

MINUTES
LDDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
City Commission Chambers
August 21, 2008
8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: David Hallock, Jim Verplanck, Janet Tucker, Jerry Herring, Chris McLaughlin, Ford Heacock, Joe Mawhinney, Anne Furr, Becky Abel, LeRoy Bradley, Julie Townsend, Ellen Simms, Heather Huebner, Tamara Sakagawa, Jim Studiale, Glenn Higgins, Justin Wilson, Jim Doig

ABSENT:

CALL TO ORDER: David Hallock called the meeting to order.

MINUTES: Jerry Herring moved to accept the Minutes of the August 7, 2008 Regular LDDA Board of Directors Meeting. Motion seconded by Ford Heacock. Motion passed 6-0.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jerry Herring, Treasurer, highlighted the July financial statements. Income for July was \$5,773.15, and expenses were \$15,739.45. Year to date income was \$557,765.02 and year to date expenses were \$464,247.42. Nearly 100% of tax revenues are in. Anne noted that we have actually received more than 100% of our budgeted amount (around \$7,000), due to 95% budgeting and later payment by some taxpayers. Total current assets were \$495,998.48 and liabilities were \$11,510.63. The report will be filed for audit.

The report from Baylis & Company for the 2nd quarter agreed with LDDA's in-house monthly Profit and Loss statements. Ford Heacock asked what the "advertising" expense was that was expressed in the Baylis report. Anne explained that LDDA calls those expenditures "Marketing" (line item 8920) and we have nine subaccounts under Marketing (ex: DLP, photo expense, VISITFlorida, etc.). Baylis names all these expenditures "Advertising". We have requested that the "Advertising" be renamed "Marketing" by Baylis & Company.

Chris McLaughlin arrived.

In the FY 08-09 proposed budget, Anne explained that, as requested, a new column was added to reflect what the effect would be if the millage was 1.8735 mills. The current rate is 1.9366 mills and that is the amount that was certified to the Property Appraiser. The rollback rate is 1.8744 mills. Five of the seven LDDA Board members would have to vote in favor of the rollback rate. LDDA's first public hearing on the proposed budget is Wednesday, September 3, 2008 at 5:01 p.m. LDDA's final public hearing will be Tuesday, September 16, 2008 at 5:01 p.m. Anne noted which accounts are affected by the millage rates – 6100 Tax Receipts (income) and 9300 Tax Increment to the Trust Fund (expense).

LAKELAND ART FESTIVAL: Jim Doig was present to give information about the Lakeland Art Festival to be held on Saturday and Sunday September 6th and 7th, 2008. Kentucky Avenue will be closed between Main Street and Lemon Street and about 30 artists will be present. Florida Dance Theatre, Opera Theatre of Lakeland, Polk Museum of Art and Lakeland Community Theatre will be on hand also. Food will be provided by Downtown restaurants. LDDA appreciates Jim bringing the art festival to Downtown. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Polk Theatre.

On October 3, in conjunction with First Friday, an International Cancer Survivors art show will take place on Kentucky Avenue. This show will be on display at J. Rowan for a few weeks before going on to be displayed at Watson Clinic. Some street activities are planned. This will

also coincide with the introduction of new sculptures that will be placed on the Lemon Street Promenade. Jim was thanked for working to enhance the artistic events in Downtown.

COMMITTEES:

Design Review Requests – 402 S. Kentucky Avenue, Citizens Bank & Trust, wall signs. Reverse channel letters were requested and the owner will comply. Approved by the Design Review Committee.

Downtown Farmers Curb Market – Janet Tucker reported that the Market will reopen September 6 after being closed during the month of August. We expect to open with about thirty vendors at that time.

David asked about the Segway tours. They are not in conjunction with the Farmers Market. They follow First Fridays each month, on Saturdays and Sundays and originate at the Peterson Building – 200 N. Kentucky Avenue.

