

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT BOARD
MINUTES
Tuesday September 10th 2024

The regular meeting of the Downtown Redevelopment Board was held on Tuesday September 10th, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the City Commission Chambers, Daytona Beach City Hall, 301 S. Ridgewood Avenue, Daytona Beach, Florida. The following People were present:

Board Members Present:

Mr. Kenneth Hunt, Chair
Mr. Pete Zahn, Vice Chair
Mr. John Kamchan
Ms. Sheryl Cook
Mr. Javier Benavente

Board Members Absent:

Mr. Jake Nicely
Mr. Tibor Benke
Mr. James Newman

Staff Members Present:

Mr. Ken Thomas, Redevelopment Director
Mr. Anthony Jackson, Deputy City Attorney
Ms. Michele Toliver, Redevelopment Project Manager
Mrs. Angela Armstrong, Redevelopment Project Manager
Ms. Phebe Fuqua, Redevelopment Project Manager
Mrs. Mandana Carry, Office Specialist III

1. Call to Order

Mr. Hunt called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Mrs. Carry called roll and noted members present as stated above.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was stated by the board.

4. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes from August 6th, 2024, by Mr. Zahn, seconded by Ms. Cook. The motion was carried 5-0.

5. Police Report

Captain Nikolow presented the police report covering August 15th to September 4th. He submits these reports every two weeks to the chief, who then sends them to the city manager. He also noted that they are still waiting for the county's programs to start tracking statistics and conducting special analysis.

During this period, the district responded to 1,774 calls, wrote 315 reports, made 44 felony and 93 misdemeanor arrests, conducted 412 traffic stops, issued 323 tickets, and completed 355 field interview cards and 42 courtesy cards. They also towed 29 vehicles, responded to 53 crashes, made 3 DUI arrests, and handled 24 city ordinance violations. There were 19 arrests for trespassing in parks, 24 for domestic violence, 4 aggravated assaults, and 5 burglaries (3 of which led to arrests). Of the 4 car break-ins, one resulted in an arrest. He reported no major crimes during this time, which is positive for the area.

Officers continued monitoring parks and the area under the bridge for quality-of-life issues, leading to 32 arrests. They also monitored the Jackie Robinson Bridge during games and events, resulting in 11 arrests. The police are working with Walgreens, The Speedway, and Ridgewood to install "No Trespassing" signs, though panhandling enforcement has been challenging.

At the Heritage Inn, the police collaborated with code enforcement to address violations. Lieutenant Harris contacted Ms. Fuqua to explore city grants for bringing the property into compliance. Recent operations led to 3 felony arrests, 1 misdemeanor arrest, and warrant checks for tenants.

A recent traffic initiative focused on school zones and pedestrian safety, resulting in 163 traffic stops and 141 citations. Officers also addressed a beachside complaint on North Halifax.

Upcoming events include Trucktoberfest, Biketoberfest, and Bethune-Cookman University's homecoming, for which they are planning increased staffing and overtime. They're still awaiting confirmation on whether the pep rally will be held at Jackie Robinson Stadium.

Ms. Cook asked whether the current numbers were higher or lower compared to the past. Captain Nikolow responded that the area hasn't experienced many major crimes during his tenure. He noted that most issues are related to quality-of-life concerns. He also mentioned that the security company has been a valuable support to the police department.

6. Presentations

6. A. Delta West/Accent Daytona

Mr. Mrozek mentioned that the agenda needed to be amended because the item under discussion was a request to rezone, which requires an amendment to an existing Planned Development.

Mr. Benavente made a motion to amend the agenda to include the item for a public hearing, which was seconded by Ms. Cook. The motion was carried 5-0.

6. B. 400 S Beach Street-Framework

Ms. Fuqua gave an update on the Framework project, specifically regarding the 400 S Beach Street apartments. She noted that in December 2021, the City of Daytona Beach CRA and the City Commission approved the Framework Downtown Redevelopment Incentive Agreement. By March 2022, the City Commission also approved the Framework Downtown Planned District Agreement and PD-RD rezoning. The site has since been cleared for redevelopment, with plans for 350 dwelling units and parking in compliance with the Land Development Code. The building design meets city thoroughfare and PD standards.

As of January 4, 2022, the Downtown Redevelopment Board recommended the project for approval. Philip Smith, President of Framework Group, LLC, announced that they decided to scrap the phased development plan, speeding up the overall timeline for both the start and completion of the project.

Jessica Gow from Cobb Cole confirmed that the project renderings have not changed. She explained that they recently held a groundbreaking for the demolition of the former buildings on the site. The project is part of an incentive agreement with the city, offering a tax rebate program through the CRA. However, if Framework couldn't complete the construction and the lender had to step in, the incentive agreement would not be transferable to the lender. They worked with the city's legal team to amend this agreement, which was approved by the City Commission about a month ago. Now, with financing in place and permits issued, foundations are being poured. Ms. Gow stated that the estimated construction timeline is 12-18 months, with some staggered certificates of occupancy.

