

APPROVED

**BEACH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT COMMITTEE (BID)
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2009 – 3:30 P.M.**

<u>BID COMMITTEE MEMBERS</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	10/08 – 9/09	
		<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Amaury Piedra, Chair	P	5	2
Carlos Molinet, Vice Chair	P	5	2
Ina Lee	P	7	0
Andreas Ioannou	P	6	1
Ramola Motwani	A	2	5
Gabriel Rodriguez	P	5	2
Joseph Geluso	P	5	2
Jim Oliver	P	7	0
Jon McGaunn	P	3	0

At this time, there were 9 appointed members to the Committee, which means 5 would constitute a quorum.

Staff

Stephen Scott, Economic Development Director
Don Morris, Beach CRA Director
John P. Seiler, Mayor of Fort Lauderdale
Earl Prizlee, Engineering Design Manager, CRA
Eileen Furedi, Economic Development Representative
Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative
Ralph Riehl, Chair, Economic Development Advisory Board
Hilda Testa, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

Mr. Morris explained that the City Commission has requested that a separate Agenda Item be added for any communications they would like to single out for City Commission review. They will appear under a heading in the meeting's minutes so the City Commission can refer to them quickly.

Chair Piedra stated that he would like the Committee's support for the Fort Lauderdale Beach Music Festival date change to 2010 to be included in this section.

Mr. Scott indicated that motions made by the Committee will appear in a separate section in the meeting minutes as well, as well as general statements of support or other communications of this nature.

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

Chair Piedra called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. and roll was taken.

II. Approval of Minutes: March 9, 2009

Motion made by Ms. Lee, seconded by Vice Chair Molinet, to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2009 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

III. Beach Concert Event Update

Chair Piedra advised that the Fort Lauderdale Beach Music Festival is being rescheduled for May 2010. This change was made to accommodate the schedule of the artist targeted to headline the event, and allows for more time to line up sponsors. Official paperwork will be submitted to the City, and the new schedule date will go before the City Commission in two weeks. The event is planned to be announced to the general public during a September 2009 press release, with artists and venues lined up at that time. The headliner is expected to be a "tremendous marquee name," and it is expected that the event will take place on Memorial Day Weekend.

Ms. Lee asked if an update is available on the Air and Sea Show in terms of its timing. Mr. Scott responded that this is still intended for May 2010, but it has been made clear that for purposes of public safety, there would need to be one week between the two events. It was noted that neither party has submitted plans for an exact weekend at this time.

Ms. Lee cautioned that these dates should not conflict with the ARBO dates, and that the Air & Sea Show not take place before Mother's Day Weekend due to the potential loss of business to the Galleria. Mr. Scott pointed out that both these concerns had also been raised at a Staff meeting concerning the events.

Chair Piedra stated that he planned to attend the City Commission meeting at which the concert event will be on their agenda, "to give the proper support" to the event. He offered to email the Committee members when it is certain which City Commission agenda the event will appear on.

IV. BID Beach Maintenance Contract Update

Mr. Prizlee advised that the RFP committee, of which Ms. Motwani is a member, had received five responses with prices ranging from \$184,000 to \$5 million. The committee has shortlisted some proposals and will meet for a presentation by these bidders before selecting finalists. Mr. Morris added that anyone may attend this meeting and "listen in."

V. BID Special Event RFP Update

Mr. Scott reported that the Selection Committee, including Chair Piedra and Ms. Lee, will meet tomorrow, along with a member of the City's Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Scott will not be a voting member of this group but will represent Staff.

The RFP had received five responses, he stated, and hoped that by the next BID meeting, there would be more information to report.

Ms. Lee asked for an overview of the selection process. Mr. Scott asserted that this is "completely up to the Selection Committee," who may make the decision tomorrow if they feel they have sufficient information, or may create a short list of two groups and ask them to make presentations to the Selection Committee. While the participating bidders will not be making presentations at tomorrow's meeting, they are allowed to observe along with the public if they wish.

Ms. Lee asked how quickly the project may move forward in the event a selection is made at tomorrow's meeting. Mr. Scott estimated that based on the revised timeline, they are expecting to move forward in July 2009.

