

## DSCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 6, 2023; Broadway Promenade and Zoom

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

**Member Representatives Present:** Barbara Campo, Alinari; Janice Hetland, 101 Condominium; Jim Lampi, Jewel; Irving Ross, Bay Plaza; Peter Blanton, Ritz-Carlton Residences-Quay,, Condo on the Bay; Rosemary Krimbel, Alinari

**Associate Members Present:** Kristin Fourie, CORE Marketing Solutions; Steve Roskamp, Freedom Senior Manager; Annika Mantius, Burg Simpson Eldredge; Fred Grady, Aldermam Oaks; Don Fitts, Cornerstone; Terry Phelps, Socotech (Forge Engineering); Steve Shaw, Hotwire Communications

**Guests:** Vice Mayor Liz Alpert, Sarasota City Commission; Jim Toale, 101 Condominium; Mike Marrah, the Q;

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

The minutes of the August 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting were approved (Bib Pirollo, Peter Fanning)

Treasurer Clark Lauren reported the DSCA account holds \$2,734.15

There was no guest speaker at this meeting so that time could be given for the Board's discussion of our list of priority issues to forward to CCNA for inclusion in its Neighborhood Association Summit to be held next month. The list should represent issues important to downtown residents, specifically.

### Community Issues Discussed:

David Lough reminded board members of the Mind Map he had sent out earlier. Patrick Gannon had prepared a preliminary list and copies were handed out.

- Walkability: the issue includes canopy trees, sidewalks, lighting – all the physical features that make walking downtown streets a pleasant experience for downtown residents. Discussion focusing on the desire for more canopy trees touched on things that prevent them from being planted, such as there not being enough space, the presence of infrastructure elements underneath, roots causing sidewalks to heave. Such trees are costly to plant (\$5000 or more) but could represent a worthwhile investment because of their effects on walkability. Different kinds of canopy trees may differ in likelihood of causing sidewalk heaving, depth of soil they need, etc., and pruning practices may alleviate some issues. There needs to be better coordination among City government components (e.g. Public Works and Parks & Rec) regarding selection and planting of / care of canopy trees. More opportunity for community input is needed.
- Community Input on developments: There needs to be more opportunities for City residents, including downtowners, to be able to access information, ask questions, and express opinions about proposed developments. People feel somewhat disenfranchised since requiring developers to seek public input about their projects has become optional rather than mandatory. Suggestion was that the policy should be "opt out" – i.e such community input provision should be assumed to be the case unless the developer "opts out". Question raised: what prevents other organizations (e.g.DSCA) from holding meetings/ workshops on a proposed project? Note that a recent DSCA workshop included

decision makers who expressed having benefited from observing/hearing concerns of attendees about future projects. Issue raised: DSCA risks being seen as against affordable downtown housing by continuing to ask for more public input into development projects. DSCA must be clear on holding information sessions, not taking a position. ZTA content was displayed - an excerpt pertaining to requirements for community input especially when a density bonus is being applied for. The state's Live Local Act is relevant here – its purpose being to smooth and speed the development processes in municipalities. The Development Review Committee (DRC) should allow community members to speak.

- Noise problems: Sound ordinances to be applied to downtown bars, restaurants, and night clubs have been under review for years. Something relevant to the issue is supposed to be presented to the Planning Board on the 21<sup>st</sup>.
- 'Complete Streets' approaches: Discussion touched on fixing potholes, functionality for cars as well as pedestrians, appearance being subjective, width of sidewalks.
- Health & safety: Discussed topics included need for traffic calming measures, criminal behavior being not much of a threat to downtown pedestrian safety at this time, anticipation of more foot patrol officers, increased education efforts.
- Input on the City's budget: The current budget planning process does not allow for input by city residents. There are workshops but attendees are not allowed to speak.
- Reliance on grant funding: When applications for grant funding (state or federal) to enable projects desired by residents fail to be approved there's disappointment all round, but the issue can be raised that committing to full funding rather than relying on such grants is worth consideration.
- Parking: more spaces are needed, particularly free spaces. Question was raised about the history of planning for parking, versus what has actually been achieved.

