

BEACHSIDE REDEVELOPMENT BOARD
MINUTES
Wednesday, September 11th, 2024,

The regular meeting of the Beachside Redevelopment Board was held Wednesday September 11th, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. 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. Robert Ellis, Chair
Mr. Gary Libby, Vice Chair
Mrs. Amy Pyle
Mr. William Bittorf
Mr. Gary Koliopoulos
Mr. Raymond Masone
Mrs. Helen Humphreys
Mr. Vernon Weatherholtz (Ex- Officio)

Staff Members Present

Mr. Ken Thomas, Redevelopment & Neighborhood Services Director
Ms. Kira Honse, Assistant City Attorney
Mrs. Angela Armstrong, Redevelopment Project Manager
Ms. Phebe Fuqua, Redevelopment Project Manager
Ms. Michele Toliver, Redevelopment Project Manager
Lieutenant Kirsten Burns, Daytona Beach Police Department
Mrs. Mandana Carry, Office Specialist III

1. Call to Order

Mr. Ellis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Mrs. Carry called roll and noted members as present 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 June 12th, 2024, by Mr. Libby, seconded by Mr. Bittorf. The motion was carried 7-0.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from August 14th 2024 by Mr. Libby, seconded by Ms. Humphreys. The motion was carried 7-0.

5. Staff Reports

5.1 Daytona Beach Police Department

Lieutenant Burns provided a two-week update, reporting 1,774 calls, 315 reports, and 44 arrests. There were 93 misdemeanor arrests, 412 traffic stops resulting in 323 citations, 355 field interview cards, 42 courtesy cards, and 29 towed vehicles. Additionally, there were 43 vehicle crashes, 3 of which involved DUI arrests, 24 city ordinance violations, and 19 arrests for trespassing or park rule violations.

Domestic-related offenses led to 24 arrests, and 4 aggravated assault cases that were cleared by arrest. Of the 5 burglary cases, 3 were cleared by arrest, along with 1 out of 4 car break-ins. Out of 3 stolen vehicles, 1 was recovered. Officers made 32 arrests after monitoring bridges and parks.

At Jackie Robinson, 11 arrests were made, and during Seabreeze overtime patrols, 37 calls, 94 traffic stops, 77 citations, and 10 parking violations were recorded. Three felony arrests were made, leading to the recovery of two guns, 15g of cocaine, and 13g of marijuana. A wanted violent criminal was also apprehended.

Mr. Masone inquired if Trucktoberfest was a sanctioned event, and Lieutenant Burns responded that it wasn't. Mr. Bittorf noted that local cameras have been helpful in reducing crime and drug activity.

6. Commercial Property Improvement Funding Request- 615 Main Street

6.1 Request for funding through the commercial Improvement 0% Interest Loan Program- 615 Main Street

Mrs. Armstrong presented a funding request for the commercial property at 615 Main St. through the commercial Improvement 0% Interest Loan Program. Mr. Tom Guest, the applicant and owner's representative, sought approval from the redevelopment board. The application was reviewed based on several factors, including whether the property conformed to its zoning, which allows retail sales and services. It was confirmed that there were no delinquent taxes or municipal liens on the property. Additionally, the project was assessed for its contribution to eliminating blight, as the applicant proposed replacing 34 windows to bring the building into compliance and improve its aesthetics. Staff recommended approving the commercial improvement grant for 615 Main Street for up to \$50,000. A majority vote from the Beachside Redevelopment Board is required to recommend approval to the city commission.

Mr. Guest clarified that the building's correct address is 614 Main Street, with the upstairs windows located at 616 Main Street. He was unsure why 615 Main Street was listed in the application. He explained that window units would be installed upstairs and that the current windows, which haven't been replaced since 1985, are in poor condition. Although repairs had been made over the years, full replacement is now needed. The new windows will be white vinyl, which will improve the building's appearance.

Mr. Guest noted that the building has 11 apartments upstairs and 5 stores on the ground floor. Mrs. Pyle suggested that other improvements, such as a new awning, could further enhance the building. Mrs. Armstrong added that the business owner is eligible to apply for grants to make additional changes, and one tenant has already started the process. Mrs. Pyle also discussed the possibility of adding decorative decals to the windows to improve the street view.

