

MINUTES
LDDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
City Commission Chambers
July 17, 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

ABSENT:

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

MINUTES: Janet Tucker moved to accept the Minutes of the June 19, 2008 regular LDDA Board of Directors Meeting. Motion seconded by Jerry Herring. Motion passed 5-0.

Joe Mawhinney and Chris McLaughlin arrived.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jerry Herring, Treasurer, highlighted the June financial statements. Income for June was \$18,254.14, and expenses were \$16,774.21. Year to date income was \$551,991.87 and year to date expenses were \$448,507.97. The report will be filed for audit.

Downtown Farmers Curb Market – At this time, expenses for the Downtown Farmers Curb Market have exceeded budgeted amounts by \$1,417.45. In order to fund ongoing operating costs for the next three months and the purchase of a Rubbermaid storage shed for Jim Luna (will be less than \$500), money needs to be transferred from Unappropriated Surplus. **Jerry Herring moved and Jim Verplanck seconded the motion to move \$10,000 from 6950-Unappropriated Surplus to 9750-Farmers Curb Market to cover expenses. Motion passed 7-0.**

Certify LDDA Millage Rate for FY 2009 – Last year, the Board adopted the rolled back rate, which was 1.9366 mills. The rollback rate this year is 1.8744 mills. The maximum LDDA can set is 2 mills. Chris stated that if, according to the rules we have to advertise our rate as a tax increase, this would not be the time to raise taxes. **Jim Verplanck moved and Janet Tucker seconded the motion to set the millage rate at 1.9366.** Joe Mawhinney said that he remembered that the actions the Board took last year have some affect on the rate we can set for this year, and he wondered what the limitations may be. Anne will ask City of Lakeland Finance Director, Greg Finch, to attend the next Board Meeting to address this issue. **Motion passed 7-0.**

DOWNTOWN CRA ADVISORY BOARD: No Business

COMMITTEES:

Design Review Requests:

422 S. Florida Avenue, Lakeland Realty, Inc. replace existing awning
129 Lake Beulah Drive, Tru Temp Controls, ground sign face change

Jim Verplanck, Design Review Chairman, stated that the Committee should plan to stay after the meeting today to make decisions on the above applications.

Retail Recruitment Committee:

Committee Chairman Ford Heacock stated that the June 17 and 23 Committee Minutes were included in agenda packets. The July 8 Committee Meeting Minutes were not yet available. At the last LDDA Meeting (June 19), the Board voted on a split vote of 5-1 to approve moving forward with Kiku Obata & Company. The following day an article was in *The Ledger* that was a little

concerning, so a special meeting of the Committee was called to have the members reconfirm their vote to engage Kiku Obata & Company. There was understanding for concern for the amount of money to be spent, but there is commitment to support and pursue the initiative. Kevin Jones, in his absence from the Committee's meeting, wrote an e-mail of his opinion, and Ford read the e-mail aloud.

Ford continued to share that the Committee has been considering the other aspects of its work. One initiative is branding (which is underway), the second is retail recruitment - Part 'A' being the strategy and planning and Part 'B' being the knocking on doors to fill vacancies, and the third is engaging a firm to provide the useful data needed for filling vacancies. John Hutto proposed that DLP may want to make the bid for handling the retail recruitment element. All of the initiatives unfortunately do have a price tag, but we feel strongly that we should continue to move forward.

Anne said that there have been 8 responses to the RFP for the data. The Committee will be getting the proposals to evaluate. The evaluations will be discussed at the Committee's August 1 meeting, in Ford's office.

We are moving forward with Kiku Obata and Company. Anne said that the company's schedule includes arrival on Sunday, July 27, with a tour and dinner that evening and focus group meetings on Monday, July 28. LDDA is currently scheduled to meet with the firm's representatives from 8-8:45 a.m. on 7/28. Due to a suggestion, Anne asked if Board Members would rather eat lunch with the representatives that day in the City Commission Conference Room (noon – 1 p.m.). The general consensus was that would be preferable, but Anne will send an e-mail to all after calendars are consulted.

Chris McLaughlin asked to respond. He said that he read the article and disagreed with Kevin Jones' e-mailed assessment that there was disinformation and distortion of the facts. Chris said that he stood by the article and feels he was quoted accurately. He is supportive of the effort, but is still confused and concerned about how we reconcile Kiku Obata's efforts with what has already been done by Cloud Geshan. Are we going to be tying their hands?

Janet Tucker said that Cloud Geshan did not just give a sign, but locations and structure of signage. All components of Downtown, including Cloud Geshan work, has been sent to Kiku Obata. Janet said that the sign ordinance with the City is largely what is holding up implementation of signage. Anne elaborated that the projecting signs and the sidewalk sign issues for Downtown have not been resolved. Cloud Geshan did both wayfinding and sidewalk signs. We could move forward at any time with the wayfinding, but as we develop a brand, we probably want to include the new brand. Ford said that arguably, the Cloud Geshan work was a premature "fourth element" in our initiatives; that necessarily some branding elements (the colors, the flying swan) were needed to fill the space as a sign design was created. Joe said that since there is just one sign, it is not a big deal to redesign if we like a new design better.

DLP REPORT: Executive Director Julie Townsend reported that First Friday will be August 1st, with the Dog Days theme and plenty of entertainers. Platform Florida is partnering with Arts on the Park that evening also, so there will be lots of activity. August 12th is the next Downtown at Dusk networking event to be held at Lake Mirror Tower. The summer issue of the newsletter has gone out and she says it is well-received. The new map and brochure is in the works and will be ready for distribution at the Annual Auction and Luncheon October 1st.

