

## DSCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 2, 2023; Broadway Promenade and Zoom

**Board Members Present:** David Lough, Clark Lauren, Patrick Gannon, Bob Pirolo, Peter Fanning, Roger Barry, Jaime Still, Ken Shelin, Judy Mower

**Board Members Absent:** Catherine Sellers

**Member Representatives Present:** Janice Hetland, 101 Condominium; Bill Diehl, Condo on the Bay;; Jim Lampi, Jewel; Cheryl walker, One Hundred Central; Richard Mones, Renaissance; Peter Blanton, Ritz-Carlton Residences-Quay

**Associate Members Present:** Annika Mantius, Burg Simpson Eldredge Hersh Jardine; Steve Shaw, Hotwire Communications; Erik Martakis, Crews Bank & Trust; Paul Schott, ServPro of Sarasota

**Guests Present:** Liz Alpert, Vice Mayor (Regency House); Kafi Benz, CONA; Jim Toale, 101 Condominium; Barbara Campo, Alinari; Irving Ross, Wendy Starr, Bay Plaza; Victor McTeer, BLVD Sarasota; Linda Haller Sloan, Marina Tower; Ted Wilson, Regency House; Pamela Mones, Renaissance

The meeting was called to order by David Lough at 4:02, a quorum was declared.

The minutes of the July 5<sup>th</sup> board meeting were approved (Peter Fanning, Ken Shelin).

**Guest Speaker: Liz Alpert, Vice Mayor, City of Sarasota Commission.**

Board members had received Commissioner Alpert's bio via email prior to the meeting. David Lough set a conversational tone by beginning with some observations concerning the expected growth in population numbers and income to the City due to downtown residential development projects underway, soon to begin being constructed, or passing through the steps required for approval by the Commission. He followed that overview by asking for her comments regarding the evolving plan for providing attainable housing downtown. Commissioner Alpert replied that in her view the process is moving toward a good plan that will increase downtown's capacity for new residents rather than create sprawl. Zoning text amendments (ZTAs) under consideration will facilitate that outcome, and two projects that will incorporate affordable housing are awaiting approval. David Lough expressed the board's opinion that there should be Community Workshops because of increasing concerns about density and building height. Commissioner Alpert responded that such community workshops will be held as part of the approval process, but if a developer has met all the applicable zoning criteria then the project has to be approved by City staff (under Administrative Review). Other topics briefly addressed in the conversation were as follows:

- Sound ordinances for downtown restaurants and bars: the goal is harmony – finding the best compromise between residents' desires and business interests.
- Streetscape along Fruitville – plans are moving forward.
- Roundabouts – one proposed to allow better traffic flow has lost its right-of-way (assumedly Blvd. of the Arts (BOTA) and 41)
- Fruitville Road from Orange Ave to US41– should be one lane each way rather than 4 lanes; having fewer lanes helps traffic flow more smoothly.

- Concerns about streets labeled “Evacuation Routes” – a “red herring” issue given that during hurricanes traffic counts are way down and there have been no problems in the past.
- Grant request to improve BOTA streetscape was not approved and some other source of money will be needed if the plan is to move along.

Further topics addressed in response to questions from board members and others were as follows:

- Downtown’s growth affects its character; a study is needed to find out who is coming and why.
- Even though the cost of installing art (e.g. at 14<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>) can be more expensive than the art itself, Commissioner Alpert still feels it is important.
- Ms. Alpert does not know of any planned structure(s) in Centennial Park. Parking is being improved and there will be new restaurants along the boat launch area; the pedestrian walkway along the channel will remain.
- The budget for maintenance of street trees is limited, even as rising temperatures make those trees more important to pedestrians.
- Downtown is evolving into a restaurant and entertainment district and becoming less of a district for other kinds of retail and offices.
- A housing project on Main Street will add to the economic health of that area.
- Having a larger convention center would help hotels and the business community; the issue is who’s going to pay for it, and where could it be located.
- The County Commission will move to a different building. Location there? Post Office?
- As requested, Ms. Alpert will join nearby neighbors in a discussion of the future of the BOTA/41 intersection.
- The Planning Meeting in the third week of September will include the “finding harmony” goal that balances sustainability of entertainment venues that make downtown vibrant with quality-of-life concerns of downtown residents. We search for “right size”, “right template” for growth.
- Issue of sidewalk congestion on lower Main; requirement of 5 feet pedestrian clearance between building and road edge not being enforced. Ms. Alpert will look into it.
- Wheelchair passage along lower Main is also an issue. Wheelchair users should be asked for comment.

