

APPROVED

**BEACH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT BOARD (BID)
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2008 – 3:30 P.M.**

<u>BID COMMITTEE MEMBERS</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	6/07 – 9/08	
		<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Amaury Piedra, Chair	A	11	3
Carlos Molinet, Vice Chair	P	13	1
Ina Lee	P	14	0
Michael Hatzfield	A	7	7
Andreas Ioannou	P	9	5
Ramola Motwani	A	11	3
Gabriel Rodriguez (arr. 3:49)	P	10	4
Joseph Geluso	P	11	3
George Cozonis	P	1	0
Jim Oliver	P	1	0

Staff

Charlotte Rodstrum, Vice Mayor
Jonda Joseph, City Clerk
Earl Prizlee, Engineering Design Manager, CRA
Jeff Modarelli, Economic Development Director
Donald Morris, Beach CRA Director
Eileen Furedi, Economic Development Representative
Hilda Testa, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Vice Chair Molinet called the meeting to order at 3:49 p.m. Roll was called and a quorum was present.

Mr. Rodriguez joined the meeting at this time (3:49 p.m.).

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Ms. Lee, and duly seconded, to approve the September 15, 2008 meeting minutes. In a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Molinet asked that the new members of the BID introduce themselves, as well as the veteran members of the Committee.

George Cozonis is with the Atlantic Hotel and Spa and described himself as “new to the property” as well as to the BID. Jim Oliver is with the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

As a guest speaker had not yet arrived at the meeting, the following item was taken out of order on the agenda.

III. Marketing Presentation

Ms. Lee recalled for the Committee that the BID’s budget is approximately \$600,000. Before the BID was formed, the City held a contract with Prism Powerwash to keep sidewalks and beaches clean.

At the present time, however, Ms. Lee pointed out that although cleanliness remained a high priority, the Committee wishes to take on other projects to improve the area. The Holiday Lights program, for example, decorates light poles and three ground areas in the Beach community. Its cost to the budget is \$60,000.

This leaves roughly \$80,000-\$100,000 for marketing purposes, Ms. Lee noted. She reminded the Committee of a recent presentation by three marketing representatives, who gave recommendations on how to best use the marketing dollars. She added that the Live Nation event first came to the Committee’s attention in this manner, although they did not ask that any BID funds be used.

Ms. Lee continued that representatives of Live Nation would appear before the 1:30 p.m. meeting of the City Commission on October 21, 2008. She felt it was very important that BID members attend this meeting in support of the event, which is a music festival planned for Memorial Day Weekend 2009.

Ms. Lee informed the Committee that she had participated in some “brainstorming” in order to come up with ideas for Beach marketing initiatives. The proposals focused on plans that would generate business for the hotel and tourism industries, but should also create excitement in the Beach community and lend themselves to marketing the “New Fort Lauderdale Beach.”

Ms. Lee emphasized that, as any plans made by the Committee must be submitted for RFP, no official decisions would be made at today’s meeting regarding use of BID funds. Today’s presentation was intended to be conceptual in nature, she said, and was intended to lead to further brainstorming by the Committee.

She introduced Chris Thompkins, Director of Marketing for The W Hotel and a member of the Beach Council’s Marketing Advisory Committee; Melissa Milroy, member of the Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board (BRAB) and Director of

Marketing for The Galleria. Ms. Milroy is Head of the Beach Council Marketing Advisory Committee, as well as incoming Chair of the Beach Council in 2010. Ms. Lee then turned the presentation over to the three guests, who would lead the BID's brainstorming session.

Mr. Thompkins stated that one goal was to capitalize on the "backyard market" of Fort Lauderdale, as well as to the extended areas of Orlando, Tampa, and other nearby cities. The period of greatest business need is also a consideration, he said, and described this time as beginning after Easter and running through the fall, up to the end of September. He clarified that the goal for the Beach area is to keep restaurants, hotels, lounges, and other businesses operating at or near capacity for this period, which is traditionally a slow season.

The result of this strategy is a plan to turn weekends into "Saturday Night Live," Mr. Thompkins said. It is intended to capitalize on drawing people to the beach every weekend. He pointed out that several well-known brands are now located along the Beach area, including restaurants.