Julie asked whether it was the intention of the LDDA to adopt the new logo. Since the DLP has adopted the Cloud Geshan logo, and that the DLP is the marketing arm, with publications like posters, maps, newsletters, and a website with lots of traffic. Ford says that we

are not in a position to require anything, but hopes that DLP will be on board with whatever the outcome is. Yes, there are costs associated with changing stationery and other items, but those sorts of things could be done over time as supplies run out, etc. Ford also cautioned about referring to the flying swan as “the Cloud Geshan logo”, since that is not what the LDDA asked them to create. Joe said that in the contract negotiations with Kiku Obata & Company, there has been discussion about protecting the finished product with a copyright.

Julie was asked about the article in the newsletter about the potential of Segway tours. Jim Luna talked with Julie about partnering to do the historic tours on Segways, as well as other kinds of tours around Lakeland.

Ford asked about a joint celebration focusing on the openings of five new businesses in Downtown. Ford would like Anne to send all Board members contact information so each could welcome the new businesses. Janet asked about putting together a grand opening. David said that John Hutto said he would come back with a proposal to have a big grand opening maybe in September. The five businesses are Linksters, Gosh! Asian Bistro, SugaRush, Cask & Barrel and the scrapbook store. Julie mentioned that the DLP blog mentions the new businesses. She also said that Gosh’s back room is available as a meeting space.

CITY COMMISSIONER REPORT: Jim Verplanck said that the City Commission renewed the lease of Garden Bistro in the Magnolia Building for another five years. Entered into a parking agreement for five years with Anu Saxena for 15 spaces and MidFlorida Federal Credit Union for 60 spaces. There has been discussion by the Commission on whether to hire a firm to represent the City concerning the CSX issue.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT: David Hallock had no report.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Gosh! Asian Bistro - During the application process for a 2 COP license for beer and wine by Gosh, Anne was informed that a letter was needed stating that the LDDA had voted in the majority to support the proposed use. Since we were unaware of this and she didn’t want the opening of the establishment to be delayed, she wrote on the application that we supported the use and told Permitting that she would discuss the matter with the Board. She is in favor of this addition to the Standards for Alcoholic Beverage Establishments in Areas Zoned C-6 and C-7 (article 31.01.05.00). I have included the draft article in your agenda packet. It is another step in the process where LDDA will have the opportunity not to delay, but to review the quality of establishments that plan to open in Downtown. As you know, the primary business of Gosh! is a restaurant which is open Monday through Saturday for breakfast, lunch and dinner. **Jerry Herring moved and Janet Tucker seconded the motion that the LDDA support a 2 COP license for Gosh! Asian Bistro. Motion passed 7-0.**

Florida Redevelopment Association Annual Conference - Tampa, Florida is the site of the FRA conference. It will be held Wednesday, October 22 through the 24th. Anne would like to attend and will e-mail the agenda to Board members to look over to determine whether there are workshops Board members would be interested in attending. The cost is \$295 to register. There is money already budgeted for conferences that would cover Anne’s registration. **Jerry Herring moved and Jim Verplanck seconded the motion to approve Anne’s registration for this conference. Motion passed 7-0.** Jerry encouraged the Executive Director to attend as many relevant conferences as possible.

IRS increases business mile rates - Anne received an IRS notice from Baylis & Company that it had increased business mileage rates from 50.5 cents to 58.5 cents for July – December of 2008 because of the cost of fuel. Becky is reimbursed for local errands she does (packet delivery, bank transactions, etc.) and Anne is reimbursed for out of county travel. **Joe Mawhinney moved and Jerry Herring seconded the motion that LDDA increase its rate to reflect the change. Motion passed 7-0.**

LDDA Election – The LDDA Election is run by the City Clerk’s office. The LDDA Election Notice was in agenda packets and is on the LDDA website. Qualifying is noon on Monday, August 18 to noon, Friday, August 22nd.

CSX Update – Ron Weaver’s engagement has been ceased since the aggregation of the initial 318 acre parcel purchased by CSX with other lands is unlikely at his time. City staff will continue to monitor the process and offer public comment at the upcoming workshops and public hearings. The FL Department of Transportation’s Public Workshop 7/10/08 in Bartow was to explain the scope of the study and receive comments. The standard presentation of boards on easels was set up around the room with staff available to answer individual questions. There was no formal presentation with questions and answers.

VISIT Florida Grant – \$5,000 was received by LDDA as our reimbursement for the Day & Night brochure partnering with Polk Museum of Art, Explorations V, and Frank Lloyd Wright’s “Child of the Sun” at Florida Southern College. This was the second year of the grant reimbursement.

Executive Director’s Review – It is almost time for Anne’s annual review. The Board decided to have Chairman David Hallock get an evaluation tool out to all Board members with a response deadline. He will appoint a committee to compile the results and will discuss how to meet with Anne to follow. It should be treated as a public meeting and the press will be notified.

NEW BUSINESS:

Backflow Preventers – Every time there are new businesses, there are new challenges. The current challenge is the installation of backflow preventers (BFP). The City is getting a lot of pressure from the State Department of Health to get BFPs installed in all new businesses. David Pipkin has agreed to pay for the installation of a BFP for SugaRush at 121 S. Kentucky Avenue. In this pilot program, the City of Lakeland would do the work of the installation. Public Works would replace the streetscape with LDDA reimbursing the COL. LDDA would also be responsible to come up with a method to disguise the BFP. There will be costs, however, in taking up and then replacing the streetscape in affected areas. Anne suggested using the dollars in the LDDA budget allocated to 8920.16-Programs. She will come back to the Board with costs. The Board said that we should move forward in seeking solutions to this issue.

CRA Annual Report – These were included in agenda packets.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 AM.

The next LDDA Board Meeting will be Thursday, August 7, 2008 at 8 a.m. in the City Commission Conference Room.