



Thursday, March 28, 2013 – 2:00 p.m.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Present: T. Allegretti, J. Bailey, O. Barakat, M. Bishop, K. Harper, and M. Saylor

Board Members Not Present: Chairman D. Harris, R. Clements, and P. Perez,

Office of General Counsel: Julianna Rowland

Council Members Present: Council Member Lori Boyer, District 5, and Council Member Don Redman and

Attendees: Paul Crawford, Office of Economic Development (OED); Eric Lindstrom, DIA Staff; Karen Underwood, Recording Secretary; Terry Lorince, DVI

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bailey called the meeting to order at approximately 2:03 p.m. opening with the Mission Statement.

ENVIRONMENT DISCUSSION

Chair Bailey, stated that the environment committee priorities are not for the entire board.

The purpose of the committee meeting was identifying such issues, with a Redevelopment Committee meeting directly after used to further discuss priorities.

The board discussed parking homelessness, Laura Street Trio, Bostwick and the demolition of the old court house.

Jim Bailey stated that the DIA board has been in existence October 2012. Laura Street has been around for a long time and we have seen it go both ways. He mentioned the Bostwick building has a buyer the owners have a price and want to sell the building. The reason that people are on this board is because they have the exposure and experience but at the same time, they have to be careful about whom they are engaged with to avoid conflicts. Bostwick owners have a contract in hand that has not been signed with some conditions to it to sell the building. He is in hopes that the buyers will renovate the building and put it to use. Mr. Shea made a recommendation during the first DIA meeting that the board find the \$325,000. Jim Bailey asked if the Old library would require funding. Paul Crawford responded that there has no documentation has been received or requests of additional funding.

Paul Crawford provided an update on the Ambassador Hotel. They met with a development team for the Ambassador Hotel, and they have presented it to DDRB and currently seeking conceptual review and approval. Chair Bailey addressed short term activation of the shipyards, and asked if there was anything we can expect regarding funding for the shipyard activation. Paul Crawford responded that the shipyard is a property that we took back about approximately two years ago. When it was taken back, there were quite a few improvements to that entire property from Metropolitan Park to Berkman Phase II. The improvements were a new bulkhead along that perimeter of the property adjacent to the St. Johns River. In addition, we took it back with its entire works, which would be the environmental issues on the property. The Environmental issues are being evaluated. Some known contaminants have been evaluated and monitored. A partially built River walk is going from the western portion of the Berkman Phase II to the eastern portion which is the the Metropolitan park. This area is currently fenced off because it is an incomplete project and has no safe guards to protect pedestrians or people adjacent to the water front. They have disconnected piers from eight to ten feet from the partially complete river walk structure. Several things have been added to the eastern portion of the property by taking out the foundations of old buildings that were shipyard buildings. The sanded areas are grassed and trees have been planted along the northern portion of the property adjacent to Bay Street. The side walk has been replaced adjacent to Bay Street and provided a connection from the terminus of the river walk, located behind Berkman Phase II to Bay Street is well lit and has been landscaped. They have looked at activating that in the process of looking at how they could do a short-term activation plan and make that property a usable property for the short-term as they contemplate a long-term master plan. They are looking forward to presenting something so the board would have a slate to work from.

Oliver Barakat asked Paul Crawford if the prior owners conducted phases II and I. Paul Crawford responded yes, some in some cases environmental testing and remediation were done. There was a large pile of contaminated soil covered with a two foot tarp. When they left and we took over the property through their bankruptcy, we took that element possibly about a year and a half ago and noted that filed suit and were awaiting a judgment from Crescent a parent company of Landmar to recoup some of the funding that were owed to the City based on their default. The City is currently waiting for the outcome. Remediation is needed on several parts of it. Depending on what you do with the site, may be an issue with the future outcome.

James Bailey commented on Water site II, the environmental is not just under the two feet, and there may be some challenges in the water. Paul Crawford responded that Hogan's Creek was recently dredged and wide so that it could accommodate upstream flooding issues. Therefore, they could accommodate the amount that flows into the St. Johns River. The Hogan's Creek was noted as having several contaminants at the mouth and further upstream. The bulkhead resolved many of the contamination issues on the property, so that there would be any leaching into the St. Johns River when the new bulkhead was created. A barrier was provided for the elimination of leaching materials into the St. John's River.

