

MINUTES

**LDDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
Thursday, February 13, 2003
8:00 AM**

PRESENT: Jerry Herring, Greg Mugg, Kevin Jones, Jim Verplanck, Janet Tucker, Joe Mawhinney, Chris McLaughlin, Tammy Sakagawa, Randy Mathews, Steve Scruggs, Tim McCausland, Anne Furr, Becky Abel

ABSENT:

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Jerry Herring at 8:00 AM.

PRESERVATION ALLEY UPDATE: Tim McCausland, City Attorney, reported that investigations continue as to the cause of cracks and damage to two buildings on Preservation Alley. Tim stated that he was meeting later today with Gaines Jewelers and their attorney in the hopes of reaching a reasonable solution.

MINUTES: Jim Verplanck moved to approve the Minutes of the January 23, 2003 Board of Directors' Meeting. Motion seconded by Janet Tucker. Motion passed 7-0.

HIGH TECH PRESENTATION: Steve Scruggs, Lakeland Economic Development Council Director, shared a PowerPoint presentation on attracting high tech firms to Lakeland. The most important barrier Lakeland faces is the perception of a poor educational system. Steve pointed out that if Lakeland schools were considered independent of the rest of Polk County schools, then Lakeland would be among the top education areas in the state. Also, low wages in Polk County create a large number of residents who are among the working poor. Lakeland, and especially the downtown, has many positive factors that can attract high tech companies and Steve's team is working on strategies to capitalize on those strengths.

COMMITTEES: Jerry Herring, Chairman, appointed the following Directors to ad-hoc committees:
Finance and Audit: Kevin Jones - Chairman, Chris McLaughlin, Joe Mawhinney
Flowers and Flags: Janet Tucker
Downtown Residential: Jim Verplanck and Jerry Herring
Design Review (already appointed): Jim Verplanck – Chairman, Jerry Herring, Greg Mugg, Chris McLaughlin

LEMON STREET CELEBRATION – PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD: Anne Furr stated that the Lemon Street Celebration is scheduled for April 15, 2003 from 5-7:30 p.m. In the past, the LDDA has sponsored the prize for the People's Choice Award in the amount of \$500. The \$500 is budgeted in the approved FY 2003 budget. Jim Verplanck moved to sponsor the 2003 People's Choice Award in the amount of \$500. Motion seconded by Janet Tucker. Motion passed 6-0. (Chris McLaughlin temporarily stepped out of the meeting during this vote.)

MIDTOWN AND DIXIELAND CRA GOALS: Tammy Sakagawa, CRA Coordinator, reported on the results of the Midtown's and Dixieland's respective planning retreats.

**Dixieland Community Redevelopment Area
Results of 2003 Planning Retreat – December 7, 2002**

AREAS OF CONCERN/INTEREST:

- **TRAFFIC/ACCESS** – Complete a study of vehicle and pedestrian traffic (includes alleyways and parking issues).

- **PUBLIC INVESTMENT** – Identify and implement public improvements like streetscape and container gardens.
- **IDENTITY** – Develop common design or visual theme through signage and entry features to mark the entrances into the district and entrances to the historic neighborhoods.
- **USE** – Continue to support the district as a mix of office and retail businesses. Concentrate retail businesses (both specialty and national) in areas with the most functional access and parking conditions – in particular, encouraging redevelopment activities in the area between Palmetto and Cresap/McDonald Streets.
- **PROMOTION** – Create a retail/office organization similar to the Downtown Lakeland Partnership to do strategic promotions and marketing.
- **NEIGHBORHOODS** – Buffer residential neighborhoods from commercial and office uses. Support neighborhood initiatives- strong residential is good for the district.

PROJECTS:

1. Complete a **Corridor Study and Streetscape Master Plan for S. Florida Avenue** from W. Walnut Street to Lenox Street. The study will look at the safety and function of the street, as well as the function of the alley systems. Parking and access will be critical to the study, as well as the development of a unified “look” for the corridor.
2. Investigate the development and implementation of **design or appearance guidelines** for the district.
3. Develop a **retail/office organization** similar to the Downtown Lakeland Partnership to promote the district.

Mid Town Community Redevelopment Area

Results of 2003 Planning Retreat – January 15, 2003

AREAS OF CONCERN/INTEREST:

- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** – Make N. Florida Avenue viable for businesses and support the HOPE VI redevelopment. Explore the revitalization of the “strip malls” and mini-malls at the edges of neighborhoods or in neighborhoods. Provide services for residents and employees in the district as well as provide job and business opportunities for residents;
- **HOUSING** – Need for more “affordable” housing and improved quality. More housing choices for all income levels;
- **TRAFFIC/SAFETY** – Safety and traffic issues need to be addressed- particularly on the most heavily-traveled streets;
- **IMAGE** – Develop design principles for the corridors to avoid unattractive development. Develop critical “visible” properties to show reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods.
- **BUILD ON SUCCESSES** - Bring the successes of Downtown redevelopment northward.

