



MINUTES
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING
Monday, October 20th, 2025 – 12:00pm – 3:00PM
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
100 NW 1st Ave, Delray Beach, FL 33444

Call to Order of the October 20th, 2025 BOARD MEETING – 12:00 PM

Members Present: Alan Costilo, Aaron Hallyburton, Brian Rosen, Cole Devitt, Jule Guagliardi (by phone).

Members Absent: Jim Knight, Anthony Barber.

Ex-Officio Members present: Mayor Tom Carney.

Staff: Laura Simon, Liliana Fino, Suzanne Boyd, Quentin Morgan, Shelly Likosar, Marusca Gatto, Alexandra Cosenza.

As Board Chair Knight was absent from the meeting, Board Vice Chair Rosen presided over the proceedings.

1. AGENDA APPROVAL – Additions or Deletions

DDA Executive Director Simon informs the board that the applicant under agenda item 4C: Request for Old School Square Venue Fees to be waived for Concourse D'Elegance 2026, requested to have the item moved to a future agenda.

Motion by Cole Devitt, seconded by Aaron Hallyburton to remove agenda item 4C: Request for Old School Square Venue Fees to be waived for Concourse D'Elegance 2026.

Motion carries (5 - 0). All in favor (Jim Knight and Anthony Barber not present).

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS & PARTNERS REPORTS – limited to 2 Minutes

Public comment by Stephanie Immelman, Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce, Chief Executive Officer):

Ms. Stephanie Immelman, on behalf of the Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce, expresses concerns about the new parking regulations and their potential impact on downtown small businesses. The organization is gathering feedback but stresses the importance of providing the City Commission with concrete data. To support this, the organization will promote and share any business surveys going out on this matter instead of conducting its own, ensuring all data is collected in one place and reaffirming the organization's partnership and support in addressing the issue.

Public Comment by Mavis Benson (Downtown Merchant and Business Association, Chair):

Ms. Mavis Benson expresses appreciation to those who attended the recent museum opening events but notes disappointment with the limited Board attendance. She reminds Members that Board service extends beyond attending meetings to include being active and visible in the community, engaging with the public, and supporting DDA initiatives. She emphasizes that such involvement strengthens relationships, builds community trust, and demonstrates genuine commitment to the downtown area.

Ms. Benson encourages DDA Board Members to increase participation and advises that she will share the same message with the Old School Square Foundation Board.

In regard to the City's new Employee Parking Permit program, she notes that the program has been positively received, with many participants signing up. However, she notes continued concern among small business owners and employees, particularly restaurant workers, regarding the affordability of the \$10 monthly fee. Ms. Benson reiterates the importance of supporting small businesses that form the foundation of the downtown economy. She restates her endorsement of previous DDA recommendations to keep parking garages free and to maintain no time limits in surface lots until at least 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Benson then discusses the storage situation at the Old School Square campus, expressing serious concern about its limited and impractical conditions. She observes that items are difficult to access, the upper storage area is unusable, and the existing wall construction presents safety and operational risks. She cautions that simultaneous events at the amphitheater, vintage gym, and Cornell Museum could lead to significant congestion and safety hazards.

Ms. Benson concludes by reminding the Board that, according to the original Interlocal Agreement between the City and the DDA, the DDA retains authority and responsibility for managing the entire Old School Square campus, with the only formal modification being the removal of the Crest Theatre. She urges the Board to carefully consider its obligations and ensure that operational and safety standards on the property are properly maintained.

The Board invites Major Gary Ferreri to introduce himself in his new role overseeing the Community Response Division of the Delray Beach Police Department, which includes the Clean and Safe program.

Public Comment by Major Ferreri *(City of Delray Beach, Police Department, Community Response Division, Major)

Major Ferreri emphasizes that community relations are a key priority, and outlines plans for officers to conduct door-to-door outreach with downtown merchants to gather feedback on successes and concerns. He assures the DDA Board of his availability and active engagement in community initiatives.

Major Ferreri also provides updates on downtown camera technology projects, noting that previous installations have aided crime reduction and investigations. He reports progress on the West Atlantic camera expansion and a citywide technology project funded by a Department of Justice grant, as well as a \$525,000 camera project to include cameras to be installed on the barrier island, highlighting the continued advancement of city technology over the past two years.

