

MINUTES
LDDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
City Commission Chambers
September 4, 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, Tamara Sakagawa, Justin Wilson, Patricia Hendler, LPD Officer Michael Link, Rick Grube, Mark Scherer, Chris Bishop, Kurt Phillips

ABSENT:

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

MINUTES: Janet Tucker moved to accept the Minutes of the August 21, 2008 Regular LDDA Board of Directors Meeting. Motion seconded by Jerry Herring. Motion passed 6-0.

RED CARPET NIGHT, POLK THEATRE: Janet Tucker reported that this event, on Saturday, September 13th, will benefit the Polk Theatre. It will feature the debut of the Lakeland Opera Theatre and other enjoyable local entertainment emceed by Joe Mawhinney. VIP tickets are \$100, Preferred Seating tickets are \$50, and General Admission is \$25. All ticket holders are invited to an “alley party” afterwards and VIP ticket holders will have a cocktail party prior to the event. Janet encouraged all to attend and help support the Polk Theatre.

COMMITTEES:

Downtown Farmers Curb Market – Janet Tucker reported that the Market will reopen September 6 after being closed during the month of August. Vendors continue to be added and we will have more than thirty on opening day. Music will be provided. Janet encouraged everyone to visit the Market this weekend for its reopening.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE ESTABLISHMENT REGULATION: Justin Wilson, Senior Planner, Community Development Department, brought for discussion the suggested update to the regulations on alcoholic beverages. The existing document is confusing and out of date. Proposed changes clarify the regulations, as recommended by LDI. The only difference is that the City would be able to revoke a business tax license if there are five violations of the regulations. LDDA’s backing of the update is requested. On September 16th, the update will go before the Planning & Zoning Board for the first reading and the second reading would be October 21st. The City Commission will hear the update in November.

Chris McLaughlin arrived.

Joe Mawhinney had a concern about the three-hundred foot distance requirement. He said the requirement assumes that the establishment serving alcohol is inherently bad and churches and schools must be protected. It allows for a church or a school to move into the perimeter of an establishment’s three-hundred feet – that would be their choice – but that then creates a new perimeter of 300 feet from the school or church for any new establishments that serve alcohol. Jim Verplanck said he thinks that there is relief for that situation in the code, that a distance variance can be sought.

Joe Mawhinney was excused.

Ford Heacock expressed concern about the negative references to establishments serving alcohol. LDDA actively works to encourage nightlife in Downtown with quality establishments. While it is recognized that regulation is necessary, the Board did not want to cast a negative pallor upon all such establishments. It was suggested that the intent statement be re-written. Ford suggested that the statement could be written objectively and without opinion. **Ford Heacock moved and Jim Verplanck seconded the motion to remove the word “negative” which appears twice in the Intent statement 31.01.01.00. Motion passed 6-0.**

TWO DAYS OF POLK COUNTY – BIKE RACE OCTOBER 4th: Chris Bishop and Kurt Phillips presented plans for a bicycle race on Saturday, October 4th through Downtown Lakeland at twilight. That means that the organizers would close the pertinent streets at 2 p.m. and reopen them by 10 p.m. A race of this type will usually attract about 300 athletes, about 90% of them from out of town. It is proposed that the race be brought farther north than past races in order to showcase Downtown restaurants and retail. Because of construction issues on Lime Street, Don Nix has said the race would need to be no further south than Lemon Street, so the organizers would like the course to go north from Main Street to Bay Street, using Tennessee and Kentucky Avenues. There is concern from the Lakeland Police Department that the train crossings on Kentucky and Tennessee Avenues would not be safe because of the number of trains. Representatives from the City’s Traffic Division, Rick Grube and Mark Sherer were concerned with the impact of closing Main Street during the race. While concerns are understood, the representatives from Traffic and from LPD were asked how we can make this event work. Lt. Link said he could work with the rail hazard for this event if people were posted on the line with radios to warn of oncoming trains. Extra police officers will be hired for coverage at the railroad tracks and the road barricades. **Ford Heacock moved and Jerry Herring seconded the motion to approve support for this quality event in Downtown. Motion passed 6-0.** All parties were commended for coming together to work for a solution. Safe, clean events in Downtown are an asset and we should do all we can to encourage such events.

