



**Downtown Investment Authority**

City Hall at St. James  
117 West Duval St., Lynwood Roberts Room  
Friday, December 6, 2013 – 4:00 p.m.

**DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE/ECOMONY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** Tony Allegretti, Chairman, James Bailey, Oliver Barakat, Melody Bishop, and Mike Saylor

**Office of General Counsel:** Jason Gabriel

**Council Members Present:** None

**Attendees: (Staff):** Aundra Wallace and Karen Underwood

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Downtown Experience Committee meeting was called to order by Chair, Tony Allegretti at 4:04 p.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

- Late Bloomers Garden Club – Neely Towe and Barbara Ketchum

Neely Towe and Barbara Ketchum presented their powerpoint presentation “Making Urban Spaces into beautiful places.” Their vision is the beauty of the park. There has to be a management group for the Hemming Park. Great parks need private management. An RFP has been put on the streets regarding the management of the park. The Garden Club will have set up a new organization called “Friends of Hemming Park” to create a new 501C3 with a collaborative board of directors, which would be invited to participate. Membership would consist of private, and government leaders around town who would be responsible for raising the funds through public partnerships. The Garden Club will continue to investigate the possibility of joining in a Community Development Entity (RECDE) to receive tax credits for the capital expenditures.

Board Member Tony Allegretti asked Ms. Towe if she had been in conversations with some of the people that are responding. Ms. Towe responded yes, she attended the meeting where all of the responders where gathered and they affirmed their great efforts.

Aundra Wallace stated that the first step that the group would need to do is to procure a park plaza manager and the changes being proposed for the park would first need to be agreed upon with the new manager. The plaza park manager has the ability of conducting all of the programming for the park. Regarding construction in the park, the park manager should understand that they need to generate revenue, and construction during programming would

impede that goal. Coordination should occur between the park manager and the construction contractor to alleviate any disruption.

Neely Towe stated that at this point they do not have any funding and is an exciting beginning.

Board Member Bishop asked if the construction efforts have to go through the City. Chairman Allegretti responded that at this time something that will happen now is potentially, a private group manages the park and they come to make an earnest proposal to change the park. Ms. Towe stated that her group would be patient in going through the various processes.

- The Connector – Eddie Berrang

Eddie Berrang, Chief Marketing Officer for Void presented the Connector. The Connector is a private bus service that will conveniently link these “physically separated but spiritually linked” sides of town. The goal of the project is to provide two luxury buses that run continuously between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights, with the potential for expansion into other nights and times to coincide with events.

The Connector group has secured relationships with an international company that services over 170 Airports for the shuttles.

Board Member Bishop stated that six years ago she had a conversation with JTA regarding a similar project for Downtown, San Marco, and Riverside areas. She inquired if Mr. Berrang talked with JTA. Eddie Berrang responded yes and their response was that they liked it and if they could wait for an extended period. They would love to collaborate with JTA.

Aundra Wallace has been in conversations with Nat Ford and they are supportive of the concept, but are not as simplistic. Chairman Allegretti agreed and stated that might be hard for the JTA do new routes.

Oliver Barakat asked if Mr. Berrang tried to fund this through other means. Mr. Berrang responded that they went to JTA and private companies for sponsorships exclusively to get it running. The Connector wanted to be able to be able to run into the Jaguars, Sharks game and Art Walk. Oliver Barakat asked if he approached any of the downtown restaurants or bars. Mr. Berrang responded yes, they think it is very awesome. Kim Bergeron considered that he look into FDOT Grant Funding.

- Retail Enhancement Plan

Aundra Wallace provided a handout of the Downtown Retail Enhancement Plan. He asked for comments, feedback, and overall review regarding the plan.

He compiled the comments from the November 4 and 5<sup>th</sup> community forums. He created a recoverable grant program, which can address the actual demands in the market place.

There will be flexibilities to convert to a loan taking a lien hold position, if needed. He discussed the boundaries.

- Board Member Tony Allegretti asked if compliance would be done in the DIA office. Aundra Wallace responded that for starts it would be Aundra himself, but once the two positions are filled, it would be their main responsibility.
- The members discussed the plan.
- Aundra Wallace noted that 11E/Carling has retail space currently available. One has a potential applicant pending, which would be moving in and one building needs assistance with finding a retail tenant for that space. It would help the project.
- Mike Langton commented that real estate development does not blend itself well to a structured program. Create a program with a lot of flexibility. Let the good judgment from the DIA Staff and this committee. Board Member Barakat stated that the board would try to find a balance.
- Board Member Oliver Barakat stated that the Retail Enhancement Plan has to go thru Council.
- Terry Lorince commented regarding the exclusion of ductwork and asked to reconsider.
- Chairman Allegretti noted that his phone is ringing off the hook for retailers that want to come in. There should be many applicants once it has been approved by City Council.

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Terry Lorince thanked the board for following up on the retail enhancement program. She noted that this program would not address buildings that are so far gone that the owners will need to spend funding to try to attract tenants. This is for the projects that are ready to go with a signed lease. When the DIA was being formed, the goal was to make all members proactive. She urged the members to follow-up on Member Bishops comments on what other cities have done, including design these programs after the retail they want to attract in their downtown. If the board is seeking destination retail, focus or weigh it towards those that are open after 5 p.m.
- John Nooney expressed his concern regarding the public access to the floating dock at shipyards at Scott Wilson District 4.
- Mike Field strongly encouraged pedestrian use. Incentivizing a second floor separate tenant that has an office use would be contributing to a walkable use.

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Mr. Wallace noted that the boundary to the east would be Market Street; the boundary to the North would be Adams Street. The boundary to the south would be Bay and Laura Street.

Mr. Wallace stated that on Monday, December 9, 2013 at the Downtown Library in the Auditorium, a planning workshop will be held regarding the Jacksonville Landing and the surrounding areas. He encouraged all to attend.

Chairman Allegretti announced that Community First Saturdays would be held tomorrow, Saturday December 7, 2013. Urban Sleigh rides to the skyway. Take the skyway to Kings Avenue to see Santa at the Kings Avenue station.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

- There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Allegretti adjourned the meeting at 5:49 p.m.

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

**Recorder:** *Karen Underwood*  
*Completed Monday, January 31, 2013*