

Downtown Development Authority Minutes **Thursday, November 14th, 2024**

The meeting of the Downtown Development Authority Board (DDA) was held on Thursday November 14th, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. in Rm 149 B, Daytona Beach City Hall, 301 S. Ridgewood Avenue, Daytona Beach, Florida.

Board Members Present

Mr. Michael Sznajstajler, Chair
Ms. Sheryl Cook, Vice Chair
Mr. Douglas Martin
Commissioner Quanita May

Board Members Absent

Kenneth Hunt

Staff Members Present

Ms. Michele Toliver, Redevelopment Project Manager
Mrs. Angela Armstrong, Redevelopment Project Manager
Mr. Ben Gross, City Attorney
Mrs. Mandana Carry, Office Specialist III

1. Call to Order

Mr. Sznajstajler called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Mrs. Carry called roll and listed members as present above.

3. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes from August 8th, 2024, by Mr. Martin seconded by Ms. Cook. The motion was carried

4. Reports & Presentations

4.1. DDA Budget

Mrs. Armstrong noted that the initial monthly report was incorrect and provided an updated version. She stated that as of October 31st, \$21,450 had been spent, leaving \$370,329 remaining.

4.2 Halifax Arts Festival

Ms. Mahoney shared that the Halifax Arts Festival had a great turnout, with happy artists and positive feedback from attendees. While the turnout might not have been the highest she's seen, it was still very successful. She praised the excellent weather, thanked the board for their support, and mentioned that while final numbers are still being calculated, she believes they did better than last year. Additionally, all sponsors were pleased with the event's response and expressed interest in returning. She also highlighted the esplanade as a valuable asset to the festival's success.

4.3 Staff Report

Mrs. Armstrong presented the staff report, noting Ms. Fuqua's absence as she was completing her certification. She highlighted the Beach Street security update, praising the foot patrol officers for their excellent work and the significant improvements in the downtown CRA. Mrs. Armstrong mentioned that the report is available to the board and that Ms. Fuqua can provide access if needed. She also stated they are exploring ways to continue collecting data for the area.

Mrs. Armstrong discussed updates to the sidewalk café program, which now offers up to \$6,000 for outdoor planters and barricades. This opportunity is available to the community, with the goal of promoting consistency within the CRA.

Mrs. Armstrong provided updates on the business development program, noting last month's successful meeting and plans to launch phase two in the coming month. She highlighted articles from Ms. Fuqua about post-Hurricane Milton flooding updates, included in the packet. Mrs. Armstrong also reminded the board about the See, Click, Fix app on the city's website, encouraging citizens and business owners to help maintain the city's beauty.

She shared that a wave of new businesses has entered the downtown and Ballough CRA areas, leading to increased traffic and potential revenue. Ms. Fuqua has been actively meeting with stakeholders and developers interested in downtown CRA projects, staying focused on the strategic plan.

Mrs. Armstrong announced that applications for the next business summit in March 2025 will open soon and reminded the board about available grants. These include the Small Project Commercial and Business Incentive Program, the Commercial Property Improvement and Professional Design Assistance Program (offered as a 0% interest loan), as well as lease subsidy and landscaping grants.

Mrs. Armstrong reported that staff attended the Florida Redevelopment Association conference last month, where Ms. Fuqua and Ms. Toliver earned their designations as redevelopment administrators, making the team fully accredited. She also mentioned a new agreement with Keith Gold, clarifying that it is a one-year extension with no significant changes from last year.

Mr. Gross expressed concern about the board being asked to approve the contract without prior notice, but Mr. Gold confirmed it was not a new contract, just an extension.

Mrs. Armstrong also mentioned the new board member, Mr. Kenneth Hunt, stating he is enthusiastic about the role and will be a valuable asset to the DDA.

Mr. Sznajstajler noted that he had previously requested Ms. Fuqua to address downtown flooding at today's meeting. Since she was unavailable, he suggested adding it as an agenda item for next month.

Ms. Anita Pologa announced that Mr. Kenneth Hunt has officially resigned from the Downtown Redevelopment Board and has been appointed to the DDA, though he was unable to attend today. She also noted that there are still vacancies on the Downtown Redevelopment Board and in other redevelopment areas, encouraging referrals to her for consideration.

4.4 Keith Gold, Gold and Associates

Mr. Gold presented the October and early November report, highlighting the start of winter holiday advertising efforts.

Mr. Sznajstajler observed increased activity despite the recent storm. Mr. Gold highlighted that their largest growth came from Miami visitors, many of whom explored real estate after visiting their site. He suggested this could be due to storm fatigue or existing property interest in the area. Over the past 12 months, the Riverfront Shops website attracted around 125,000 visitors, with 28,000 in the last six weeks alone, including over 5,000 in October responding to online ads about events.