John Nicholson, 413 N. Grandview Ave., commented on the building's appearance, asking if the awning could be repainted since funding is being provided to improve the property. He was concerned that the worn awning detracts from the building's overall look. Mr. Nicholson also noted that the mural on the side of the building is fading and asked if there are plans to refresh it. Mr. Guest responded, explaining that the tenant in the corner of the building has already applied to replace the awning and that he has been in discussions about redoing the mural.

A motion was made to recommend approval to the city commission, by Mrs. Pyle, seconded by Mr. Libby. The motion was carried 7-0.

7. Board Discussion

7.1 Beachside Neighborhood Watch August 1, 2024-Resolution

Anne Ruby, chair of the Beachside Neighborhood Watch, clarified that they were not proposing a direct change to the Land Development Code. On August 1st, 2023, the Beachside Neighborhood Watch passed a resolution addressing the use of non-functional turf grass. In September 2023, they presented this resolution to the city commission, which was met with agreement but no formal action. Since then, the Neighborhood Watch has passed a second resolution, asking both the Beachside Redevelopment Board and the Planning Board to urge the city commission to direct staff to explore changes to the LDC and development standards. Their goal is to promote the use of native plants and reduce non-functional turf grass in city properties and new commercial developments.

The Neighborhood Watch hopes the city commission will develop a similar resolution that could be passed along to state and county authorities. Neither resolution proposes direct changes to the LDC nor imposes new standards on residential properties. The intent is to inspire the commission to instruct city staff to examine possible citywide changes that encourage more native plants and less turf grass.

Ms. Ruby emphasized that the original proposal was meant to apply only to the Beachside area, but it was later determined that this should be addressed citywide. Mr. Bittorf added that this approach could reduce expenses, especially in areas like Grandview where the grass is struggling, suggesting this solution could be beneficial long-term.

Mrs. Pyle raised concerns about retraining landscaping teams, noting that some plants might have weeds growing between them, which could potentially turn into low-growing flowers. Mr. Koliopulos suggested consulting a landscape expert to evaluate these potential changes.

John Nicholson, 413 N. Grandview Avenue, remarked that when Ms. Nazak first presented the idea of using native plants, he thought it was a great fit for our beach town. However, he pointed out that much of the town's landscape looks like New England or New Jersey, as it was originally founded by Yankees. He emphasized that maintaining these landscapes has become extremely expensive. It's not just the current costs, but long-term expenses, like paying workers \$20 an hour over 40 years, that add up. He suggested that when replacing landscaping in areas such as A1A, Oak Ridge, and City Island, native grasses and plants that require little to no water or care should be prioritized. This would reduce maintenance and watering costs, better reflecting the town's beach identity. He also warned that the more they overbuild, the less the area looks like a beach town, and the only way to preserve that identity is through thoughtful landscaping and design.

Jenny Nazak, 501 Harvey Avenue, supported this view, adding that green infrastructure, like native plants, helps manage stormwater and supports essential pollinators. She stressed the importance of not overusing water, noting that many areas in the city have pressing human needs that aren't being met. She gave the example of the need for shade at every bus stop to protect people from the heat. By saving on unnecessary landscaping expenses, she argued, the city could invest in more important infrastructure.

Mr. Bittorf asked if specific plants could be used to aid water mitigation. Ms. Nazak responded that some plants require less water than others, and recommended the Florida Native Plant Society website, which has an extensive catalog detailing the water needs of various plants.

Mr. Weatherholtz suggested planting native trees and plants in privately owned bare areas near the beach, noting that palm trees, though iconic, are not native to the area.

Mrs. Pyle moved to recommend that the Beachside Redevelopment Board and the Planning Board encourage the city commission to review the standards proposed by the Beachside Neighborhood Watch regarding reducing non-functional turf grass and promoting native plants. Ms. Humphreys seconded the motion. The motion was carried 7-0.