3. CONSENT AGENDA for Approval

3A: Board Meeting Minutes Approval: August 18, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes; September 8, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes; September 8, 2025 FY 2025/26 Budget Meeting Minutes

Motion by Alan Costilo, seconded by Cole Devitt to approve the consent agenda under items 3A:Board Meeting Minutes Approval: August 18, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes; September 8, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes; September 8, 2025 FY 2025/26 Budget Meeting Minutes, and 3B DDA FY2025-2026 Work Plan as presented.

Motion carries (5 - 0) through roll call (Jim Knight and Anthony Barber not present):

Cole Devitt – Yes

Brian Rosen – Yes

Aaron Hallyburton – Yes

Alan Costilo – Yes

Jule Guaglardi – Yes.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4A: Placemaking Activation DDA Grant Application by the SET Coalition for the “12 Days of Christmas” Dec. 18, 2025 Event Costs

Board Treasurer Devitt notes that the amount being requested is higher than the grant allows for but highlights that there is a surplus of funds for this program coming from the previous fiscal year.

Board Secretary Guaglardi suggests approving the grant at the total amount of \$2500, as it is only the beginning of the DDA’s Fiscal Year budget wise and seeing that the amount requested is higher than the regulated amount as per the grant policy.

Board Vice Chair Rosen states that if the availability exists, he is in favor of approving the grant on the total amount requested – being this event part of a set of events from this organization – to help the efforts of the organization on putting up this series of events to the community.

Mayor Tom Carney stated that the Set Neighborhood Alliance performs valuable work within the community and that the requested amount is reasonable.

Motion by Alan Costilo, seconded by Cole Devitt to approve the Placemaking Activation DDA Grant Application by the SET Coalition for the 5th Annual Santa’s pajama Block Party, as presented, for the total amount requested of \$3695.

Motion carries (5 - 0) through roll call (Jim Knight and Anthony Barber not present):

Alan Costilo – Yes

Aaron Hallyburton – Yes

Brian Rosen – Yes

Cole Devitt – Yes

Jule Guaglardi – Yes.

4B: Old School Square Campus Venue Rental fees waiver process discussion – L. Simon

DDA Executive Director Simon introduces the agenda item regarding venue fee waivers for the Old School Square campus, noting that it follows up on the Board’s discussion at the previous month’s meeting, when more information on venue rentals was requested. She reports that research on comparable venue fees has been conducted and is included in the meeting backup, along with a letter of recommendation from Old School Square management regarding venue rental fees. DDA Executive Director Simon explains that venue fees support operational programming rather than capital projects and that adjustments to fees can provide broader community access while promoting economic activity through events at Old School Square. She notes that a nonprofit rate, currently offering a 50% discount, is primarily requested for events at the Amphitheatre rather than other campus facilities, such as the Vintage Gym. She emphasizes that any request to increase the nonprofit discount beyond 50% or other

fee waiver requests must be approved by the DDA Board. DDA Executive Director Simon concludes by inviting the Board to discuss the matter and ask any questions.

Board Member Hallyburton inquires about how many events are commercial versus non-profit.

DDA Executive Director Simon responds that most of the events at the Amphitheater have a non-profit component, either managed by a 501(c)(3) organization or an event which proceeds reverted to a 501(c)(3) organization.

Aaron asks why that is the case.

DDA Executive Director Simon explains that most event producers have a non-profit arm.

Board Treasurer Devitt asks if other venues provide different rates for non-profits as well.

DDA Executive Director Simon refers to the document provided to the Board on their packet and notes that many venues have different rates for week versus weekend days and that there are also venue fees for setting up/breakdown.

Ms. Alexandra McCoy refers to the Old School Square venues fees stating that they include a 12-hour rental rate, which is standard, including setup and breakdown, highlighting that most venues charge more for less time.

Board Vice Chair Rosen asks whether other venues charge more during weekend versus weekdays.

Ms. Alexandra McCoy confirms they do.

Board Vice Chair Rosen asks the DDA team if it is preferable to have more activations during the weekends or during the weekdays.

DDA Executive Director Simon refers to the preference for weekdays, to improve economic impact, and cause less stress on city related services.

Board Vice Chair Rosen suggests the DDA creates different venue rates for the events at Old School Square in what refers to weekend versus weekdays, to promote more events on weekdays. He also suggests boosting promotion of those events through marketing campaigns and by promoting the venue itself.

Board Member Costilo agrees on having a slightly higher venue rate rental on weekends and highlights that the ultimate goal is to keep the campus active, which is the cultural center of the Delray Beach downtown area. He also mentions that independently whether the set up and breakdown of the events take place on the same day or not, the fees should reflect the total time spent on campus and not only the duration of the event.

