

MINUTES
LDDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
City Commission Conference Room
April 17, 2008
8:00 a.m.

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

ABSENT:

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

MINUTES: A correction on page three should read “Downtown at Dusk.” Jim Verplanck moved to accept the Minutes of the April 3, 2008 regular LDDA Board of Directors Meeting with the correction. Motion seconded by Jerry Herring. Motion passed 7-0.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Jerry Herring, Treasurer, reported that income for March was \$6,951.56, and \$484,487.09 year-to-date. Expenses for March were \$18,886.85, and \$395,736.46 year-to-date. At the six-month mark, income is at 89.55% of budget. Expenses are at 70.57% of budget. There are no unusual items to report, but a request was made for detail of expenses and income for the Downtown Farmers Curb Market.

David Hallock asked about commissions paid to the Polk County Tax Collector and Polk County Property Appraiser. A percentage of LDDA’s and other taxing authorities’ tax receipts are allotted to those two agencies for their respective operating budgets. It is automatically deducted by the Tax Collector, but we are billed quarterly for the amount due to the Property Appraiser.

DOWNTOWN CRA ADVISORY BOARD

Guiding Principles – Anne distributed a draft of the Guiding Principles for Downtown. Jerry commented that the LDDA cannot meet every demand, but should embrace the opportunity to clarify what guides the actions of LDDA to enable, supplement, etc. **Chris McLaughlin moved approval of the Draft Guiding Principles for Downtown with no changes. Motions seconded by Jim Verplanck. Motion passed 7-0.**

COMMITTEES

Downtown Farmers Curb Market, Spring Art Festival – Janet Tucker reported that the Spring Art Festival is scheduled for May 3, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please put this date on your calendars. Showcase Publications has agreed to put Downtown Farmers Curb Market Advertising in its publications for free whenever there is space.

There are approximately 17 regular vendors on Saturdays at the Market. The Market will be closed during the month of August.

Design Review Approval since April 3, 2008 Meeting – 201 South Florida Avenue, MidFlorida Federal Credit Union, fence as dumpster enclosure. A conversation was had with the owner of the fence company about the type of fencing preferred in Downtown. It was suggested that all general contractors also be notified of that preference.

DLP REPORT: Executive Director Julie Townsend distributed copies of the first DLP newsletter, *Downtown Dish*. She noted that First Friday for May is coming up and that the Downtown Farmers Curb Market’s Spring Art Festival is the next day. She reported there were five new potential DLP members. There is a CSX rally planned for Monday, 4/21. Julie apologized for what she called the “mischaracterization and zealotry” of the meeting held by the DLP on

April 8th. She stated that there has been considerable discussion amongst retailers in Downtown about what is perceived to be slow progress of the Retail Recruitment Committee and frustration about a quick fix. All LDDA Board and Committee meetings are open to the public. People who have questions or concerns are welcome to attend meetings and encouraged to call or make an appointment with staff to clarify issues. It was explained that the process is not intended to be a front-line effort to get tenants into buildings, but rather a concerted approach to make Downtown Lakeland an appealing option for successful businesses to locate. Business is slow now for most retailers, and there is frustration among some business owners.

CITY COMMISSIONER REPORT: Jim Verplanck reported that Hauger-Bunch Realty received a Beautification Award for the landscaping at their building on South Kentucky Avenue.

The TIF agreement for Landmark Properties was approved by the City Commission.

The conditional use on the former Lillian's property was withdrawn and Linksters at 209 E. Main Street will open on Friday (4/18).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: David Hallock stated that by the next LDDA Board meeting he will have met with Anne to come up with a breakdown of committees and/or staff responsibilities for action steps under the 2008 Priority Goals and a timeline for accomplishment.

David asked about what the space next to Harry's (formerly Pottery by the Park) is going to be. It is Anne's understanding that owner Bill Wakeman is converting the space into a private dining facility. There was an announcement in today's newspaper that Gosh Express at 246 North Kentucky will open for business in June or July.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Federal Building Update – The City is in an exploratory mode.

May 1, 2008 LDDA Board Meeting – The Board agreed by consensus to start the regularly scheduled Board meeting on May 1 at 9 a.m. instead of 8 a.m. to allow members to attend the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast that morning at 7:30 a.m.

CSX Update – Anne included a copy of the amendment authored by Seth McKeel concerning commuter rail programs and intercity rail transportation.

No-Trespass Signs in Feltrim Redevelopment Area – Signs have been posted at each entrance to the area.

Two Bills – The FRA (Florida Redevelopment Association) has alerted its members to two bills in the Florida House of Representatives. One limits projects that may be paid for with TIF revenues. The other adds additional new reporting requirements.

NEW BUSINESS

Lobbyist – Chris McLaughlin asked again about the possibility of hiring a lobbyist to represent the City's / LDDA's position in opposition to the CSX proposed plan. He thinks that the City has lost momentum and that LDDA should talk with Paula Dockery to discuss possible strategies. Jim Verplanck stated that efforts are being made that make the City's position clear to legislators.

Graffiti – There has been an increase in graffiti on Downtown business buildings. It should be corrected immediately so it doesn't increase in Downtown. Anne will check on a police program of removing / painting over graffiti. It is a Code Enforcement issue for property owners.

Homelessness – Anne has contacted the Mayor of Charleston to find out how they manage the homeless. There are new panhandling bans in Orlando and in Miami that we will investigate. The City is working to find solution for "our" homeless. Jerry stated that a sign on property in windows allowing officers to remove trespassers must be renewed annually. Police Chief Roger Boatner thought those signs were a good idea. Robin Tillett is working on design that would be easy to use for all property types – whether in/on a window or door, or posted outdoors.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 AM.

The next LDDA Board Meeting will be Thursday, May 1, 2008 at 9 a.m. in the City Commission Conference Room. Please note earlier starting time due to Mayor's Prayer Breakfast to be held at 7:30 a.m. that morning.

Reminder: The LDDA Board Meeting originally scheduled for Thursday, May 15 has been cancelled due to the LEDC's Annual Breakfast.