Retail Recruitment Committee - Committee Chairman Ford Heacock stated that the August 13 meeting of the Committee was cancelled due to the lack of a quorum. Kiku Obata and Company will return to Lakeland on Sunday, August 24 to have dinner with and make a presentation to the Retail Recruitment Committee and on Monday conduct workshops with stakeholder groups. DLP will be at 7:30 a.m., LDDA will be at 9 a.m. City Commissioners, City Manager Administration, City Attorneys and Department Heads will meet at 10:30. In the afternoon, at 1:00 and at 4:00, sessions for property owners, business owners, residents, arts groups, and other stakeholders are scheduled. The workshops will begin to focus on some colors and words for the campaign. Participants will have the opportunity to “vote” on their favorite.

CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL’S CSX DRI: Jim Studiale, Director, Community Development Department, explained the status of the CSX DRI process. One of the aspects of the state’s proposal is the ILC in Winter Haven. We have always felt this is a tough fight because of the way it is structured, but we have made our interests known to the Regional Planning Council as to the impacts on Downtown Lakeland, as it is a Development of Regional Impact. There may be a second round to fight this. The arguments for the ILC have been about the need for economic development versus not really wanting to look at the impacts. There are several fronts to this issue - in the Legislature, at the Federal level, and about the media coverage – the public’s perception. There is a lot of concern that Lakeland is being perceived as a naysayer and that impacts are not really there. Most of the money has already been allocated quietly in the past. It may lead to a reform of FDOT. It is going to be a tough battle between Orlando’s desire to have commuter rail and our desire to not have more freight. In an effort to get everyone (Tampa, Orlando, and Lakeland) on the same page, we will continue to work on this rail summit (and we will probably come back to you to be one of the sponsors of that summit). Before we get to the next legislative session, we are working on getting the I-4 corridor cities to ask how will we get passenger rail? If you have too much freight, then how can you have room for passenger rail? We will begin working in earnest on the summit, which will be in mid October. It is hoped that the summit can be accomplished before the legislature begins its organizational meetings in November. We should have a date within about a week. The goal is to have all the cities in that corridor agree upon a vision for passenger rail. There have been some real and sincere attempts to sit down with the Orlando Mayor, twice now. Tampa has been participating in these summit meetings. Pam Iorio, Tampa Mayor, has a light rail campaign going. She has joined the summit group. The DOT study to look at the alternatives for the freight lines is becoming more important. The City will take a stronger role in the summit and Paula Dockery will back off some.

The DRI process moves to Winter Haven to consider the drafting of a development order that is consistent with the Regional Planning Council recommendation. It also has to get the final approvals from the city of Winter Haven. On the local level, their decision would be easily challengeable, but Jim doesn’t think that will be the route taken.

Anne said that she understood that Winter Haven can either accept or reject conditions set by the Regional Planning Council. Can DCA add these back in? Jim is not sure, but stated that Pat Steed of the Regional Planning Council would allow Lakeland's concerns to be heard. The DCA will be especially diligent in "dotting every 'i' and crossing every 't'" because the City has hired David Theriac, who is a well-known DRI attorney.

DOWNTOWN CRA ADVISORY BOARD: Tamara Sakagawa, CRA Coordinator, explained that in FY 09, the LCRA Downtown Plan needs to be updated. The last thorough update was in the 1990s. The one after that (2003) was not technical enough to meet requirements for use of tax increment dollars. Tamara said that she thought she understood that the LDDA would like to have tools in the plan that will allow us to address the issues that are a priority, specifically, direction for the area north of Bay Street. If actions are not in the plan, we would not be able to use tax increment. It is important to get an updated collective vision for the Downtown CRA so in terms of future development, all parties are saying the same thing.

Tamara suggested that we may want to consider using Glatting Jackson as the consultant for the plan since they are on continuing contract with the City. There is \$50,000 in the CRA budget for this update. Tamara thought that with City staff doing some of the production work and Glatting Jackson doing the plan, we would be able to have the plan update completed for the \$50,000 budgeted. She will come back to the LDDA (CRA Advisory Board) with details and scope of work.