Oliver Barakat asked if the City was working with the DEP to develop a critical path of what measures would need to be completed. Even if a private developer does it after they acquire or the City does it in preparation for the potential sale. Paul Crawford responded that recently two things has been done and both funded through professional services through the City of Jacksonville's

Office Economic Development. Contracting with an environmental consultant was done by removing and disposing through the requirements of the DEP and secondly, there were several drums that were left on site from the shipyards days. After the previous developers left, the drums were removed. A continuation of monitoring wells that is on the site eastern of the portion. They reached out to the company that is doing the remediation get further guidance on DEP requirements as well as the previous developer's environment consultant whom has a history on the site to determine what they would recommend to the previous developer. This will require continual monitoring on the environmental side and seeking additional direction from the environmental consultants.

James Bailey asked Paul Crawford to keep the DIA informed of any changes, progress, and update on the law suit settlement.

Mike Saylor stated the Cities future use of the land is dependent upon how the board negotiates the use DEP guidelines to figure out a sequencing plan. The strategic planning on this property used to be strategic and needs to be looking at the economics of the future use and value before piling up funds for remediation. Paul Crawford concurred and noted that we needed to continue to interact with the DEP on any contamination and environmental uses.

Melody Bishop asked about an aiming timeframe. Paul Crawford responded that we are currently working through the disposing of the property and continually try to discover a plan to remediate the environmental issues. Mike Saylor commented that there was a great example on the other side of the river that we do not want to follow. The JEA Southside plan has been remediated to a degree. There have been several failed attempts to look at purchasing a redevelopment. We need to figure out what more JEA could do for the future to expedite the redevelopment of that site and apply those procedures to this site.

Jim Bailey pointed out the wavering signage downtown. Melody Bishop asked if there was a price for that. Paul Crawford responded three years ago, we tried to figure how to solve the wavering signage issues because it was noticed that the 1980- early 1990 signs around town did not point in the right direction and were faded and non-repairable. We went through an inventory of where signs were needed, what they needed to say, and material to be used, how they would be placed and installed. This estimate came to nine hundred thousand to one million dollars to install all of the signs on the North and South bank that went through DDRB and JEDC.

Jim Bailey addressed several streets that were identified in the past that need to be turned into two way streets. Paul Crawford pointed out the members that were on the committee during a study in 2007 called Pedestrian open space taskforce. They identified the streets, which streets that would be best utilized for two lanes. He addressed the three streets, a portion of Bay Street, Water Street that comes up to the Hyatt, and Laura Street was turned into two way streets. Going forward there are several others on the list and the direction of Melody Bishop and CRA, committee would be addressed after this meeting. A document from King Engineering defines what streets would be best utilized to two ways.

Oliver Barakat inquired on the Laura Street improvement program 2.7 million dollar project. This was a high end landscaping improvement project as well as a traffic directional project. How much of that was allotted to the directional aspects to that change and improvements and landscapes. Paul Crawford responded it was not as simple as being able to break out the two lanes. There was a need for new control boxes that went in as part of the overall demolition. New control boxes were added at a different size to accommodate kiosks. The overall project consisted of digging up crossing and asphalts to provide wiring back to another block that does not have traffic control devices. There have been discussions with engineers on what it would cost and depending of the block, number of lanes, and bolts to protect parallel parking.

Oliver Barakat noted that based on Laura Street experience, would you be able to provide numbers once a defined scope of work and a range of streets. Paul Crawford responded that he would rely on public works to provide a basic. James Bailey stated that he imagine that number could be found from a high end to a low end.

James Bailey advised to the committee that anything done in Hemming Plaza would be considered in the environment committee. Anything we can do to honor our military, is important.

Bruce Fouraker commented that the emerald necklace would be something important to Downtown. An overall quality study for Hogan and McCoy creek would be a good start for this project.

John Nooney commented on the water related activity for the Downtown and mentioned that many of the activities should go through waterways. He commended Council Member Boyer at the previous Waterways Commission meeting.

James Bailey recognized Councilwoman Boyer, Councilman Lumb and Council Redman for attending the committee meeting.

Melody Bishop stated that there were ways to increase the activity in the ability to have activation of the sidewalks. Other cities have come up with very creative ways. She mentioned that in New York City pallets were placed on the parking spaces and expands their restaurant into that space. Minor improvements would be huge difference in a short amount of time.