6. C. Daytona Beach Fire Headquarters

Ms. Fuqua provided an update on the proposed fire station, which will be located on Ridgewood, with the back of the building on Seagrave. Mr. Zahn asked about the next steps for the project. Ms. Fuqua explained that they are finalizing the site plan, with only minor modifications needed before moving forward to break ground.

Mr. Mrozek added that the site plan for the fire station had already been approved by the City Commission as part of a public use permit, and the requirement for the plan to go before redevelopment boards was waived because the site falls within two different redevelopment areas. The site plan was approved based on staff review, so it won't return to the board. A \$10 million grant has been secured to assist with the project. While no specific timeline for completion is available, the estimate is a couple of years.

The project engineer shared that a pre-construction meeting was held the day before. They plan to start construction after getting the final building permit and funding approval from the City Commission in early October. The construction is expected to take 16-18 months, with the fire station likely opening in early 2026.

6. D. Quasi-Judicial Hearing Accent Daytona/Delta West Development Plan

Ms. Fuqua presented a request to rezone 10.2 acres from Planned Development-Redevelopment (PD-RD) to support a mixed-use development, which will include residential, retail, and workforce housing. The proposal involves vacating the rights-of-way for York Court and Dowling Court to make room for 300 units, with some allocated for workforce housing at 120% of the Area Median Income and housing for first responders. The development also features enhanced landscaping along Ridgewood Avenue, along with parking additions on Bay Street and Palmetto Avenue. A public hearing with the City Commission will be scheduled alongside the right-of-way vacation.

Staff determined that the proposed rezoning complies with sections 3.4D.3 and 4.8.B of the Land Development Code. They recommend that the Downtown Redevelopment Board forward the rezoning request to the City Commission with a recommendation for approval. The 10.2-acre property is located at the intersection of Ridgewood Avenue and International Speedway Boulevard.

The area is currently zoned PD-RD, with a future designation for mixed-use development. Nearby land uses include residential mixed-use to the north (RD PD2), commercial mixed-use to the south (RD-D3), and commercial/residential mixed-use to the east (PD-RD). To the west is a public park within the RD-D3 zone.

The proposal includes several waivers, particularly for building height, parking ratios, and road modifications, which are considered justified and necessary for the project. The allocation of workforce and first responder housing is still under negotiation with the developer. The project aligns with the city's goals of providing affordable and moderate-income housing and fostering an inclusive residential environment. The development is also consistent with surrounding residential and commercial areas and is expected to enhance the vibrancy of the area by increasing foot traffic and supporting local commerce.

Staff recommends that the Downtown Redevelopment Board forward the rezoning request to the City Commission with a recommendation for approval.

Mr. Benavente asked about the impact of vacating Dowling Court on the office building at the northeast corner of Dowling Court and Ridgewood, specifically how it would affect the property owner. Mr. Mrozek confirmed that discussions with the business owner are still ongoing.

Ms. Gow clarified that the property in question is 6.86 acres, not 10.2 acres as previously stated, with 0.3 acres including Jack White's office building. Mr. White has been consulted and is involved in the rezoning amendment. She corrected that there is no waiver for building height since it was already approved in the original development plan.

The amendment focuses on three main goals:

1. Revising the signage for the multifamily development to 1,120 square feet, with future commercial development following the Land Development Code.
2. Addressing parking needs by improving Palmetto Avenue and adding on-street parking. Over two-thirds of the proposed units will be one-bedroom, with one parking space per bedroom. Additionally, 115 more parking spaces are available within a block of the site.
3. Promoting alternative transportation by lowering the parking ratio, as the project targets residents who may not need a car due to the downtown location.

Mr. Benavente then asked if the city has tools to incentivize future retail development. Ms. Fuqua confirmed that discussions are ongoing to provide incentives for boosting commerce in the area.

Mr. Brown expressed that he's been working for over two years to bring a grocery store downtown but has found that vendors are waiting for the population to increase. He believes the proposed project will help achieve that goal.

Mr. Benavente suggested that a pedestrian bridge would improve safety when crossing International Speedway Boulevard. Ms. Gow mentioned that there is already a crosswalk at Beach Street and ISB, but it's rarely used due to the high speed of traffic, making people afraid to cross.

John Nicholson, 413 N Grandview Avenue, raised concerns about redevelopment. He noted that there were plans to build a private building behind McKay's, but the inclusion of housing—specifically HUD housing—was insisted upon. Mr. Nicholson argued that people in HUD housing typically don't have the disposable income to support nearby restaurants and businesses, making redevelopment challenging. He also mentioned missed opportunities for apartments and a parking garage in the same location, which the mayor opted to convert into HUD housing. Mr. Nicholson warned against placing low-income residents in redevelopment areas, as it may hinder progress. He also criticized open parking in downtown as a waste of valuable land and urged caution in planning for empty spaces.

Mr. Zahn made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kamchan, to forward the rezoning of the 6.86 acres from PD-RD to PD-RD to the planning board and the city commission with a recommendation for approval. The motion was carried 5-0.