Mayor Tom Carney compares to Meizner Park venue fees and notes that, as per his knowledge no venue fees have ever been waived. Mayor Tom Carney continues raising his concerns on the venue fees waived for the Old Scholl Square campus events as it is funded using taxpayer dollars. He also notes that according to the Interlocal Agreement there is a 10% share policy, which if no revenue is generated, adding to the fact that venue fees are being waived then there is no return.

DDA Counsel Morgan clarifies that the DDA has the right to set fees under the Interlocal Agreement. She emphasizes the importance of continuing discussions with both parties.

Mayor Tom Carney suggests that it would be better if the Commission could consent to lower fees. *Discussion ensued with Board Members Costilo and Vice Chair Rosen highlighting that the ultimate goal is to keep the campus active, that the campus should not be a profit maker but a cultural hub for the city, but emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration and discussion with the city going forward.*

Board Treasurer Devitt suggests waiving fees only for 501(c)(3) and for profits to pay full rate.

Board Vice Chair Rosen follows up on Mr. Devitt's recommendations and suggests approving only for local non-profits and deciding on a case-to-case basis for other non-profits outside the area.

Board Secretary Guaglardi agrees to approve rental fees reduction for local 501(c)(3), and to discuss the discount on a case-by-case basis for non-local 501(c)(3)s.

Mayor Tom Carney agrees that lower rates for non-profits make sense compared to for-profits.

Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris explains that from the City's perspective, and according to the City's latest policies a non-profit is either "a nonprofit based in the city of Delray Beach or clearly serving the Delray Beach community". He highlights that the policy defines the regulations on providing any sort of discount, to ensure the events align with the goal for community-focused programming. He adds that the intent of the discount should be to support events that provide entertainment and cultural value for the broader community rather than exclusive or high-cost fundraising events that limit public access. From the City's perspective it is important to support events that are inclusive and community oriented.

Board Vice Chair Rosen requests that the current City policy be shared with the DDA Board and staff and that any revisions also be provided as they are developed to help maintain consistency between DDA and City policies.

Board Treasurer Cole proposes offering the 50% discount for 501(c)(3) organizations only. with conditions to be determined.

DDA Executive Director Simon suggests determining the conditions in accordance with the City's policies.

Motion by Cole Devitt, seconded by Aaron Hallyburton to approve Old School Square venue rental fees reduction at 50% only for organizations that fall under the 501(c)(3) , with conditions to be further decided by the DDA Board, and all other organizations to pay the Old School Square venue rental fees at the full rate.

Motion carries (5 - 0) through roll call (Jim Knight and Anthony Barber not present):

Cole Devitt – Yes

Brian Rosen – Yes

Aaron Hallyburton – Yes

Alan Costilo – Yes

Jule Guaglardi – Yes.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A: DDA Bylaw Amendments – Quentin Morgan

DDA Counsel Morgan introduces the item on hand, which was removed from the previous DDA Board September meeting and explains that the items to be voted on remain as they were at said meeting, and opens the floor for discussion on the amendment's changes. He further suggests the approval of amendments for sections 4.4, 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4 first and afterwards approval of the amendments for section 4.3 as there has been discussion on the matter by the Board Members at previous meetings.

Motion by Alan Costilo, seconded by Cole Devitt to approve the DDA Bylaws Amendments for sections 4.4, 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4 as presented.

Motion carries (5 - 0) through roll call (Jim Knight and Anthony Barber not present):

Alan Costilo – Yes

Aaron Hallyburton – Yes

Brian Rosen – Yes

Cole Devitt – Yes

Jule Guaglardi – Yes.

Board Member Costilo initiates the discussion on the amendment for DDA Bylaws section 4.3, explaining that the current language was introduced into the charter but that the DDA board has the authority to maintain it as is or modify it. He suggests that there is no need to have such language on the bylaws as the DDA meetings have always been and continue to be a space where everyone is allowed to give their feedback.