Concluding comments were that an ongoing strength of DSCA has been having a generally positive orientation to developers who meet zoning requirements, but when a developer asks for an exception to such requirements once a project is approved, it feels as if the developer is "gaming the system".

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**DSCA Survey:** Patrick Gannon spoke about the survey results report that had previously gone out to board members, mentioning that 37 surveys had been sent to condo members and the response rate was 60%. The data will be useful to condo boards as they prepare their budgets. Of particular interest, he noted, is that aggregate fees being paid by condo residents (including for reserves) have gone up by 55% since 2021.

**President's Report:** David Lough spoke about having watched the City's budget discussions underway, in particular noting what City Manager Marlon Brown has had to say during these talks.

**City Update:** Cathy Sellers had no report.

**Arts and Culture:** Ken Shelin reported that the Public Art Master Plan adopted by the City will be costly, and to help pay for it the developer's public art contribution requirement will be doubled, from one half to one per

cent (of total project cost). In his opinion the acquisition process has been badly flawed. The DOT has been one source of delays in getting art pieces installed at the centers of roundabouts. \$400,000 has been budgeted for public art in those roundabouts with a view toward making those pieces a distinguishing feature of Sarasota. The expression in use is “Art is Our Fabric”. In Ken’s opinion we do not yet have a world-class collection of public art but the City is moving in that direction. The aesthetics and other results achieved might be better if the City worked with a more limited number of installation contractors. There will be a community workshop on September 11 to focus on an upcoming City-planned series of events to be called “Modern by Design”. Residents will be asked to nominate their favorite building. The Van Wezel Purple Ribbon Task Force has well-credentialed members and leaders. The City’s engineering study was not comprehensive because it failed to look at the interiors of walls and flooring – both of which have been found to be damaged by water seepage. The task force is doing an excellent job of highlighting the ADA noncompliance issues, and problems with acoustics. An aside subject Ken raised was that traveling shows booked at the Van Wezel are often “old”, in the sense of their being several years away from when they were first produced, often showing diminished production values (cast, sets, etc.) and thus not giving audiences optimal theater experiences. Hurricane Idalia caused further water damage to the Van Wezel’s entrance area and other areas as well.

**Associates and Events:** Jaime Still displayed the program flyer produced for the upcoming DSCA workshop, “Sarasota’s Rapid Growth: Boom, Bubble, or Bust?” – to be held in Goeway Hall on October 19, 4-7 PM. She commented on some of the speakers who have agreed to participate and mentioned that attendees will be asked to submit written questions on cards – a different process than was used in the last workshop.

**Homeless/Health & Safety:** Peter Fanning reported that David, Jaime, Patrick and he have been meeting to talk about and plan for a volunteer Community Watch Program for downtown Sarasota. The anticipated name of the program is “City Watch”. A handout was distributed, featuring the phrase “Walk, Watch, Inform”. The Sarasota Police Department has agreed to the creation of a pilot program within a small, defined area of downtown, the program designers’ initial tasks being to develop specific objectives and strategies, a training module for volunteers, print material to be used in their training, and a cell phone app to be used to report incidents. Mr. Fanning asked for DSCA board approval of the launch of this pilot program and said that in future board meetings more details will be forthcoming. Foundation money will be sought for some supporting aspects, such as for special T-shirts volunteers will wear when “on duty”. Motion was passed unanimously (Ken Shelin, Roger Barry).

**Greenspace, Transportation, Zoning, Bay Park Conservancy:** No reports.

**CCNA:** See above – discussion of issues to be forwarded to CCNA for its upcoming summit.

**Rosemary District:** David Lough said there has been some slippage on the progress of park construction, including extension of the timeline.

**Associate Highlights:** Brief presentations were made on behalf of Hotwire Communications, First Service Residential, and WrightWay Emergency Services.

There were no questions or comments from member representatives.

Meeting adjourned at 5:27 PM.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 4, 4 PM, same location