



**MINUTES**  
**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**FY 23-24 FISCAL YEAR PLANNING WORKSHOP MEETING**  
**Wednesday – July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – 9:09AM**  
**135 SE 6th Avenue, Delray Beach, Florida 33483**

➤ **Call to order/Roll Call – 9:09AM**

Members Present: Mark Denkler, Vera Woodson, Christina Godbout, Brian Rosen, Richard Burgess, Cole Devitt, Aaron Hallyburton.

Members Absent: None.

Staff: Laura Simon, Marusca Gatto, BJ Sklar, Suzanne Boyd, Liliana Fino, Danielle Morien, Devin Dewane.

Guests: Robert Cantwell, Mavis Benson, Lori J. Durante, Arlen Dominek, Joy Howell, Rita Rana, Shirley Johnson, Daniel Hartwell.

➤ **Welcome and Introduction of the workshop meeting – Matt Hammer, Facilitator:**

Matt Hammer (Lawrence & Schiller) mediates the meeting, starting with introductions by the DDA Board Members (Cole Devitt, Richard Burgess, Brian Rosen, Mark Denkler, Aaron Hallyburton, Vera Woodson, Christina Godbout) and DDA Team (Laura Simon, BJ Sklar, Liliana Fino, Marusca Gatto, Suzanne Boyd, Devin Dewane, Danielle Morien).

**9:10AM – Christina Godbout arrives to the meeting.**

Ms. Laura Simon proceeds with an introduction of the DDA organization: mission and focus and the DDA Fiscal Year 2022-2023 priorities and accomplishments for placemaking initiatives (Safety Ambassadors Program, clean, safe and beautiful, and downtown amenities, parking management, art installations and activations, public art management) for economic vitality priorities (business development and retention, data collection and management, downtown development, West Atlantic Avenue collaboration, implementation plans, Visitor Information Center), for marketing & events priorities (strengthen downtown brand, strong focus on summer, produce downtown experiences, enhance digital assets, grow organic audience, improve messaging) for Old School Square priorities (marketing and PR, Cornell Art Museum, amphitheatre and Old School Square Park, for DDA operations (training & participation, capacity building, strategic planning).

Ms. Laura Simon presents the DDA Team top priorities for FY23-24:

1. Vibrant downtown;
2. Downtown beautification – sidewalks, landscaping, alley ways;
3. Parking – daytime valet, seasonal meter rates; policy for private lots;
4. Enhance downtown parks – Old School Square Park, Worthing Park, Veterans Park – (BRYANT Parks);
5. Engage residents – meet your neighbors, downtown advisory committee;
6. Marketing – focus on summer, KPIs , new website;
7. West Atlantic Avenue enhancements – café lights, on NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue & Libby Wesley Plaza;

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8. Data collection – invest in technology that measures pedestrian traffic;
9. Reduce or streamline events and add funding to DDA Art & Activation Grant program;
10. Proactive advocacy to help shape policy.

➤ **Getting to know the DDA Board Members & Top Priorities:**

**DDA Board discussion priorities:**

- Clean & Safe and beautification priorities:
  - Homeless issues;
  - Panhandling issues;
  - Maintain and enhance landscaping (shrubs, plants, trees);
  - Enhance the Safety Ambassadors Program (add more staff members);
  - Private property cleanliness issues (create a “cleanliness culture” to engage property owners and business owners on private outdoor property storefronts).
- Data collection priorities:
  - Inventory of the downtown Delray Beach assets (list of businesses, residential units, clean and safe assets (trash cans...));
  - Use City app to communicate issues (via app or others) and follow up.
- Funding issues - once issues are detected how will the solutions be funded;
- Overlapping of roles issues – the overlapping of responsibilities between the different entities in town slows down planning and execution;
- Code Enforcement issues were expressed;
- Resolve parking issues including re-evaluation of the in-lieu parking program;
- Enhance DDA advocacy in the solution process between different entities in town;
- Enhance the community spirit (enhance relationship building between the business owners and different entities in town and improve relationships with local residents and with year-round residents (versus seasonal);
- Perfect business recruitment process (recruit the right retail shops) according to the Delray Beach visitor needs;
- Enhance coordination between Police Department, Fire Department and local businesses;
- Coordinate the downtown as a whole versus focus on one area:
  - Disperse events and activations through all neighborhoods versus concentrating them on Atlantic Avenue;
  - Enhance programming on West Atlantic Avenue;
  - use art & culture projects and initiatives to stimulate downtown neighborhoods outside the Swinton – A1A area;
- Review historic overlays (Swinton Avenue different from Atlantic Avenue) and allow for adaptive reuses in historic buildings as well as facilitate waivers (for parking purposes).