Board Vice–Chair Rosen justifies his support in maintaining the current language paraphrasing his own comments at a previous DDA Board meeting stating that “the current language does not allow any commissioner to join, but rather specifies that only the Mayor may participate either as an *ex-officio* member or by appointing a representative (...) emphasizing the importance of collaboration with the city, stating that the Mayor's involvement with the DDA board either directly or through a designee is beneficial and that (...) regardless of the current status of relationship between the city and the DDA, focus should remain on improving and strengthening that relationship.” He proceeds, stating that his provision was in the bylaws and that the Mayor is not forcing his way under the board, only following the bylaws and voices his appreciation on the Mayor's input that facilitates collaboration between the DDA and the City. He finalizes by stating that he is not in favor of changing the current language in section 4.3, and that, as a DDA Board Member, he will work to ensure smoother collaboration moving forward.

Board Member Hallyburton also expressed his support for retaining the current language, stating that there is no justification for altering language that has long been a part of the bylaws, and that form a fundamental component of the organization's governance framework.

Board Treasurer Devitt, also is in agreement of keeping the current language noting that while it initially seemed confrontational, having the *ex-officio* member seat at the DDA Board meetings, it is now clear that it is essential for feedback on the City's perspective and to ensure smooth cooperation.

Board Secretary Guaglardi also supports keeping the provision, stating that past the initial hesitation, the objective is to foster cooperation in order to enhance mutual support between the organizations and to ensure that such collaboration is conducted in an efficient and seamless manner.

Motion by Aron Hallyburton, seconded by Cole Devitt to maintain the language on the DDA Bylaws section 4.3 as it sits.

Motion carries (4 - 1) through roll call (Jim Knight and Anthony Barber not present):

Cole Devitt – Yes

Brian Rosen – Yes

Aaron Hallyburton – Yes

Alan Costilo – **No**

Jule Guaglardi – Yes.

B: OSS Storage Facility review – L. Simon

DDA Executive Director Simon gives an overview of the process for the Old School Square (OSS) storage facilities changes and updates the Board on the latest recommendations from the Fire Department made to ensure safety of the facilities and its users. DDA Executive Director Simon also notes that the current layout is not consistent with the activities of that storage facility, especially when the OSS campus runs at full capacity.

Board Member Hallyburton asks Assistant City Manager Oris if the temporary wall can be moved 12 inches.

Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris responds that the wall cannot be farther moved due to fire code and egress requirements.

Board Member Costilo asks whether the classrooms could be used for the ceramic classes instead.

Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris Jeff replies that it is not possible due to the historical status of the facility.

Board Vice Chair Rosen reminds the Board that the storage facilities are City property. Nevertheless, he highlights that the space is mission critical to operate the campus in an efficient manner. He then revisits previous DDA Board meetings discussions when the board mentioned a possible transition of management over Old School Square, noting uncertainty about whether the City itself or another group working with the City would assume operations. He expresses concern about budget constraints, ongoing maintenance issues, and the DDA's decreasing control over space, emphasizing that although both City and organizational staff work diligently, challenges continue to arise.

Board Member Costilo asks DDA Executive Director Simon what alternatives exist to the space on discussion.

DDA Executive Director Simon responds that no other suitable facility is available on the campus.

Board Member Costilo asks whether a pre-submission request for changes at the storage facility was made.

DDA Executive Director Simon says no and suggests the Creative Arts School could reduce classroom capacity for the DDA to gain additional 12 inches of storage space.

Board Member Costilo asks if the Interlocal Agreement second amendment includes specific language allowing DDA use of the facility.

DDA Counsel Morgan reports that the DDA has sent a letter to the City that there is an understanding, under the Interlocal Agreement, that the DDA has exclusive use, but the City does not agree.

Discussion ensued with Board Members Costilo and Devitt expressing different interpretations of the facility's usage between the DDA and the City.

Board Secretary Guagliardi acknowledges the constraints of the use of the storage facilities for the intended purposes with the new layout and suggests, as before did Executive Director Simon, to reduce the classroom capacity. She ultimately advocates for the collaborative use of the facilities among the various entities that share the space.

Board Treasurer Devitt requests further clarification from Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris as to the reasons why it is not possible to move to move the wall 12 inches over.

Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris refers, once more, that it has to do mainly with egress requirements.

Board Treasurer Devitt reiterated a suggestion previously made by other Board Members to reduce classroom capacity in order to allow for the relocation of the wall.

Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris responded that reducing classroom capacity would compromise the program's sustainability and profitability. He further noted that the City had offered an alternative storage area within the parking garage, as well as staff assistance to relocate materials as needed.

Board Treasurer Devitt references the City's offer to provide a storage area within the parking garage, noting that the space is not equipped with air conditioning and will necessitate additional staffing.

Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris reiterates that the City will allocate personnel to address those operational requirements.