PROJECTS:

1. Move forward with a **Comprehensive Housing Strategy**- to examine the supply and demand for all types of housing (for all income levels) and to begin to develop strategies for encouraging infill development, new development and reinvestment in residential projects in Mid Town. Process will help to develop partnerships between groups that develop/fund/manage housing at all income levels- process should help some groups to reorient their programs/products to be more effective and to identify gaps in current services;
2. Complete a **Corridor Study and Master Plan for the US 98 Corridor** (N. Florida Avenue) from the In-Town Bypass to Bella Vista. The study should look at safety and function of the street, as well as define a unified look for the corridor. Most importantly, the study will identify potential redevelopment sites through the corridor and make specific recommendations re: land use, zoning, use, and design parameters. This study will include a small-area study of the area north of the In Town Bypass bounded by Iowa Street, N. Florida and Memorial Boulevard. The goal of the small-area study will be to work with existing property owners and community members to define the future of that area and recommend appropriate regulatory changes and/or development incentives to effectuate the redevelopment process.
3. See progress on the development of at least one project in Mid Town due to information/assistance from the Housing Strategy or the Corridor Study. We anticipate the project to be the LHA commercial site at N. Florida Avenue and 10th Street or a cluster of privately owned sites at N. Florida Avenue and the In Town Bypass.

Tammy’s goal is to see that at least one of the stated projects is completed in each district by year’s end.

Jerry Herring stated that the LDDA has a responsibility to be a good example of development and progress to the other newer districts. Jim Verplanck stated that the city's landscaping project along North Florida Avenue was underway and would provide a smooth transition between the downtown and Midtown.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Design Review – Certificate of Review issued since January 9, 2003 meeting:

- a. 223 S. Florida Ave., Jones Edmunds & Associates – wall sign.
- b. 225 E. Lemon St., SmithBarney – two wall signs
- c. 225 E. Lemon St., Chase Manhattan Mortgage Corp., awning with sign
- d. 102 W. Orange St., DP Tech – two wall signs, one sign over entrance

Downtown Park and Ride – The contract to provide the fencing for the Oak Street lot has been awarded to Williams Fence Company and the installation work should begin in a few days. Anne is not sure about when the signs for the Park & Ride will be completed and installed. Steve Githens is working on the creation of a brochure to explain the program. It is hoped that the program can begin the first Monday in March (3/3/03).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Jerry Herring thanked all for attending the City Commission retreat.

CITY COMMISSION REPORT: Jim Verplanck announced that Roger Boatner had been selected to replace outgoing Police Chief Cliff Diamond. Chief Diamond will be moving to another position in Washington, DC on March 15, 2003. Jim stated that the City Commission set priorities for the coming year at its retreat. One priority is to build a new fire station on the northeast side of town. Another priority is to provide funding for several police officers (formerly funded by grants). These two priorities would be funded by slight increases in property taxes. There will also be a slight electric rate increase. A fuel adjustment charge will be added to customer's bills beginning April 1, 2003. The Commission voiced support for the new director of Lakeland Electric and how he is going about the business of running the utility. City Administration presented a road improvement program, suggesting the possibility of the need to raise property taxes to fund it. Another priority is to expand the Lakeland Center to make it adequate for the demands of the market. The Commission will continue to support annexations and growth as appropriate.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Property Database – Tammy shared that she has a sample CD software program that could be used in all three CRA districts to individually store data on properties. The company that creates that software is out of Philadelphia. They have stated that they can customize aspects of the software as needed and that the program will be Access-based and user-friendly. The software would cost \$5,000. Tammy will continue to investigate this and report back to the LDDA at a later date. Anne stated that Brent Philpot is working with the Community Development Department and will have time and ability to input data for our property database needs. Whether software is purchased for this project or not, Anne proposed that LDDA will need to pay Brent directly for his work on the database. No decision was made at this time.

Overhang at 310 E. Main Street – Mark Clements, Attorney, agreed to pay up to \$3,000 for the new curb, pavers and street restoration to extend the curb so that it will go beyond his building canopy. The LDDA will pay the additional dollars out of the budgeted FY 2003 CRA streetscape account. According to Public Works, the cost to construct the new curb, pavers and the street restoration will be approximately \$6,000.

LDDA Website – Jonathon Ortiz and Gus Palas from Allnet Consulting Services, Inc. (LDDA website host) met with Becky to look at the LDDA website, discuss concerns and needed updates. They will send the LDDA a proposal.

Thank-you Letter from Swansation – Anne shared a letter from Donna Henricks and Linda Rice, Swansation Co-chairmen, thanking the LDDA for underwriting the cost of the Swansation Trolley Tours

Joe Tedder, Tax Collector – 81.10 % of taxes for the LDDA boundaries have been collected as of December 2002.

NEW BUSINESS:

Marketing Study for Carlisle Group – Anne distributed the short version of the study.

Women’s Celebration – Anne shared a letter received from Anne Kearton regarding a sponsorship request of \$300 for a Women’s Celebration to be held in Munn Park on March 1, 2003. No action was taken on the request.

ICSC Conference – Jerry Herring will attend the International Council of Shopping Centers Spring Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada in May 2003. Due to the fact that the CRA (City) is a member of ICSC, LDDA Directors also qualify to register for the conference at the reduced rate for members.

Janet Tucker moved that the LDDA pay for Jerry’s registration expense of \$315.00 for this conference. Motion seconded by Jim Verplanck. Motion passed 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

The next regular LDDA Board meeting will be held on Thursday, February 27, 2003, from 8 a.m. – 10 a.m. in the City Commission Conference Room.