DLP REPORT: Executive Director Julie Townsend reported that the new Segway tours are going well and have generated a lot of interest. She has been working with *Focus* magazine on a Downtown article. She has been contacted by Paul Dimbath concerning scheduling an antique car show February 26-28, 2009 and a Chevy show in late March. Ford Heacock said these shows are prestigious and will attract a lot of traffic. The September 5th First Friday will feature a back-to-school theme with MidFlorida Federal Credit Union offering a shopping spree in a drawing for educators. October 1's First Friday theme is "artwalk", in conjunction with the cancer survivor art at J. Rowan Gallery and the new sculptures on Lemon Street. In November, the theme will be a salute to veterans and will be in conjunction with the Veteran's Day parade to be held the next day.

CITY COMMISSIONER REPORT: Jim Verplanck had no report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: David Hallock asked for comments on today's newspaper report. An article told how rents would be dramatically increased from below-market rates (approximately \$5 per square foot) for the four tenants who currently occupy the ground floor of the Bloomburg Building (formerly owned by Citrus & Chemical Bank). The new rates for those tenants would be in line with typical rates in Downtown and will allow the new owner to make improvements to the building. It is regrettable that the new owner gave only a few days for the current tenants to make a decision whether to go or stay. Anne will make contact with the owner to see if decision / transition times could be extended. The LDDA expects retail to continue in those locations and looks forward to the improvement of those spaces.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Recycle Computer Equipment in Lakeland Vision Office – Janet Tucker moved and Ford Heacock seconded the motion, retroactive to August 11, 2008, to dispose of (send for recycling) the old LDDA-owned computer equipment (Compaq Presario PC, Maxtech monitor, keyboard and mouse) that has been in the Lakeland Vision Office. Motion passed 5-0. (Joe Mawhinney and Chris McLaughlin had left the meeting.)

Place-Making Strategies for Every Community – The local chapter of the American Planning Association is sponsoring a presentation in Winter Haven on Friday morning, August 22nd. There is no cost and Anne will attend.

Lakeland Area Chamber of Commerce – On September 12th, Anne has been invited to attend the Lakeland Area Chamber of Commerce Fall Board Retreat to hear the Smart Community KSI presentation and the keynote presentation by Carol Coletta. Ms. Coletta is President and CEO of CEOs for Cities and host of the nationally syndicated public radio program, “Smart City”.

Budget Cut Impacts – At the workshop on the City’s tentative budget, it was discussed that medians and other roadside areas are now being mowed every ten days instead of every week. Garbage can service in Downtown has been reduced. The Federal Building, which still has maintenance/repair issues, is slated to be leased to the private sector for \$100,000.

E-Mail from Polk Theatre - Polk Theater sent an e-mail asking if there were partnerships or grant dollars available from LDDA for advertising and promotions. The Board stated that dollars are budgeted to DLP for Downtown marketing and that to make donations to one worthy cause would bring about more requests from other worthy causes that couldn’t be met. Board members encouraged others to make personal donations to the Polk Theatre if they so desire.

NEW BUSINESS:

Name of Retail Recruitment Committee – Ford Heacock, Chairman of the Retail Recruitment Committee, stated that a suggestion had been made to rename the committee the “Retail” Committee. The committee started in the LDDA as the Retail Committee and evolved to become the “Retail Recruitment and Retention” committee. The suggestion was to simplify the name because we do more than the name suggests. The history is that the committee was an outgrowth of the former Retail Committee and was not new. That committee asked representatives of the DLP to sit on the committee, as well as a Downtown resident representative. The Downtown resident has since withdrawn. **Ford Heacock moved that the Committee name be changed to “Retail Committee”. Motion seconded by Janet Tucker. Motion passed 5-0.**

Calendar – Anne called attention to several upcoming dates:

Retail Committee – Sunday evening, 8/24/08 for the branding presentation

First Public Budget Hearing – Wednesday, 9/3/08, 5:01 p.m.

Final Public Budget Hearing – Tuesday, 9/16/08, 5:01 p.m.

ICSC – Jerry Herring said that he went to the ICSC meeting in Orlando. Participants come from the southeastern US. 20-25% were retailers, and the rest were engineers, architects, etc. There was a lot of talk about retail having a tough time everywhere.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 AM.

The next LDDA Board Meeting will be Thursday, September 4, 2008 at 8 a.m. in the City Commission Conference Room.