DDA Executive Director Simon explains that the DDA's suggestions take into account the structure of the campus and the need for functionality. She recalls that when the previous organization managed the grounds, the storage facilities were fully utilized, amongst other things, for production of stage sets.

Board Vice Chair Rosen confirms that the DDA has submitted its input to the City and reinforces that the storage facilities are key to operating the campus as whole. He also suggests the city takes that into consideration when making any future capital improvements to the campus.

Discussion ensued among Board Members Hallyburton, Rosen, and Costilo regarding the clause within the Interlocal Agreement and the appropriate next steps for future planning of the campus.

DDA Executive Director Simon cautions against taking any premature actions, emphasizing the importance of maintaining momentum and ensuring that the campus remains active throughout the transition period.

Board Member Costilo suggests a workshop to be held between the DDA and the City for the future planning of the Old School Square campus.

Board Member Hallyburton requests input from the Mayor's opinion on property management.

Mayor Tom Carney explains that since it is City property and the DDA only manages it (without paying rent), the structure operates differently, clarifying that property law and usage rights vary because the DDA does not hold rental rights over City-owned assets.

Board Member Hallyburton asks if the ceramic classes can commence after the high season discussion can wait until after the current season.

Mayor Tom Carney answers that he has not been following the issue very closely and highlights that the Creative Arts School ceramic classes are an essential component of the Arts School and must be considered.

A discussion ensued among Board Member Guaglardi, Ms. Marusca Gatto (Director, Cornell Art Museum), Board Member Rosen and DDA Executive Director Simon, emphasizing that the proposed changes to the storage facilities would have significant implications for the overall functionality and future use of the campus.

Mayor Tom Carney notes that approximately one month ago, when the matter was initially raised, he recommended the use of a storage POD. Ultimately, he emphasized the importance of collaboration to ensure the success of both organizations.

Board Members Hallyburton, Rosen, and Devitt proposed further exploration of the storage POD option, including an assessment of associated costs.

Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris responds that the discussion could continue to evaluate the feasibility of the POD storage concept and, if deemed unviable, consider alternative solutions.

C: Downtown Parking Discussion – L. Simon/Vice Chair Rosen

DDA Executive Director Simon provides an overview of the recent launch of the City's Downtown Employee Parking Permit Pilot Program, as well as the recent adjustments to public parking rates. She

informs the Board that the following evening, the City Commission will conduct the second reading of the ordinance to formally approve the proposed changes to parking fees and time limits, and to dissolve the Parking Management Advisory Board. She also mentions that the DDA is preparing a survey to gather feedback on the changes.

Board Vice Chair Rosen recommends that the Board review the survey prior to its distribution for further analysis. He also suggests that the DDA collaborate with the City and the Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce to determine the most appropriate and effective questions to include.

Board Member Costilo inquires whether, based on the feedback previously provided by the DDA to the City on parking matters, and the future survey results the City would consider the feedback and make corresponding adjustments to the program.

DDA Executive Director Simon responds that the feedback collected through the survey would be provided to the City for review, clarifying that the survey pertains solely to the City's Downtown Employee Parking Permit Pilot Program.

Board Vice Chair Rosen notes that sales of passes for the City's Resident Downtown Parking Permit Program have increased significantly in light of the recent changes to parking rates. He further proposes that the DDA Board assume the responsibilities of the Parking Management Advisory Board, noting that the latter has experienced difficulties in achieving a quorum. He recommends that this matter be discussed further at the next Board meeting. Additionally, he suggests that parking in the garages be made free of charge and that time limits on metered lots be eliminated, as those areas are already regulated by meters.

Board Member Costilo suggests sending a letter to the City Commission with the DDA Board's suggestions on parking matters.

Board Secretary Guaglardi agrees with suggestions given by Board Vice Chair Rosen.

Board Member Hallyburton agrees that parking in the garages be made free of charge. He supports keeping the Railroad Lot metered as it promotes turnover. As per the City's Downtown Employee Parking Permit Pilot Program he notes that although paid parking may not be ideal, it can benefit the City.

Board Vice Chair Rosen suggests the City's Downtown Employee Parking Permit Pilot Program be automated, through the use of an app to facilitate the sales of passe process.

Board Member Hallyburton recommends postponing the distribution of the DDA survey regarding the City's Downtown Employee Parking Permit Pilot Program, noting that the program was only recently launched. He further observes that it would be beneficial for the DDA Board to assume the mission of the Parking Management Advisory Board.

