

MINUTES
LDDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
City Commission Conference Room
Thursday, August 19, 2004
8:00 AM

PRESENT: Chris McLaughlin, Jerry Herring, Janet Tucker, Joe Mawhinney, Kevin Jones, Greg Mugg, Jim Verplanck, Anne Furr, Becky Abel

ABSENT:

MINUTES: Chris McLaughlin moved and Greg Mugg seconded the motion to accept the Minutes of the August 5, 2004 Board Meeting. Motion passed 7-0.

COMMITTEES:

Finance – Joe Mawhinney presented the Treasurer’s report for July. Total expenses for July were \$32,989.80. Year to date net income was \$34,549.08. Anne pointed out that 9800 – Contribution to LAMTD was high because it included six months of billing for the trolley.

The budget changes from July were indicated on the front of the report: 1) \$660 was moved from 6950 – Unexpended Funds to 8400 – Transportation Travel & Entertainment for conferences; and 2) A corrected figure of \$216,788.00 was included for 6100 - Tax Receipts (annual budget).

Jerry Herring moved and Joe Mawhinney seconded the motion to approve the proposed FY 2005 LDDA Budget for the two public hearings in September 2004. Motion passed 7-0.

Other samples of financial reports were shared. The Board preferred the format used for the July report, but requested the addition of a column which would show YTD percent of budget.

Design Review – Certificate of Review Request: 225 S. Florida Avenue – InVision HR – The Committee reviewed a photograph of the proposed sign. The sign would need a border and would need to have the telephone number removed in order to be approved.

In the same photograph, a Twistee Treat sign is visible (same building). It was never approved. Anne will talk with the business owner to have it removed.

DLP UPDATE: LeRoy Bradley reported that the DLP Annual Meeting / Luncheon / Auction would be held at The Lakeland Center on October 6, 2004. The President of Florida Southern College, Anne B. Kerr, will be the speaker. The DLP is getting ready for the annual poinsettia orders. August 5th's First Friday was very successful with a large turnout.

CITY COMMISSION REPORT: Jim Verplanck shared that the Commission had decided to delay several projects in order to make up for losses / shortfalls at Lakeland Electric. A total of \$10,000,000 in projects will be delayed. Phase I of the Lake Mirror Park (Main Street realignment) will proceed as scheduled due to bonded financing. The City Manager is working hard to reduce costs and to streamline services that the City provides.

Many commendations are due to City workers for their hard work during the Hurricane Charley recovery effort.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT: Janet Tucker reported that she presented the quarterly report to the City Commission on August 16, 2004. The main topics were wayfinding, smokeless containers and the feasibility study for the northeast expansion area. There were no questions or concerns expressed by the Commission.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Creative Cities Summit – Creative Tampa Bay, Inc. is hosting a Creative Cities Summit in St. Petersburg on Thursday, September 9, 2004. The agenda has several items that are of interest to LDDA so Anne plans to attend. The cost is \$149.99 and would come from line item 8400 – Transportation, Travel & Entertainment.

Art on the Lemon Street Promenade – CBA is purchasing “Tier” by Ann Melanie from Greenville, NC to go in front of their building at 331 S. Florida Avenue. This will be the first piece of art that has been purchased from the Florida Outdoor Sculpture Exhibit by the private sector. The piece will remain on Lemon Street until the exhibit closes in March 2005.

Smokeless Containers – Anne shared a second example of the smokeless containers.

Wayfinding Report – Anne received a call from Cloud Gehshan saying that they are pleased to have been selected as the number one firm and will have a proposal to LDDA by next week.

LDDA Board Election – Anne reported that the Board will have two open seats as Kevin Jones and Greg Mugg have decided not to run for election. Qualifying for candidates is August 23-27, 2004.

Lake Mirror Tower – Anne reported that she had been in contact with Gene Strickland, who would like to open a leasing office in downtown by October 1, 2004. The project is on schedule. The elevator will be removed soon and streetscape work will begin on the south and west sides of the building. The streetscape is planned to be completed in time for the Christmas parade in early December.

NEW BUSINESS:

Properties in Expansion Area – Anne has discussed the two properties for sale on North Vermont Avenue (411 and 410) with Mr. Willers. He is willing to sell the 411 property for the price offered. Anne was told by the City Attorney’s office that closing would take longer than 30 days due to title searches. Realtors and brokers on the LDDA board felt that the title search would not take that long. Anne will talk with Jerry Herring to expedite the sale.

For 410 N. Vermont, Mr. Willers hopes to get a better offer than what Anne proposed. After some discussion, it was decided that a contract offer should be written for the previously determined purchase price with a 10-day response time.

Jim Verplanck was excused.

RETAIL NEEDS FOR DOWNTOWN (Brainstorming): The Board was given a summary of retail in downtown, with the total number of retailers in various categories. When asked what types of retail the Board would like to add to the current mix, suggestions included: a New York-style deli, inexpensive places to eat lunch, a newsstand, a card shop.

Janet reminded the Board that Tom Moriarity had suggested that Lakeland’s downtown would be most likely able to recruit successful local retailers to downtown rather than nationwide chains. She shared some examples of local businesses that she got from the phonebook: Babe’s, Bits of Art, Encore Consignments, Gadzooks, Rave, Lorna’s, Cleghorn’s and Little Giggles.

The Board discussed who the downtown customer is, what the hook is, what our identity is, what our customer base is and what our strengths are. We looked at existing clusters in the downtown.

The Board was surprised and pleased to see a total of nineteen restaurants on the summary. They thought this to be a strength - that marketing efforts for downtown should focus on the variety and uniqueness of downtown restaurants. The slogan, “Downtown Lakeland – Restaurants with Character” was a suggestion. A public relations firm could be hired to develop a marketing plan to capitalize on this strength and also to work on “branding” for downtown, which could include a new logo. **Chris McLaughlin moved and Jerry Herring seconded the motion to have Anne develop an RFP to hire a Public Relations firm to market downtown as a destination with a budget of \$50,000 for the image campaign. Motion passed 6-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

The next LDDA Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, September 2, 2004 in the City Commission Conference Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall, at 8 a.m.