Commissioner Alpert closed with praise for DSCA, stating that DSCA reports, newsletters and other communications help her get a better picture of what’s going on downtown. She also expressed confidence in the Purple Ribbon Van Wezel Task Force – noting that the people who came forward to serve in that group have very impressive and useful backgrounds.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Community Survey:** Bob Pirollo and Patrick Gannon reported that some associations have yet to complete the survey. Several are in process and follow-up contacts are being made. Finishing by September is still the goal. The information being gathered will help condo boards and residents better understand why fees have been going up.

**President’s Report; City Update:** The conversation with Commissioner Alpert brought up most of what would be covered under these headings. DSCA continues to try to do what can be done about the situation at BOTA and 41. It was good to learn from Commissioner Alpert that the City still seems to be committed to doing something about that intersection.

**Arts & Culture:** Ken Shelin reported that an eleven-person tour of the Van Wezel took place on August 24. Eyes were opened about the acoustic problems and the lack of ADA compliance. A 100-page Public Art Plan will go before the City Commission later in September. It will contain lots of goals and actions but is short on information about who/what is responsible for implementation.

**Associates and Events:** Jaime Still reported that the event on October 19, 4-7 PM, at Goeway Hall, will focus on issues related to the effects of Sarasota's growth on downtown. Panelists and speakers will be chosen according to topics such as insurance costs, inflation, fear of crime and other quality-of-life impacts. There will be a video recording of this workshop. Pat Robinson and the Chief of Police will be among the speakers. A proposed title is "Sarasota's Rapid Growth: Boom, Bubble, or Bust?" Paul Petruilis, with a local property management firm, will be the moderator. We are looking for one or more sponsors.

**Greenspace:** Patrick Gannon had emailed committee notes to board members in advance of this board meeting. His verbal report touched on status of the City's Green Building Policy, Urban Forest Program, and Mature Tree Program. Discussions for a workshop on adapting to climate change for health and safety, would include speakers such as the founder of the Climate Adaptation Center (CAC).  
<https://www.theclimateadaptationcenter.org/>

**Homeless:** Peter Fanning reported that the Homeless Committee has not had a meeting but the County Association's HOT team has done an overall assessment of day time and night time provisions for the homeless during extremely hot weather and determined those have been adequate. Alarm-causing reports from other cities such as Phoenix have created worry among some Sarasota folks, but there really is no need for excess concern. Shelter opportunities are meeting the need for cooler accommodations, and there are backups. There is a need to get that information out so that people will know the problem is being well managed.

**Transportation:** Roger Barry reported that statistics collected monthly on accidents connected to the Gulf Stream roundabout show there have been seven or eight minor accidents. On August 14<sup>th</sup> there will be a City Commission workshop on parking, with mobility being the overarching objective. The trolley service has been very successful.

**Zoning:** David Lough reported that it looks like the City will hold a community workshop on the zoning text amendments for Attainable Housing later this month.

**Bay Park Conservancy:** Prior to the meeting Bob Pirollo had sent board members notice of an August 15, 5:30 PM Community Workshop for BPC's proposed RE-zone and Street Vacation. The board discussed issues that still concern people about the future of the Bay Park, such as possible negative impact of modifications on the street grid there, and the future effects of building structure additions and changes (e.g. the Hyatt) on traffic and congestion.

**CCNA:** CCNA does not meet in July or August, but David Lough has established on behalf of DSCA a good working relationship with CCNA Chair Richard Harris.

**Rosemary District:** Five new restaurants are opening soon, and the timeline for completion is December 15.

**Associate Member Presentations:** Annika Mantius introduced the Associate members attending. Brief presentations were made on behalf of Platinum Associates: Burg Simpson and ServPro; along with Gold Associates: Hotwire Communications and Crews Bank.

**Member Representative Comments:** Point was made that any sculpture installed at the center of the Gulfstream/41 roundabout must not block the 180 degree view that is needed for safety in maneuvering through the roundabout. Other discussion was about electric scooters (VEOS) that have become more and more part of the traffic pattern – concerns about safety were raised.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 PM. The next meeting will be on September 6 at the usual time and location.