DDA Executive Simon suggests presenting the Board suggestions at the next day's City Commission meeting.

Mayor Tom Carney concurs with the DDA Board's recommendation to assume the responsibilities of the Parking Management Advisory Board.

Board Treasurer Devitt suggests deploying the DDA survey on the City's Downtown Employee Parking Permit Pilot Program only after the employees have gone through the permit's renewal process.

D: Downtown Beautification and Vision for Downtown – J. Guaglardi/L. Simon

Board Secretary Guaglardi emphasizes the importance of defining DDA's mission and direction to ensure a clear path forward. She notes that it has been approximately fifty years since the Atlantic Avenue streetscape, including sidewalks and trees, was last renovated, and while Federal Highway was improved

in 2016, the rest of the downtown area has not received similar attention. She expresses concern about the lack of maintenance, issues with overgrown landscaping, outdated signage, deteriorating facades, and the absence of coordinated beautification elements such as planters and uniform design features. She stresses that vacant storefronts, inconsistent aesthetics, and poor upkeep negatively affect tourism, business activity, and the overall vitality of the downtown area. She adds that she has been researching state and local laws regarding vacant properties to determine whether property owners benefit from leaving spaces unoccupied and emphasizes the need to address this issue proactively. She proposes holding a workshop meeting to discuss beautification efforts in greater depth and suggests forming an internal Beautification Committee to work collaboratively on recommendations for the Vision Board. She volunteers to lead the initiative and recommends engaging design professionals or consultants to evaluate existing conditions and provide cost estimates for possible improvements. She further suggests linking these efforts to the 50th anniversary of the downtown redevelopment to generate community excitement and participation. She proceeds, noting that during recent visits with merchants, several business owners expressed concerns about limited visibility and reduced pedestrian activity, particularly near Deck 84. She explains that one merchant's request to install planters or decorative features to improve the area's appearance and safety was denied. She believes such initiatives should be encouraged to enhance downtown aesthetics and deter undesirable activity. She concludes by sharing that several merchants reported significant declines in business during the summer months due to reduced events and foot traffic, underscoring the importance of ongoing programming and beautification efforts to sustain year-round economic activity.

Board Vice Chair Rosen refers that in the past, initiatives have been conducted with local merchants, where they are invited to sessions on topics such as using Facebook effectively, learning about new marketing tools, and setting up campaigns correctly. He suggests that there may be opportunities in the future to offer similar support and training sessions to local businesses.

Ms. Suzanne Boyd states that the meetings jointly organized by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the Downtown Merchants and Business Association serve as a vital forum for merchants to engage with the DDA and to raise any inquiries or concerns they may have.

DDA Executive Director Simon Ms. Laura observes that downtown is continually evolving and emphasizes that the organization cannot directly control rental rates, which are expected to increase as part of this growth.

Board Secretary Guagliardi reports that during her interactions with local businesses they highlighted ongoing challenges faced by small, independent businesses. She reports that local merchants express frustration over the steady rise in rents, which they feel disadvantages long-standing "mom and pop" shops that have contributed to Delray's unique character. She notes that these smaller businesses are increasingly being replaced by larger chains, which are often the only entities able to afford the higher rental costs. She comments that this trend undermines the distinctive local identity upon which Delray was originally built.

DDA Executive Director Simon agrees, noting that multiple factors—such as beautification, accessibility, and construction projects—intersect to influence downtown's overall environment and visitor experience. She recommends that the Board allocate time to identify and prioritize key issues through a structured discussion or workshop. She further proposes the establishment of a committee to

address these priorities in a coordinated manner, given the current period of transition. She offers to poll Board Members for potential workshop dates in the coming months.

Board Vice Chair Rosen suggests developing a dedicated database of small, independent businesses (“mom and pops”) that the DDA could collaborate with for marketing initiatives. He remarks that some merchants may not be fully leveraging digital marketing tools, such as targeted social media campaigns, to attract engagement from niche audiences. He proposes that the DDA consider offering a short marketing workshop or class to support these businesses, encouraging participation through existing merchant meetings.

DDA Executive Director Simon acknowledges the suggestion and notes that many small businesses operate with limited staff, often run solely by the owner. She highlights the DDA’s ongoing outreach efforts through the *Block Captain Program*, which has helped identify merchants’ concerns—particularly those related to reduced summer activity. She explains that the team is actively exploring strategies to mitigate seasonal downturns and to support businesses as they transition into the busier months. She further mentions the upcoming *Shop Small* campaign, emphasizing that approximately 95% of downtown businesses remain small and independently owned. She stresses the importance of continuing to support and celebrate these enterprises as the holiday and tourist seasons approach.

