



Tuesday, February 12, 2013 – 9:00 a.m.

HEMMING PLAZA COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Present: DIA Chair D. Harris; Hemming Plaza Committee Chair J. Bailey; M. Bishop; and T. Allegretti

Attendees: Ted Carter, Acting Executive Director Office of Economic Development; Paul Crawford, OED, Acting Executive Director; Eric Lindstrom, OED; Michelle Stephens, Recording Secretary

Office of General Counsel: Jason Gabriel

Council Members Present: Council Member E. Denise Lee, Council District 8 and Council Member Don Redman, Council District 4

I. CALL TO ORDER

Hemming Plaza Committee Chair J. Baily called the meeting to order at approximately 9:10 a.m.

HEMMING PLAZA DISCUSSION

Chair Bailey advised that as a result of Council Member Denise Lee, Chair of the City Council Ad Hoc Committee on Hemming Plaza and who also attended the December 12, 2012 DIA meeting, a Hemming Plaza Committee of the DIA was formed, Chaired by Jim Bailey and includes Board Member K. Harper and Board Member M. Bishop. The purpose of the DIA Hemming Plaza Committee was to take all of the information provided by Council Member Lee's Committee study it, explore solutions and recommend a solution to the full DIA in the near future.

Mr. Bailey advised that one of the recommendations that resulted from Council Member Lee's Committee was the idea of creating a new not-for-profit foundation that would be responsible for Hemming Plaza. The foundation would be responsible for creating a sense of neighborhood for the people who live and work downtown and treating Hemming Plaza like a welcoming front porch for visitors to our downtown government center. The foundation would be responsible for staging events, hiring vendors, and fronting the expenses and it would also keep all of the revenues generated to go back into the operation and promotion of the park through the foundation. Would be run similar to other successful parks around the country and compared to the way the Riverside Arts Market is run. Other groups such as churches and non-profits could use the plaza, but event booking would be scheduled and approved by the foundation. Council Member Lee noted that she could not speak for other members of City Council, but thought that if the DIA chose to follow the suggestion of a not-for-profit organization or if the DIA were to

come up with another better idea, the members of City Council would be inclined to follow their lead.

Mr. Bailey advised that he has since spoken with several stakeholders to find out what can be done if the park was run by a not-for-profit foundation, adding that they have reached out to other cities around the country who have had success with a not-for-profit foundation under similar circumstances. He introduced Ms. Emily Butler who provided a presentation on a hypothetical model based on research conducted. The title of the presentation was H.A.R.T. Jacksonville (a copy of the presentation is attached).

Mr. Bailey provided the following information:

- The concept is a collaborative effort working with the City's Park and Recreation Department, DVI, and businesses.
- To test, they created a mock foundation of 10 people who would invest \$5,000 into the "Friends of Hemming Plaza" or the "H.A.R.T. organization" to be seed money to start the foundation.
- There are grants from Home Depot, Verizon, State Farm, Wells Fargo, etc. for urban park improvements that can be applied for.
- The concept requires no money from the City other than the maintenance currently provided by the City.
- The Sheriff advised that with a private foundation you can have rules in the park that he can't enforce as a law enforcement officer.
- Events are needed every single day in the park.
- Has spoken with the Florida Theatre, an organization that he thinks can handle the programming of the events adding that they would be glad to assist with a programmer to pull the events off and manage them on a day to day basis.
- Must be a collaborative effort.
- The park remains a City park with some rules and regulations that are created by the foundation.
- Would like to have up and running in coordination with One Spark in April.

Mr. Bailey advised at the end of the presentation that the proposed not-for-profit foundation was one option that they would like to bring back to the DIA as an opportunity and as a suggestion. He suggested that DVI has presented a RFI that has merit that should be looked at to see if it can carry itself or if there is a hybrid or blend in between of what we are trying to do. It's not about trying to do the same things we have been trying to do in the past. It is time to unleash the potential in Hemming Plaza, get it done, salvaged and show that the DIA is going to get things done and start moving forward.

Mr. Bailey advised that the Committee's recommendation is to take the concept presented today back to the DIA as a recommendation to continue investigation and move forward, see if there are other opportunities with other organizations that might like to do this (if someone has a better

mousetrap – we want it – we want to jump on it and do it), there is no pride and ownership in anything we do. If we have another opportunity let's do it. Or, if we have a combination of opportunities that we can pull together – I think the foundation is an excellent way to pull these different entities together and be able to do Hemming Plaza right and get it done.

Council Member Lee was present and reiterated the need for the DIA to own the Hemming Plaza issue and move it forward.

Terry Lorince, Executive Director with Downtown Vision, Inc. commented that she hoped the DIA had a chance to read their RFI and discuss their budget and their proposal and look at what other downtown improvement districts are doing throughout the county to manage parks.

Chairman Bailey advised that he would like to make a recommendation to the DIA on proceeding forward with the opportunity for a foundation and if and how the RFI that has been presented is information that may also be used, or the possibility of merging the two and figure out the best opportunity to move forward.

A motion was made by Chairman Bailey and seconded by Committee Member M. Bishop to take the not-for-profit foundation concept to the full DIA as a recommended solution to the Hemming Plaza issue.

For clarification, Mr. Gabriel verified that the DIA Hemming Plaza Committee was making a recommendation to the DIA for vote regarding the exploration and possibilities of engaging with a not for profit to program and operate events at Hemming Plaza. Mr. Gabriel added (noting that he needs to verify the information) that if the DIA concurs with the recommendation, it is likely that the action will require either a RFP for the property or City Council action. Whenever you are relinquishing some formal control over a public park or property in general it may require some form of RFP to vet what operators may exist or Council approval because it will likely result in some form of an agreement.

After much discussion, the Committee concurred that the discussion of the not for profit foundation presented by Chair Bailey today, the subject of the RFI submitted by DVI, and the possible need to issue a RFP and under what scenarios, etc. needed to be further researched and presented to the full DIA for a recommendation.

A motion was made by Committee Member M. Bishop and seconded by Chair J. Bailey to take the not-for-profit foundation concept to the full DIA as a recommended solution to the Hemming Plaza issue.

There being no further business, Chair J. Bailey adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:14 a.m.

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The written minutes for this meeting are only an overview of what was discussed. For verbatim comments for this meeting, an audio CD is available upon request. Please contact Michelle Stephens, Office of Economic Development at (904) 630-1979 or by email at msteph@coj.net.