Mr. Thompkins pointed out that the environment is "more positive" than a gaming environment, and more family-friendly. Many of the clubs in the area already feature quality entertainment as well. The emphasis of the "backyard market" is to bring in a local clientele, drawing them "over the bridge" to the Beach area.

If all the area's hotels participate, he said, they would feature entertainment on Friday and Saturday nights, which would draw people into the venues along the Beach, walking from place to place among entertainment and dining options.

Ms. Lee emphasized that several lounges, restaurants, and other businesses contribute to the BID area as well as the hotels, many of which already featured live entertainment. The Saturday Night Live proposal creates an umbrella concept for all these businesses. She described this plan as a good opportunity for marketing, and noted that marketing options could be turned over to the CBB.

Mr. Thompkins presented a possible logo for the proposal, featuring the slogan "The New Fort Lauderdale Beach." He felt the design represents the area and the plan appropriately, noting that as a hotelier, his concern was not only that the area's hotels remain full but that the restaurants, lounges, and other businesses profit from increased traffic as well.

He felt the Saturday Night Live plan would provide an opportunity for all hotels along the 17th Street corridor as well as the Beach area to capitalize on an increase in weekend traffic.

Vice Mayor Rodstrom asked why only certain months of the year were being targeted for this plan, as she felt it could be marketed year-round, particularly in light of a potentially slowing economy.

Mr. Thompkins explained that one project already underway for 2009 is to expand upon the Holiday Lights festivities, adding entertainment and carolers. He added that there are still many unopened properties in the area at present, so the first step is to see how the Saturday Night Live plan would work as an annual summer event. Depending on the success of the Holiday Lights expansion, other plans could be improved upon as well.

He described three potential marketing activities: one during the holidays, one during the tourist season, and one out-of-season. The message of these plans should be consistent, he noted, continuing the events and even expanding further upon them if they are successful in their first year.

Vice Mayor Rodstrom suggested that these events might “capture the market” that had disappeared from the Las Olas area during its redevelopment phase.

Vice Chair Molinet felt that, if the project was approved and went out for RFP, the CBB might be very interested in tying it in with its own “Beach Chic” event, and would perhaps contribute funds toward the weekend event as well.

Ms. Lee stated that the CRA in the City of Hollywood uses their funds for “any event,” whether it is marketing, events, maintenance, or other purposes, and as a result, has its own advertising and public relations agencies. The BID does not have this option within the Beach CRA, and may only use money for capital improvements. She felt an event of this nature gave Fort Lauderdale ownership of its own “umbrella concept,” and would allow for the branding of the New Fort Lauderdale Beach.

She added that one aspect she particularly appreciates is that a good deal of entertainment already happens in the target area, and the Saturday Night Live proposal would give it an umbrella under which it could be showcased. She thanked Mr. Thompkins for his input.

Mr. Thompkins assured the Committee that there would not be trademark issues with the name Saturday Night Live, as they had already looked into this possibility. As it was in an entirely different context from that of a television show, there is no conflict involved.

Ms. Lee noted that the prospective logo has not been trademarked, and she hoped this could be done if the proposal went forward.

Mr. Thompkins concluded by stating that some funds would be needed in order for the project to go forward if a launch time of spring 2009 is the target date. He pointed out that a cooperative would need to be developed among restaurants, hotels, and retailers in order to come up with a plan that was equitable for all businesses and is packaged in a way that ensures all participants get their fair share from the plan.

Ms. Lee asked that the hoteliers on the Committee give their opinions.

Mr. Ioannou felt the idea was "brilliant," citing this as the first time he was aware of the creation of a marketing strategy directly aimed at the Beach area. He hoped to see a more detailed marketing plan including more tangible details at a future meeting.

Mr. Modarelli cautioned that the Committee not get "ahead of itself" regarding the RFP process. Details of the kind Mr. Ioannou had suggested could be written into the RFP, he said, but should not include any specific details included in the presentation the Committee had seen, or the result could be creating an unfair bidding process.

Ms. Lee clarified this further, asking Mr. Modarelli if the RFP could be created quickly once the hoteliers had accepted the concept.