Board Member Hallyburton remarks that Delray Beach remains a tourism-driven destination and that business owners must consider both location and clientele before establishing operations. He advises prospective merchants to consult with city departments, such as Code Enforcement, to understand signage and modification regulations before leasing space. He further notes that some business owners attempt to alter Delray’s established character to suit their individual needs, which can conflict with the community’s existing identity.

Following request for updates regarding ongoing beautification efforts by Board Member Hallyburton and Rosen, which they acknowledge that the condition of the area has significantly improved compared to prior years, Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris, reports that nonviable palm trees are being removed and some planter areas paved to improve safety and pedestrian access. He notes that staff monitor other landscaping needs and coordinate with Public Works on irrigation and drainage. Additional CRA funding allows expansion of beautification efforts across downtown. He concludes by reaffirming the team’s commitment to maintaining a high-quality streetscape for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Board Secretary Guagliardi notes that multiple factors must work together to sustain downtown, including consistent upkeep, safety, and a welcoming environment. She emphasizes that visitors are more likely to spend money where streetscapes are attractive and well-maintained, and where public disturbances are minimized. She stresses that creating a safe and beautiful environment is essential to supporting local businesses and retaining patrons.

2:09 p.m. – Board Member Devitt leaves the room.

Board Secretary Guagliardi emphasizes creating a cohesive rhythm across downtown by enhancing the distinct character of each area while maintaining safety and functionality. She highlights the need for collaboration with staff to coordinate cleanup, select planters, and establish consistent yet flexible signage standards. She also notes that a single guiding approach is currently lacking and that a coordinated effort could help direct downtown improvements.

Board Vice Chair Rosen suggests identifying ten to fifteen specific locations or items to prioritize, including a quick assessment of vacant buildings.

2:11 p.m. – Board Member Devitt returns to the room.

DDA Executive Director Simon notes that the effort requires both short- and long-term planning and cannot be completed within six months.

Board Member Costilo reports that two gallery owners approach him after the last workshop to discuss beautification, homelessness, and safety concerns downtown, with patrons feeling unsafe going downtown late in the evenings.

Board Vice Chair Rosen observes that he would not characterize the area as unsafe, but rather as more active and energetic between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m., attracting a younger demographic.

DDA Executive Director Simon notes that this dynamic is not new but has become more pronounced due to the increased number of dining options, noting that over 20 new restaurants have opened in the past five years in addition to the 120 previously established establishments.

Board Member Hallyburton notes that cleanliness and safety were early priorities for the board and emphasizes that a clean environment promotes productivity. He commends the City Manager and new Code Officer for significant improvements and highlights the need for continued community support to maintain progress.

Board Secretary Guagliardi proposes the formation of a beautification committee and expresses her willingness to lead it. She states that she is deeply committed to the initiative and is prepared to dedicate her time and energy to research and related efforts. She welcomes participation from other Board Members who share this interest and notes that, if no one within the current group is available, she can identify other business owners with similar interests who may wish to be involved but are not yet aware of these discussions.

Board Member Rosen expresses interest in joining a Beautification Committee, he also suggests the board discuss matters further at a future workshop.

DDA Executive Director Simon suggests the DDA team work on the dates for the workshop, and suggests the board discuss the role of the Beautification Committee at that point.

Board Vice Chair Rosen highlights the City of Delray Beach mobile application as an effective tool for the public to report concerns or issues observed throughout the city. He further recommends that, should a Beautification Committee be established, its members utilize the application as a means of communicating identified issues to the City.

Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris offers to share his expertise, noting that his prior professional experience in similar roles provides valuable perspective. He states that he can contribute a realistic understanding of what resources and opportunities are available and expresses his willingness to assist by sharing his knowledge.

Mayor Tom Carney emphasizes that maintaining the appearance of Atlantic Avenue is among the City's highest priorities. He recalls initiating the removal of tree stumps along the Avenue shortly after his election and notes that only a few remain in non-city areas, which are expected to be removed soon. He states that the presence of dead stumps reflects poorly on the City and conveys a lack of respect for those who frequent the area. He acknowledges the expense and equipment required for removal but maintains that addressing the issue is essential to preserving a positive image of the City.