Oliver Barakat commented on the beautification, widening private sidewalks that were done on Laura Street. The various subcommittees need to connect the dots between the various objectives. If we are going to do a two way conversion, invest in beautification, we ought to think about focusing our incentive dollars in that same geographic area. James Bailey stated that it was addressed earlier about all of us lobbying in the same direction. Terry Lorince has experienced that with DVI in the past of having successes all over and not being able to tell because the dots were not connected. Our goal is to guide the revitalization of the corridor of the City of Jacksonville.

Barbara Ketchim commented that many people in our hope that this group would develop a comprehensive vision for our City. All across America Cities are imaging developing images based on a small core. James Bailey pointed out that those plans were created, administration has changed, and every one changes direction over and over.

This organization was created to transcend all administrations and be able to focus on it and not change that direction until we start getting somewhere.

Councilman Don Redman, District 4, addressed his concerns on Hemming Park. He has some legislation that he has been deferring on a regular basis waiting to see where they are going to go. He wanted to know where we were on those discussions. James Bailey stated that they spent two and a half years in an ad hoc subcommittee of the Council discussing it and they did not get anywhere. He suggested an RFP and Council Member Lee came back with them through a nonprofit. The key is for everyone to go into the same direction by working together and participating. His thought on Hemming plaza was to create a nonprofit and wanted to engage businesses and stakeholders in downtown that stepped forward to pay to be engaged in this board. There is a maximum amount of almost fifty thousand dollars and close to hundred thousand dollars to engage in Hemming Plaza. Chair Bailey stated that he would like to meet with Council Member Redman for a discussion and share some of his thoughts. Councilmember Redman responded that he would like to meet as soon as possible.

Melody Bishop wanted clarification on the legislation that was prior to DIA's involvement. She asked if this was a follow up to Councilmember Lee's recommendation from the adhoc committee. She thought the status that was left with the DIA was that it would go out in the streets as an RFP with the intent of it going forward as originally described. Chair Bailey responded that he met with Jason Gabriel from General Counsel and they went over how an RFP would be structured. Before the last meeting, they conversed about clarifying some of the issues with it. After that discussion, he is not sure that it would be the right way to go. Mr. Harris and Barakat had concerns and suggested that we would look at it a little more. Jim Bailey will connect with Terry Lorince from DVI and keep everyone engaged and added that participation would be needed from Special Events, Parks, and Recreation

Councilman Redman pointed out that during the One Spark event would be a good time to start turning Downtown Jacksonville around. Chair Bailey concurred and has meet with everyone regarding the five day upcoming event.

Oliver Barakat stated that he thought the path that was taken was a situation where the RFP would be put on the street, evaluate all of the proposals. He was not clear on who else would be interested in managing the Hemming Park. Mr. Barakat went over an evaluation process that consisted of the following bulleted items.

- Why it was decided to go through an RFP process,
- Put it on the street,
- See who would respond,
- See how capable and competent they would be,
- See if they have experience in this function,
- What would it cost the City,
- What kind of programming would they do, how creative they are
- How quickly could they get their boots on the ground to get this started and make an objective prudent decision?

Councilman Redman responded the goal was to put the RFP on the street and noted that there was some confusion at one of the meetings where more discussions were needed. Chair Bailey responded that there have been more discussions with Jason Gabriel, Ted Carter, Karen Nasrallah, Paul Crawford, and several others for an hour and a half to work through all of the issues. He addressed that it is not just putting out an RFP. There is a licensing agreement because it is a City Park, and it not that easy but can be done and will be done. Issues arise when you turn a park over, start developing rules of the City Park that someone will manage. Chair Bailey pointed out that the board will work together.

Melody Bishop asked Councilman Redman what was his legislation. Councilman Redman responded his legislation was to remove the tables and chairs. Paul Crawford noted that he would be happy to work with the board on the issues of leasing versus licensure, and the process.

Melody Bishop asked if there was a way to have someone from the restaurants nearby to occupy a certain area. What are the regulatory requirements? Chair Bailey responded if they are expecting to generate funds there are all kinds of things involved. Paul Crawford responded that he has been in conversations with the Office of General Counsel. As you start to modify the environment, designate a particular space by a user then it becomes a lease. A lease would require a process to go through City Council because this is a community redevelopment area as governed by State Statute. We will explore on how to move forward with the board decision, if it triggers a lease, we would go through the RFP process through City Council to make sure that it happens. Paul Crawford noted that Councilman Redman's concept of removing the tables and chairs are needed because they are in need of repairs. It could be combined with the lease on repairing or replacing them and provide the new entity the opportunity to decide or it would be separated and removed and given to the new entity that would manage the parks space the opportunity to set up temporary or movable tables and chairs. These details are needed before deciding how to move forward with the RFP and the process for City Council or Procurement.