7.2 Beachside Redevelopment Priority List

Mr. Thomas explained that the board was appointed by the mayor and city commission to help city staff implement the redevelopment plan for Main Street and South Atlantic, which was originally created in 1982 and 2001. The plans were updated in 2008 and again in 2011 to include goals from the E-Zone Master Plan. He presented a priority list of 18 items and asked the board to select the six that they considered most important. These items included:

- **Appearance Standards:** Set clear standards for the appearance of both public and private properties.
- **Improved Lighting:** Develop a plan to improve lighting for security and overall aesthetics.
- **Parking Signage:** Add new directional signage and signs for parking areas, including those shared with Volusia County.
- **Event Funding:** Establish a clear method for funding both current and new events, utilizing venues like the Peabody and Ocean Center.
- **Property Owner Communication:** Improve communication with property owners about their responsibilities in the redevelopment area's growth.
- **Proactive Staff Role:** Encourage city staff to take a more active role in addressing appearance issues in the Beachside area.
- **Boardwalk and Park Renovation:** Renovate the boardwalk and Breakers Park.
- **Rental House Inspections:** Address the lack of inspections or permits for rental houses in Surfside Village.
- **Vacant Lot Maintenance:** Ensure that vacant lots along the boardwalk are properly maintained and graffiti-free.

- **Unified Parking Appearance:** Create a consistent, user-friendly appearance for parking throughout the CRA.
- **Public Parking Survey:** Assess public parking options, allowing free or modern pay systems with clear signage. Enable parking location searches via an app, and allow businesses to charge for parking. Require yearly registration and establish maintenance standards for event-only parking lots.
- **Vacant Parcel Survey:** Survey vacant CRA parcels and set maintenance standards, prioritizing visible properties for cleanup and repairs.
- **City Property Standards:** City properties must meet high appearance standards, including repairing amenities and activating the pier with public art.
- **FPL Collaboration:** Collaborate with FPL to quickly remove old poles and address graffiti and dangling wires.
- **Storefront Appearance Standards:** Set standards for storefronts, ensuring clear displays and tidy merchandise, with restrictions on explicit content and window graphics for vacant stores.
- **Transportation Trolley:** Introduce a free trolley service connecting the Ocean Center, Main Street, and surrounding areas.
- **Parking Enforcement:** Enforce rules against illegal parking on the Beachside.
- **Main Street Beautification:** Improve Main Street's appearance and promote year-round business activity.

Mr. Ellis suggested making redevelopment grants more accessible to all businesses in town, as he has heard from people struggling to access them. He noted that due to ongoing road construction, many businesses in the area are at risk of closure and could benefit from these grants to help them through the process.

Mr. Koliopolus asked if the funding for the program comes from the CRA, and Mr. Thomas confirmed it does. He explained that there is currently half a million dollars available, and once it's used, they can request more funding from the commission. If the money is spent before December, they'll ask for additional funds.

Mrs. Pyle asked about businesses on ISB and how many are affected. Mr. Ellis estimated about five businesses.

Mrs. Pyle proposed using a grant of \$25,000 to \$50,000 to support businesses on ISB affected by ramp closures and reduced customer access. Mr. Thomas confirmed that the board can make a recommendation regarding this. Mrs. Armstrong noted that these businesses are in the Main Street CRA and can already access a lease subsidy grant, which offers up to \$1,500 per month for three months. She added that one affected business owner has already applied for this grant, indicating awareness of the city's assistance programs.

During the board's discussion about FPL issues, Ms. Humphreys raised a concern about a pole on the sidewalk at the south peninsula turn leading to the Orange Avenue bridge. She noted that the pole obstructs pedestrians, particularly a visually impaired man with a seeing-eye dog who has to step into South Peninsula to cross the street. Ms. Humphreys offered to take a picture to highlight the issue.

Mrs. Pyle shared her experience while walking her dog, where she noticed a cable box hanging off a pole and swinging but still attached to the wires. After calling a non-emergency number, someone came to secure it. She then asked about the process for residents who want to paint their homes or buildings themselves, suggesting a reimbursement program where homeowners could apply for a refund after painting, pending a code enforcement inspection. Mr. Thomas clarified that there isn't a reimbursement program, but there is a paint program in the redevelopment area that requires city approval for paint colors. He noted that if code enforcement finds violations like chipped paint, CRA funds could potentially be used to assist homeowners with paint purchases through a voucher system at hardware stores.