In terms of marketing initiatives, Mr. Gold detailed their collaboration with the city on e-blasts, social media, publicity, and new collateral materials. They've created a fall brochure and a special holiday-themed Halifax Arts Festival poster. Additionally, a directory map was made specifically for the festival, showing exhibit and activity locations, marking the first update to the kiosk maps in some time.

He mentioned working with Ms. Fuqua to develop a widget for merchants, sent via e-blast, allowing them to update their own listings or request assistance. This tool is also embedded on the website. November plans include two kiosk posters, with one released before Thanksgiving.

For offline advertising, the Halifax Arts Festival was promoted with a billboard on I-95, radio spots on Southern Stone, and public service announcements on other networks. Event photography is ongoing, covering the festival and holiday decorations.

Mr. Gold discussed public relations efforts, emphasizing announcements for the Halifax Arts Festival and holiday events. The website is updated daily with merchant information and will feature a holiday theme on various pages.

Finally, he reviewed the new marketing budget spreadsheet, noting that they are under budget. Most initiatives remain the same as last year, except for the addition of photography, which was not included previously.

Ms. Cook asked about event listings, pointing out that Mr. Smith's event on the same night as the Arts Festival was not included, and a recent wine walk event also appeared to be missing. Mr. Sznajstajler explained that the poster in question was specifically for the Halifax Arts Festival.

Ms. Cook raised concerns about visitors walking downtown and not finding event information in the kiosks. Mr. Smith responded, explaining that his events for the DDA are submitted on time, included in the kiosks, and that he even assists with the process. He noted two separate items: the Halifax Arts Festival-specific poster and the broader directory posters that include all events.

Mr. Gold further explained that the Halifax Arts Festival poster was printed specifically for that event, an idea from Mr. Thomas. Although it was a bit late to print, they still produced it. As for the directory posters, they are typically printed about a week before delivery to the city. Leading up to the festival, two posters were created for November: one at the end of October and another just before the festival. The December poster was prepared shortly after.

Mr. Smith shared that he interacts with merchants on Market Street every day, noting their enthusiasm and optimism about upcoming changes. However, he pointed out that sales have been slower recently, with his numbers being lower than Mr. Gold's figures, possibly due to the hurricane or the election. He mentioned that in the short time he spoke with merchants, many reported slower sales than usual.

In his report, Mr. Smith reviewed recent events. He highlighted the September 6th Downtown Daytona Nights, which used sponsorship dollars. Although September is typically a tough month for drawing crowds, the event turned out well. He also mentioned the October 4th Downtown Daytona Nights, which included a car show he worked on with the CVB, leading to a great turnout. The October 12th Wine and Chocolate Walk was canceled due to the hurricane but has been rescheduled for Mother's Day weekend, May 10th. He emphasized the importance of keeping this event.

Mr. Smith noted that the Sunset Concert with the "Are Friends Electric" band had low attendance, and the recent Wine and Cheese Walk on Saturday included 21 merchants, 4 of whom were new, including Mr. Kenneth Hunt, the new DDA board member.

Looking ahead, Mr. Smith mentioned the December 6th Downtown Daytona Nights, which will feature a night market at the South End with an arts and crafts area. The event marketing will also include an art walk. He also mentioned the Holiday Cookie and Wine Walk, scheduled for December 14th.

4.5 Joseph Yarbrough-Riverfront Esplanade

Ms. Powell shared that they've been preparing for the Riverfront Market, which will feature three night markets on Fridays starting in December. She also mentioned Mr. Smith's events, noting that on December 6th, there will be a walk and run encouraging participants to dress festively, with fun Christmas decorations. She highlighted the Downtown Daytona Nights event on the same date. Additionally, she mentioned several performances planned for the "December to Remember" event, which will include a pet race. Donations from the race will go to the PAWSibilities Foundation to help save animals.

5. Public Comments

None.

6. Board Comments

Ms. Cook inquired about why a co-sponsor slip hadn't been signed for this year.

Commissioner May responded positively about downtown, mentioning that she's been receiving positive feedback. Regarding flooding downtown, she noted that there was a significant presentation last week about efforts being made to mitigate the issue.

Mr. Sznajstajler shared his personal experience with flooding, acknowledging the many factors involved. However, he emphasized that taking steps to address the issue shows progress is being made.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:53 p.m.


Michael Sznajstajler, Chairman


Chernecia Stuart, Board Secretary