Mr. Modarelli pointed out that RFP is often at least a three-month process. Once the RFP is created, anyone wishing to bid on the contract can present their plan to the Selection Committee and show them what they could offer, based upon the specifics listed. The RFP must be open for some time, he added, and the selection process itself can be lengthy.

Mr. Modarelli added that the search can be limited to businesses in the state of Florida, or can be a nationwide search if the Committee preferred.

Vice Mayor Rodstrom advised that the Committee include as much comprehensive language and detail as possible, as the RFP may not be modified once it has gone out for bid.

Mr. Modarelli explained that the BID may suggest which market – local, state, or national – from which it preferred to accept bids in tonight's meeting, if they wished.

To clarify the timeline, he continued that an RFP should be out at least 30 to 45 days, as a very short time frame would draw few or no responses.

Ms. Lee expressed the concern that the Saturday Night Live concept had been offered to the Committee by a specific group, so they may not ethically send this specific concept out for RFP. They would need to send the RFP out asking for a similar concept during the same seasonal time frame, incorporating roughly the same geographical area.

It was pointed out that the \$80,000 in BID funds would be tightly stretched over so long a time frame, although Ms. Lee noted again that a co-op between the hotels might be a solution. Mr. Rodriguez said that anyone placing a bid would also need to be informed of the funds they would have to work with.

Mr. Thompkins added that the members of the Beach Council's Marketing Advisory Committee are marketing advisors for their own hotels in the Beach area. He suggested that the BID consider keeping the RFP local, if possible, as any project of this nature will require extensive knowledge of the Beach area market and could very likely be driven by the marketers' relationships with local businesses. Without an existing relationship already in place, he advised, the businesses may be less willing to buy into the plan.

He also asked if the Marketing Advisory Committee would be allowed to bid on the proposal itself, if it were a legal entity with the qualifications to do so.

Mr. Morris felt if the MAC met the proper legal qualifications, it could bid on the project if it wished. He explained that in that case, Saturday Night Live would be one of a number of different concepts proposed.

He added that an understanding of the local market is part of the scoring process when a bid was selected.

Mr. Cozonis felt the proposal was "a great concept," and very specific.

Mr. Oliver agreed, but was concerned that the hotels might be less willing to spend marketing dollars on the busier weekend period.

Ms. Lee felt since, in the summer months, the hotels were not operating at full occupancy, there would be limited resistance to the proposal. She felt the main goal should be creating excitement in the Beach area, as a successful program of this nature would stimulate return business over subsequent weekends.

Vice Chair Molinet also felt the project would cost significantly more than the \$80,000 the BID has to spend, and asked how the Committee might go about involving the CBB, which has more funds at its disposal. Even matching the \$80,000 would be a good start, he said.

Ms. Lee noted that there is potential for bringing in sponsorship funds as well, although Mr. Rodriguez stated that any program would need to be a success before it began soliciting sponsors.

Vice Chair Molinet cautioned once again that the Committee could not “lock in” to the Saturday Night Live proposal, but could only ask for bids of similar scope through the RFP.

Ms. Lee suggested that the proposed plan run for six weeks in the beginning, as a way to measure its success.

Mr. Geluso felt the \$80,000 would provide primarily groundwork on any project. He felt the difficulty would be in asking the hotels to spend their marketing dollars, as various hotels might be aiming at different markets, and as larger hotels might be able to contribute marketing funds while the smaller ones would be more limited in their resources.

Mr. Thompkins felt the focus should be on relationships and creating deals with the hotels and other businesses. He stated that the plan should be to bring customers in to “experience the beach.” His suggestion was that the BID ask the CBB to work with them, then ask the hotels if they could contribute a particular amount of funds. Finally, he said, they should ask the businesses involved for their input on how to best advance the program. He pointed out that his hotel would feature the program prominently on its website, and he hoped to attract both the local and the “drive-in” markets to the event.

Mr. Modarelli advised that as part of the RFP’s scope, the BID can ask that the bidder provide a proposal on how to leverage the funds available. The business whose bid is eventually selected, he said, would be the ones to approach the CBB and choose how to “package” the event. Leveraging the funds would be their responsibility instead of the BID’s, he explained.