2:18 p.m. – Mayor Tom Carney leaves the meeting.

Board Secretary Guaglardi shares that due to her previous professional background, working closely with international tourism boards and hospitality groups, she has a unique perspective on design and presentation, noting that small details collectively shape how a city is perceived. She suggests creating a list of areas and visual elements that can distinguish Delray Beach, drawing inspiration from other cities that maintain cohesive and consistent downtown aesthetics. She adds that visitors frequently comment on the city's architecture, praising new developments such as Hyde Park, Gabriella's, Colonial, and Sunday Village for their thoughtful design, lighting, and landscaping. She observes that these improvements highlight nearby areas that have not been updated recently, creating a visual contrast within the downtown area.

E: DDA Monthly August 2025 Financials - L. Simon

DDA Executive Director Simon provides a summary of the DDA and OSS August financial report and answers some questions that Board Member Rosen had over a line budget for activation at Libby Wesley Plaza.

Motion by Cole Devitt, seconded by Aaron Hallyburton to approve the DDA Monthly August 2025 Financials as presented.

Motion carries (5 - 0). All in favor (Jim Knight and Anthony Barber not present).

F: DDA/OSS Program Updates for September and upcoming – DDA Team

Ms. Suzanne Boyd reports on several marketing initiatives during the month of September, including the Sounds of the SET initiative, downtown Restaurant Month and the #LoveDelray summer campaign. She also discusses the upcoming Shop Small Holiday Rewards Pass program and the Art and Jazz on the Avenue event. Following, she reviews the DDA September marketing highlights, covering social media, public relations, and website traffic data, and references the new DDA website is in development.

Ms. Shelly Likosar provides updates on the Visitor Information Center activities for the month of September, updates on the DDA/OSS volunteer management program. Ms. Shelly Likosar and Ms. Mavis Benson give updates on the recently reinstated DDA Block Captain program, an open invitation to the DDA Board to collaborate.

Ms. Suzanne Boyd reports on the continued collaboration with the downtown Ambassadors' Program and the Beach Keepers, Inc organization.

Ms. Marusca Gatto provided an overview of the upcoming exhibitions and initiatives at the Cornell Art Museum and delivered a report on the Museum's activities and initiatives undertaken during the preceding month of September and Board Member Rosen commends Ms. Gatto and the Museum staff for their impressive work and leadership, noting the significant value of their contributions despite limited resources. The Chair reaffirms commitment to ensuring sufficient funding for the Museum's operations.

Ms. Suzanne Boyd details on the OSS September marketing campaigns, including email marketing results, social media engagement, public relations outcomes, and upcoming events at the Old School Square campus.

COMMENTS

DDA Counsel Morgan discusses the city's event charge policy and suggests adding this topic to a future agenda for review based on feedback from the city regarding fundraising events and Board Member Rosen agrees.

DDA Executive Director Simon provides updates on current development projects and the Veteran's Park renovation.

Board Member Costilo praises the DDA and OSS teams for their ongoing work. He also remarks that the meeting reflects democracy in action, expressing appreciation for the diversity of opinions and the thoughtful, respectful discussion among the Board Members.

Board Member Hallyburton advocates for the City to take into consideration the DDA's feedback on the renovations at the OSS storage facilities.

Board Secretary Devitt recalls the previous recommendations submitted by the DDA Board to the City concerning standalone retail tobacco and nicotine-product establishments in the downtown area. He notes that the vape statute appears to have been misinterpreted, explaining that the provision specifying that, once a vape shop vacates a location, it may not be replaced by another, was omitted during the commission meeting. He suggests that the DDA continue to advocate for this matter before the City to ensure alignment with the Board's original recommendation. He further refers to earlier comments by Board Member Rosen, emphasizing the importance of having new projects return before the DDA for review throughout the full process, and suggests this as a consideration for future planning.

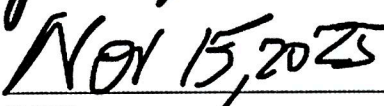
Board Vice Chair Rosen advocates the DDA to participate in the Visioning Committee and emphasizes the importance of ensuring that new development projects are brought to the DDA for review and input.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m. through motion by Alan Costilo, seconded by Aaron Hallyburton. Motion carries (5 - 0). All in favor (Jim Knight and Anthony Barber not present).

Respectfully submitted,
Liliana Fino


Julie Guagliardi, DDA Secretary


DATE