**12:05PM – 12:37PM - Lunch break**

## **12:37PM - Resume DDA Board Discussion and planning**

### **➤ Discussion: Strengths, Opportunities, Barriers**

#### **DDA organization strengths:**

- Strong leadership;
- Passion for the downtown area and Delray Beach;
- Efficiency;
- Capability of producing quality events in sync with the downtown local business's needs;
- Strong, reliable and engaging and communication skills:
  - o With the public (communication of events and important information about the downtown);
  - o Availability for listening feedback, questions and suggestions from the public;
  - o Unified branding across the different channels of communication and marketing materials;
  - o Strong social, marketing & PR communication initiatives;
  - o Consistency in communication
- Strong relationships and collaboration efforts with the different city partners;
- Reinvestment of tax dollars into cultural projects;
- Community lead and oriented (sourcing from community input).
- Source for inventory information, foot traffic patterns, sales...;
- Strong staff;
- Capability of recognizing the needs of the community;
- Vision to have a center to inform the visitors enhancing economic vitality.

#### **Strengths of current Board**

- Being new, there any new ideas being presented;
- Partnerships;
- Engagement and diversity of backgrounds and therefore ideas;
- Institutional knowledge (DDA as a decision maker);
- Capability of correcting past actions to better the future, according to community feedback.

#### **Downtown Delray Beach strengths as a destination:**

- Small town feeling, friendly and welcoming people;
- Community feeling;
- Walkability;
- Great cultural scene;
- Strong art scene;
- Beach;
- Engaged residents (active on social media channels);
- Diversity of businesses;
- Diversity of visitors;
- Strong political advocacy;
- Not a mall like, not many chain businesses;
- Diversity of activities offered from day to night;
- Capability of understand the needs of the city in order to promote economic development.

## Opportunities:

### ➤ DDA:

- Placemaking enhancements:
  - o Through clean and safe and beautification of downtown (postcard of the downtown)
  - o Resolving parking issues
- Integrate the different downtown neighborhoods as a whole (East Atlantic Avenue and West Atlantic Avenue):
  - o Creating more initiatives and activations on the West Atlantic Avenue area
  - o Leveraging relationships to include all downtown entities
- Enhance communication with the residents:
  - o Inform the residents on the DDA mission and areas of focus
  - o Use mailers to communicate with local residents about events in downtown area apart from the use of other marketing communications (social media, adds...)

### ➤ Old School Square:

- DDA has an advocate for development of the Old School Square project in the planning for the next 5 years
- Get funding for OSS.

### ➤ Tourism:

- Promote and create opportunities (events) on low season versus concentrating them during peak season,
- Change the visitor target during summer,
- Market European visitors (their vacation time is Summer),
- Market locals and neighboring cities.

## Barriers:

- Limited staff capacity
- Limited budget
- Limited time frame for planning

## Organizational Goals & Priorities

- Downtown experience strategy: Clean & Safe, Parking, Beautification)
- Resident's engagement strategy (through community events like downtown clean up, free parking weekend/day)
- West Atlantic Avenue Development (short and long-term planning)
- Planning for both OSS and DDA programs



## Defining Success – Key performance measures – Top 4 priorities:


1. Old School Square (short and long-term planning)
2. West Atlantic Avenue development plan (activations planning, infrastructure enhancement – café lights, trash cans, archways...)
3. Residents engagement strategy (more residents engagement, through newsletter sign-up, enhance messaging strategy)
4. Downtown experience strategy: Clean & Safe (expand Safety Ambassador's program (Laura), leverage the City's app for tracking issues (Brian) Parking, Beautification)

### 12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:03pm through board consensus.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liliana Fino

  
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Vera Woodson, DDA Vice-Chair

  
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DATE