Mr. Cozonis felt that although funding is a valid concern, the best plan might be to create the product first and work forward from that point. He believed a great deal of the event could be planned without costing a great deal of money up front.

Ms. Lee stressed that this would be the first project of the New Fort Lauderdale Beach, and that alone would provide a great deal of leverage.

Mr. Oliver asked if more funds will be available in 2009, as other businesses opened along the Beach.

Mr. Modarelli clarified that the current fiscal year is 2008-09, and this year's budget is an estimate of funds to be collected. Therefore, he explained, funds could grow, as based on the growth of businesses and their assessed value.

Vice Chair Molinet added that next year's projection, as more businesses moved into the Beach area, could mean more funds would be available to the BID.

Ms. Lee suggested they move on to the next step, which was that the BID work with Mr. Modarelli and Mr. Morris to create an appropriate RFP.

Mr. Modarelli counseled that the Committee, as a body, should decide what will be included in the RFP. The BID listed these aspects:

- A time frame of weekends only, from Easter through October 1
- A theme that will draw both residents and out-of-town visitors to the Beach
- Room nights, restaurants, and retail businesses should be favorably impacted
- Best leverage available for the amount of funds
- Showcasing the image of the New Fort Lauderdale Beach

Mr. Geluso asked what kind of entertainment, and what venues, would be considered appropriate.

Vice Mayor Rodstrom asked if there is a target age demographic in mind, which would affect the kind of music and other entertainment that would be planned.

Mr. Geluso felt the different hotels might naturally cater to varying demographics.

Mr. Thompkins suggested that the ad agency, when selected, research the area on its own and return to the Committee with their recommendations.

Mr. Rodriguez disagreed, stating that the target demographic should be ages 25-54, the "heavy spenders." He felt this group should make up the core of the target customer base, and the Committee should let the marketers know this.

He felt the best music would be a spectrum from R&B to classical, excluding hard rock or hip-hop.

Mr. Modarelli advised that the BID, as representatives of all the businesses who paid into the assessment, might reconsider limiting its target audience. His suggestion was that the bidders provide research on the best demographic. If their selection was inappropriate, he felt that bidder would not be selected.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that the scoring system used to select a bid would measure all the components of a bidder's proposal. He added that selection of a target demographic is another reason to attempt to hire a local company, already familiar with the market.

Vice Mayor Rodstrom felt that the target demographic would be different if another kind of event were planned, but something like the Saturday Night Live plan should target the group with the most funds available to spend at such an event.

Ms. Lee stressed that the Saturday Night Live name is a specific suggestion by the group that had created it, and the RFP should focus on building an event of similar nature, not that particular event. She also noted that the bidders might provide an entirely different concept that could also be a success.

Mr. Rodriguez pointed out again that the hoteliers and other businesses already know their target demographic, and the events proposed by bidders should reflect this knowledge rather than go in a different direction.

Mr. Ioannou felt that the BID should provide the scope and objective of an event, but not attempt to do the bidding agencies' jobs for them.

Mr. Rodriguez added that naming the target demographic up front would provide for the most efficient use of funds available.

Ms. Lee proposed that the RFP include a target age range of 25-54. She felt that this inclusion, in conjunction with the creation of an image for the New Fort Lauderdale Beach, would satisfy the concerns that had been expressed.

Mr. Ioannou recommended again that the bidding agencies should be local, with which the BID was in general agreement.

It was noted that placing a cap on the upper age range might be too limiting, and Ms. Lee proposed changing the target demographic listed on the RFP to 25 and up.

Vice Mayor Rodstrom noted that the selection of a demographic meant a particular age range is being targeted, not that another age range was being excluded.

Mr. Modarelli suggested that the Committee discuss inclusions to the RFP at the November 2008 meeting before sending it out for bid. He pointed out that the BID will be allowed to have a member sit on the Selection Committee that will ultimately choose from the bids received.

Ms. Lee asked how it is determined what individuals, from what backgrounds, sit on the Selection Committee.

Mr. Modarelli explained that the Selection Committee members will have backgrounds that allow them to understand the impact of the decision they will make – for instance, members might have marketing or economic development experience.