COMMITTEES CONTINUED:

Retail Recruitment Committee - Committee Chairman Ford Heacock reported that Kevin Flynn with Kiku Obata & Company was in Lakeland August 25th and met with groups all day. Different thoughts, colors and styles were presented to participants. Ford was pleased with the engagement of the community for this effort. He said that the next meeting of the Committee is on September 15th at 8 a.m. and we will discuss the draft branding positioning statement. Ford suggested that when the positioning statement is approved, we solicit the opinion of local marketing business people to add professionalism to the choice-making for the logo rather than leaving that decision up to laymen on the committee or in focus groups.

DOWNTOWN CRA ADVISORY BOARD: No Business.

DLP REPORT: Executive Director Julie Townsend reported that the September First Friday will be a salute to educators. This weekend, the Lakeland Art Festival will take place on Saturday and Sunday. People from the Polk Theatre will be on hand to promote Red Carpet Night and sell subscriptions to the theatre and tickets to their event. The new map and brochure is being readied for distribution at the Annual Luncheon and Auction on October 1st. Reservations to the Luncheon can be made online. There will be three speakers and the theme is “Downtown: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.” The holiday issue of *Downtown Dish* will increase by 4 pages and is due to be published following the luncheon. As of Monday (September 8th), information about ordering holiday poinsettias will be on the website: www.downtownlakelandfl.com.

CITY COMMISSIONER REPORT: Jim Verplanck said that City Manager Doug Thomas had done a good job of presenting the budget at the City’s tentative budget hearing on September 3rd. The City’s final budget hearing will be September 15th.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT: David Hallock had no report.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Bloomberg Building – At the last LDDA meeting, Directors instructed Anne to contact the new owners of the Bloomberg Building to discuss new leases offered to the current tenants. After some conversations with the tenants and the owner representative (Andy Norman), it was agreed that each current tenant will be offered the option of extending their month-to-month lease by one month at the rate of \$12.50 per square foot in order to allow more time to make a decision on whether to stay or move. If the tenant decides to stay, one-, two-, three- and four-year lease terms have been offered. At this time, Silver Ring and Main Street Creamery have committed to a four-year lease. The Style Hat Shop is leaving to move her shop next to her home. Clippership Barber Shop has extended her lease for a month to make a decision.

Development Review Team – Concept Plan Review - McKeel Elementary met with the DRT on Wednesday, September 3rd to present a new two story building that they wish to build on their school plant. The proposed building is metal and would be placed where the current playground is located. There was concern about the metal building. The LDDA Design Review Committee will review the project for design and signage.

Rail Summit – Jim Studiale has taken the lead for the planning of the Rail Summit. Dates are still being considered with October 15th the first choice. The date should be finalized in the next week. It will be a one day event hosted in Lakeland with a regional focus. The next planning meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 5th.

Resolution 08-03 – Anne corrected a figure from last night’s budget hearing. The correct total for expenditures is \$826,881.

Lakeland Vision: Visioning Efforts – Anne encouraged Board Members to participate in the opportunities to contribute to the visioning effort. Various meetings are set for community input.

Bike Racks in Downtown – There have been requests for the addition of bike racks in the parking garages and in the parks. Chuck Barmby has put together a committee to plan for the future use of bicycle racks placed throughout the City. Jerry Herring said that more people would probably ride bicycles regularly if there were places to shower. He suggested that we encourage new development and redevelopers to consider adding that kind of facility. Ford Heacock added that in the near future, electric cars will be a reality for many and that garages and other facilities should plan for providing hook-ups for charging those types of vehicles.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

The next LDDA Board Meeting will be Thursday, September 18, 2008 at 8 a.m. in the City Commission Conference Room.

David D. Hallock, Jr., Chairman

Date

Becky Abel, Administrative Assistant

Date