Chair Bailey stated that he would call a meeting with Councilman Redman.

Ms. McDonald commented on Councilman Redman's response regarding the homeless situation at Hemming Plaza. She suggested to Chairman Bailey that there is a need for more people through Arts and Culture. The Cultural Council is making available to artist, innovators, and organizations grants to execute public project. The projects could be in Hemming Plaza and anywhere in the Spark District. There is a need for more public private collaboration for more resources to become more efficient. UNF conducted a study in 2011, looking at how much bang for the \$3.27 received for the City per person invested in Arts and Culture. Chairman Bailey asked Ms. McDonald to provide more background for those numbers.

Dimitri Demopoulos, President of the Condominium Association at Churchwell commented on the Haydon Burns issues. He commented that being a downtown resident representing people that he lives with and dealing with downtown after 6 p.m., He has concerns that the building will get dark at the end of the day once everyone goes home. Chairman Bailey responded that we are fortunate to have pioneers and folks that stepped up to purchase the building. Mr. William Cesery did a wonderful job on this project and deserves a return on his investment.

Terry Lorince, Downtown Vision commented that she does not envy the task of the DIA board to maximize the leverage 9 million dollars of public funding yet alone to figure out which strategy as we have been trying to do. She advocated on behalf of some of the needs seen. She is looking at an overall strategy of how each of the three committees is going to balance it all together. What are some of the short term immediate impacts that are downtown? Downtown Vision understands that Downtown is very well lit up at night on Laura Street. A survey was conducted in the past two months identifying between 10 to 14 areas that are very dark downtown mainly because the buildings are vacant often its heavy trees. If you want to change the conception of Downtown as being unsafe, you have to make sure able lights are working, which is what the ambassador's check and report to JEA. There are areas that are not well lit up, and we have that report with small low hanging trees that needs trimming.

Second issue which is small details but part of the fit to finish downtown is so many trash cans without lids and liners. The trash cans still have Barnett banks names on them. Our Ambassadors go to areas outside of the core of downtown and take the liners out of the trashcans because the trash will not be picked up due to any liners in them. Terry Lorince pointed out that she was unclear if any city budget was charged with responsibility of purchasing trash cans downtown. A three year old survey was conducted on where the trash cans are located and standards.

The short term immediate task is how we raise the bar to make downtown more attractive. That is the fit and finish of the facade grant program as it was done on Laura Street decorated with holiday decorations showing that someone cares about downtown with love with higher landscaping and flower baskets.

The third area is how we activate downtown through this environmental committee. There is a need to activate city owned buildings that are vacant and under-utilized. The Downtown Vision and the Cultural council had leased 50,000 square feet of space downtown to artists. Many artists were lost because we only offer month to month leases. We could fill up any access city owned space with artist, incubators, and other people that are downtown. Many Cities have elevator grant programs to put to use the second floor buildings that that downtown. There is a need of a stronger Code Enforcement. Some of the spaces need to be retail ready so that someone can come in use the space. Not too many comments were mentioned on the entertainment district. She thought there were about 23 bars located downtown. A stronger café culture is needed on a block by block level.

Lastly, she sat in with Paul Crawford at a BRT Meeting discussing the bus rapid transit system. A resident leaned over to her in the middle of the meeting and stated that we are sitting here discussing BRT and they lived downtown, cannot get to the airport, and cannot throw her condominium on the Southbank, get to Riverside, San Marco, and Springfield and there is a need for the intercity circulators. Terry Lorince is unsure of the mandate that the board is operating under but Downtown has many needs. James Bailey stated that the Public Works Department has put together a trash program and if there are any flaws in that it needs to be discussed. They have a game plan. Jim Robinson and his staff have done a tremendous job and they are trying to get people step up and purchase the cans or use them. That is how they can invoice and charge them for trash pickups. There are some challenges when you have a restaurant that takes their trash, put

it in a bag and put it into their neighbor's trash can or set it out on the street. We need to educate our downtown community.

The facade program was a great idea but not many people took advantage of it.

Chairman Bailey advised the board to work together and make a better difference. If the DIA goes before City Council for a project that incorporates DIA, DDRB or anything else, that we coordinate those efforts and maximize that opportunity.

II. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Bailey adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:15 p.m.

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 Karen Underwood, Office of Economic Development at (904) 630-1906 or by email at karenu@coj.net.