Vice Chair Molinet, noting that the RFP will be out for 30 to 45 days, asked Mr. Modarelli if the BID members could email more items for consideration to him than had been discussed today. Mr. Modarelli could then list these items for discussion at the next meeting, which could speed up the process of writing the RFP.

Mr. Geluso, on a similar note, asked if a synopsis of these items could be emailed to the BID for consideration before the next meeting.

Mr. Modarelli pointed out that such communications would be in violation of the Sunshine Law.

Vice Mayor Rodstrom recommended that the BID hold a special meeting, as event planning was a priority.

Mr. Morris noted that, as next month's meeting would be a combined meeting with the BRAB for further discussion of the City's Master Plan, there would most likely not be sufficient time to cover the RFP as well.

Mr. Modarelli stated that a special meeting could consist of a recap of the key points discussed so far, then move on to new input for the scope, and conclude with finalization of the RFP.

Ms. Lee thanked everyone for their time and hard work in creating the plan.

Wednesday, November 5, 2008, was tentatively planned as the date for the special meeting. Monday, November 10, 2008, was proposed as an alternate date if a meeting could not be scheduled on the 5th. The BID agreed that 3:00 p.m. would be an appropriate time.

Mr. Modarelli said he would email the Committee members with finalized information on the special meeting.

IV. Discussion Regarding Charter Amendment

Jonda Joseph, City Clerk, informed the Board that one Amendment on the City ballot was a change in the City's Charter. She explained that at present, the authority to appoint and supervise employees by the Charter Offices was not clarified, and the ballot Amendment sought to change this.

Ms. Joseph stated that there are four Charter Offices currently recognized by the City: City Manager, City Auditor, City Attorney, and City Clerk. Passage of the Amendment would make the Charter's language more consistent, she said. She also noted that in practice, these offices are already working independently; the Amendment would simply bring the Charter's language into compliance.

This City Amendment is the last one listed on the ballot, she said, and encouraged the BID members to vote on this issue.

Ms. Joseph stated that the City Clerk keeps all City records, and the Amendment would help ensure the independence of all four Charter Offices.

Vice Chair Molinet thanked Ms. Joseph for attending the meeting.

V. Beach Security Enhancement Program

Ralph Riehl, President of the South Florida Tourism Council and Vice Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Board, noted that the other business districts of Fort Lauderdale, including Las Olas Boulevard and Riverfront Market, all have their own detailed police force. He stated that this was because the Fort Lauderdale Police Department uses squad cars rather than foot patrols.

Of the 49 zones in the City, he said, the Beach area occupies three. The current staff level of the Police Department provides only two officers in these zones. Even if the zones were fully staffed, with 13 to 14 additional officers, Mr. Riehl felt that the Beach district would still need the enhanced security that would result from an officer patrolling the Beach on foot.

He provided information detailing the expense of this patrol, at \$35 an hour for four hours a day, 6-10 p.m., every day of the year. He felt that if BID funds were used for this purpose, the cost would be minimal. In addition, he noted that anyone walking the Beach area between the hours of 6 and 10 p.m. would see that the need exists for a foot patrol.

Vice Chair Molinet thanked Mr. Riehl for attending the meeting.

Ms. Lee asked if spending funds for an officer on patrol would be an alternative to using them for marketing. It was also suggested that both uses could be accomplished.

Mr. Modarelli did not feel there were sufficient funds to undertake both projects. He noted that there were detail officers within the City who worked for specific businesses; if the BID undertook the project of enhanced Beach security in this manner, it could possibly be done without going to RFP, he said.

Ms. Lee referenced a report presented by the Police Department at the recent Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board meeting, which had not suggested a need for more patrols.

Vice Chair Molinet noted that although safety and security is a priority, he felt the existing police staff did a "more than commendable" job. At this point, he said, he did not feel there was a need for enhanced security.

Mr. Geluso added that if events began to bring in much larger crowds to the Beach area, expanded security might be a higher priority. He felt that security could perhaps be co-opted with the hotels.

VI. Old/New Business

There was no further business to bring before the BID at this time, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]