuring what is asked to do to ensure that the program would work.

Outdoor Seating throughout Downtown

- Amendment Downtown Zoning Overlay
- Enables some businesses to double their capacity without expanding their buildings
- Fosters greater interactions among people and helping activate the streets
- Places higher importance on people over automobiles in front of businesses

Reliable, Frequent Trolley System

- Combats the perception Downtown is difficult to navigate
- Supports use of peripheral parking facilities
- Connect surrounding neighborhoods with Downtown
- Compliments future introduction of BRT to Downtown

Regular Special Events Programming

- Monthly cooperative meeting open to all downtown businesses and organizations
- Corporate on a series of special events with emphasis on families
- Provide spaces for residents to conduct community business and spaces for social events and educational
- Temporary street closures for more street festivals.

Streetscape Beautification Initiatives

- Improvements for a more welcoming and well-maintained pedestrian environment
- Improved and strategically-located lighting for real and perceived safety
- Use of potted plants, lower maintenance landscaping and more effective shading
- Art in Public Places competition

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Edmundo Gonzalez stated when he lived in New York, the incentive packages were done with private developers at an 80/20 percent market rate. He mentioned that some churches would not allow outdoor alcohol to be served after a certain time. That will not work for what the people would like to see downtown.

Carlton Jones stated that most lease terms are 3 to 5 years. A rent structure could be locked in for the first 5 years. It would benefit the landowner, which would pass that savings onto the tenant. Prior to when the FSCJ President Wallace, left he had been exploring some dorms downtown and those opportunities currently exist and should be taken advantage of. SCAD is a great success story for Savannah; it changed their entire blighted downtown. With the credit system, it is difficult to finance these dorms.

Dane Beard mentioned that Pre-kindergarten – 5th grade schools might happen in Springfield. The parents that work downtown could have their kids attend school. That would give families more reasons to live and work downtown.

Chairwoman Bishop stated that something would happen in Downtown Jacksonville focused on the idea of Jacksonville becoming the healthy well-being city that it can be.

Sandra Jones asked where the targeted areas were. Aundra Wallace pointed out the map and showed her where the areas are located.

Lara Diettrich ended the meeting with a quote from Bruce Katz.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairwoman Bishop adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:07 p.m.

The next scheduled DIA CRA Redevelopment Plan Committee Workshop meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 23, 2013, at 3:00 p.m., in the Lynwood Roberts Room.

Please note that all attachments referenced will be posted on the DIA Web site [www.coj.net/departments/office-of-economic-development/downtown-investment-authority-\(dia\)](http://www.coj.net/departments/office-of-economic-development/downtown-investment-authority-(dia))

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The written minutes for this meeting are only an overview of what was discussed. For verbatim comments of this meeting, an audio CD is available upon request. Please contact Karen Underwood, at (904) 255-7567 or by email at karenu@coj.net.