Mr. Weatherholtz suggested that every store should be required to have at least one entrance, a rule that could be enforced without needing further inquiries. Mr. Thomas confirmed that although customers can still access stores, parking remains a concern.

Mr. Libby mentioned that there have been issues with code enforcement in historic districts regarding design standards and allowable paint colors. He noted that the city informed the Seabreeze University Neighborhood Watch group that homeowners would be allowed to paint their houses any color they choose, as they believed it wasn't right to require compliance with design standards. He emphasized the need for better coordination among city departments to address these challenges. Mr. Bittorf echoed this, stressing the importance of staff taking a proactive approach to resolve visible problems, and remarked that the city is currently in its best state since he has lived here for over 25 years.

Mr. Thomas stated that staff will return at the next meeting to share the results of the prioritized list with the board. They will also develop a strategy to connect items not directly related to the redevelopment plan with specific departments.

This way, the board's input will be meaningful, and they will receive updates from those departments as needed.

7.3 Beachside Redevelopment Committee-May 2018

Mrs. Armstrong mentioned that during the last meeting, it was highlighted that the Beachside Redevelopment Committee's document exists and is worth reviewing. This document contains recommendations aimed at improving the beachside redevelopment areas. She noted that while it doesn't require discussion, it is important for the board to be aware of it in case they identify any elements to incorporate into the priority list.

8. Public Comments

John Nicholson, 413 N Grandview Avenue, reiterated previous discussions with Mr. Feacher regarding the priority list. He pointed out that while FPL owns the light poles, the poles will remain as long as AT&T's wires are in place. With less than 13 years remaining for the CRA on the beachside, he emphasized the importance of prioritizing the improvement of city and county properties within the CRA, many of which are not up to standard. He mentioned that the city has approximately \$6 million in CRA funding, but there is also \$2.4 million owed for loans taken out for backed buildings.

Jenny Nazak, 501 Harvey Avenue, suggested incorporating environmentally responsible lighting that directs light downward for better safety and to reduce light pollution.

Randall Phillips, 1505 Crescent Ridge Road, a former board member, noted his intention to apply for the discussed grants. He sought guidance on addressing code issues with his property, particularly regarding two \$20,000 liens. Mr. Thomas informed him that he would not be eligible for grants until his code violations were resolved.

Anne Ruby, 137 Park Avenue expressed her support for establishing the priority list. She noted that the city commission has decided to hold regular CRA meetings to discuss ongoing issues and suggested that the Midtown and Downtown boards create similar priority lists for discussion.

John Nicholson reiterated the need for an attractive location to draw tourists, stating that frequent visitors are declining due to the area's current state. He proposed that the board mail information about available grants to the community. He also mentioned upcoming landscaping plans from ISB to A1A, expressing concern that they may not align with the board's vision for a tourist-friendly town.

He highlighted the need for better camera coverage in high-crime areas on Seabreeze and asked about the potential renovation of upstairs apartments on Main Street to encourage foot traffic. Lastly, he inquired about the plans for the Delta West property.

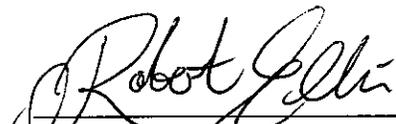
9. Board Comments

Mr. Ellis expressed a desire to reduce some of the red tape that makes it difficult for businesses to open and operate in the area, suggesting that city regulations might be too restrictive. Ms. Humphreys inquired about the progress with kiosks, and Mr. Thomas explained that four department heads have been researching kiosk systems used throughout Florida and meeting with other cities. Once their research is complete, they will submit it to the purchasing department to put out bids.

Mr. Bittorf noted that he focuses on actions that benefit the city and relies on staff for guidance. He praised the staff for their work but cautioned that while making things easier is important, not everything is beneficial for businesses on the Beachside.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.


Mr. Robert Ellis, Chair


Ms. Chernelia Stuart, Board Secretary