7. Staff Reports

7. A. Public Works Report

Ms. Fuqua presented the public works report, noting it included updates on projects that the board had inquired about. She emphasized that this was just a portion of the public works' ongoing projects and encouraged the board to request more detailed information on specific projects in advance if needed.

Mr. Benavente asked for an update on the bridge being constructed to the library and its expected completion date. Ms. Fuqua mentioned she was unsure but would find out. He also inquired if special events would block access to the electric vehicle charging station on Magnolia. Ms. Fuqua explained that the only event that may affect it is the closure of Magnolia every first Friday. However, she pointed out that there's a Blink app to notify users of alternative charging stations, including one at city hall.

Ms. Cook requested an update on the Jackie Robinson project. Ms. Fuqua confirmed that ground was broken two weeks ago and promised to keep providing updates.

Ms. Cook also raised concerns about flooding issues on Palmetto, Magnolia, and Beach Street, pointing out how cars were submerged, and people had to drive the wrong way to exit Downtown. She stressed that if no action is taken, they could face significant problems during hurricanes. She asked whether new buildings would be required to have their properties raised. Ms. Fuqua responded that any new development must adhere to FEMA reports on base flood elevation. Developers must go through a Technical Review Team process to address these concerns before proceeding. She assured the board that staff was aware of the flooding issues, and many business owners had reported them via the SeeClickFix app, prompting staff to respond. She also mentioned efforts to be proactive, such as adding flood signage in vulnerable areas.

7. B. Code Enforcement Report

Mark Jones, the code enforcement supervisor, gave an informal report on their efforts along the Ridgewood corridor. His team is working on maintaining the appearance of businesses, including tasks like painting, signage, and landscaping. They have a dedicated group of inspectors focusing on commercial properties, noting improvements such as the enhanced appearance of the Dollar General store.

Ms. Cook inquired about a sign posted on May 14th at the old Ritzy building, questioning why it's still there with no visible progress. Mr. Jones explained that their procedure involves sending certified mail to the property owner. If the mail is not accepted, they post a notice on the building. If no action is taken after a certain period, the issue goes to a hearing.

Ms. Cook mentioned she had contacted the building's realtor and noted that while work is ongoing in the back, the front windows are deteriorating and look unappealing compared to other properties. Mr. Jones promised to investigate further.

Ms. Fuqua asked Mr. Jones about the flags, signage, and banners on medians, which had been a concern. Mr. Jones responded that their standard procedure is to remove such items from the medians. He advised reporting these issues via SeeClickFix or by calling the code compliance number. He also noted that sometimes removed signs are put back in place.

7. C. Downtown Security Report

Ms. Fuqua provided an update on the security report, noting that security personnel are serving as ambassadors to enhance their role in providing resources and support. They are diligently taking notes and including them in their daily reports to staff. She announced an emergency contact number for the Downtown CRA Shops of Daytona Beach: 904-889-0883. This number is intended for emergency use only. For more serious issues that might require arrests, she emphasized the importance of calling 911.

7. D. Redevelopment Project Manager Report

Ms. Fuqua provided updates on several initiatives. The Triage Program currently has over 50 applicants. This program is designed to assess and support businesses by identifying areas where they need help. She also announced a meet-and-greet event for program participants, which will facilitate networking and attract additional members.

Applications for outdoor seating are now being accepted, and two restaurants are already in the process. She encouraged other businesses interested in outdoor seating to apply to ensure compliance. There is also a grant program available to help cover some of the costs of enhancing outdoor seating. She noted that some business owners have not yet responded and that the grace period for compliance will soon end.

Ms. Fuqua also discussed upcoming events, noting that information can be found on both the city and DDA websites. She encouraged everyone to review the strategic plan for downtown and Ballough and to highlight or ask questions about specific aspects if needed.

Additionally, Mr. Benavente requested that security reports be sent via email only, in order to reduce paper waste.

8. Public Comments

John Nicholson, 413 N Grandview Avenue, expressed his concerns and suggestions regarding downtown development. He highlighted that the city is investing \$30 million into City Island, while Hyatt Brown is contributing \$37 million to Beach Street.

However, he noted that this investment creates a gap in the middle of downtown, as Beach Street will extend only to Main Street, leaving a void.

Mr. Nicholson urged the board to push for improvements to City Island to ensure that it complements the downtown area's development. He proposed planting large trees to create a well-established park and make the area more appealing. Additionally, he stressed the need to plan and enhance the streetscapes from Mason Avenue to the Marina, which he believes looks terrible at present.

He also recommended that the city acquire riverfront properties to develop them, creating more attractions and activities throughout downtown to make the area more vibrant and engaging.

9. Board Comments

Mr. Zahn emphasized the need for precise language in recommendations to prevent confusion and ensure clarity, expressing frustration with the lack of clear wording.

Mr. Jackson clarified that there is no public notice requirement for the redevelopment board to consider in this particular situation.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:54 p.m.


Mr. Kenneth Hunt, Chair


Ms. Chernecia Stuart, Board Secretary