Mr. Oliver asked when funding will be determined for the next fiscal year, which, when considered along with the upcoming new cleaning contract, would determine whether the project could be funded for 2010. Mr. Scott explained that it is too soon to tell, as numbers are received from the property appraiser in June. Currently there is a 10%-12% decline expected citywide. There are, however, other factors to be considered, such as whether other properties might have opened in the Beach area.

He stated the budget would be determined by a "best estimate" of what revenues would be. Although it was a "good bet" that revenues would have indeed declined, they could have done so to a lesser extent for this particular area. He agreed to try to have an estimate ready by the next Committee meeting.

He continued that monies are not actually seen until nearly a year after the properties are appraised.

VI. Police Update

Mr. Morris informed the Committee that, as no member of the Police Department was available, any concerns or questions raised by the Committee would be forwarded to the Department.

Ms. Lee raised the issue of an incident occurring with high school students, who, she pointed out, would “always know” the dates for Spring Break. She suggested that having a police presence stationed on the Beach might allow them to respond in a timely manner when needed.

Mr. Morris advised that weekly Staff meetings were held for most groups with Spring Break involvement, and the incident has been discussed among them as a matter which could be communicated more effectively among Staff.

VII. Old / New Business

Chair Piedra provided the Committee with an update on the discussions with the beach vendor. He and Mr. Morris met with City Manager George Gretsas on behalf of the BID.

He reminded the Committee that the vendor gave a demonstration on the beach; however, many of the items included in this demonstration have not been approved for City use. Chair Piedra had requested that approval of these items be expedited, as this would allow the vendor to come back to the hoteliers as quickly as possible with pricing for the items and the process could move forward.

He added that a meeting had been held some five to seven days later between the vendor and the City. Mr. Morris confirmed that this meeting had occurred.

Mr. Morris continued that the City and the vendor have explored some color options for the beach items, as well as site plans for several areas in order to increase the number of chairs. The City is still working with the vendor on the latter issue, he noted.

The vendor has also been asked to set up meetings with individual hoteliers, which Mr. Morris will attend on behalf of the City.

Mr. Ioannou asked if the vendor had a “standard amenity” upgrade plan for all the hoteliers. Mr. Morris stated that this was the case. He pointed out that under the City’s contract, they may approve amendments to the original RFP as relates to colors and site plans. The City also recognizes that at times throughout the year, the hoteliers will need additional beach chairs, and they are attempting to put together an amendment that will address this need.

Mr. Oliver recalled that at a previous meeting, it had been discussed that the hoteliers might negotiate this particular item as a group. He added that the previous weekend, his hotel had contracted with the vendor to provide chairs, towels, water, and a concierge. He described the service as “very inconsistent,” indicating that this referred to both the original services included in the contract as well as the additional services.

Chair Piedra expressed concern that the original meeting had occurred more than a week ago, and no further steps have been taken in that time to resolve the issue. He asked when the pricing and services would be available to the hoteliers.

Mr. Morris referred to the site plan discussions with the vendor, explaining that this would allow them to “set up an area” so the City could see what the amenities would look like.

Chair Piedra asked if a target date could be established, and again stated his concern that the necessary services would keep “extending out” to a later date. He felt details such as the colors for the chairs were less important than providing the service to guests right away.

Mr. Morris affirmed that he would check with Business Enterprises to find out when the site plan would be set up, and would “push for sooner rather than later.” When he learned of a date, he added, he would let the hoteliers know, but currently he could not commit to a date until the impact of these services to the beach had been determined through the site plan.

Mr. Scott suggested that while a specific date could not be provided yet, the Committee could contact each hotelier individually once “things are moving.”

Mr. Ioannou felt it was important to understand what the vendors are obligated to provide under their contract as well as the cost of any additional amenities. For example, he asked if a concierge was to be present “at all times” at some major hotels, or if this would incur additional costs. He expressed concern that services the hoteliers might consider “fundamental” would actually cost them a great deal if they were not covered under the vendor’s contract.

Chair Piedra felt that the services the hoteliers might have expected were not the same as those included in the City contract – for instance, they are not obligated to provide a concierge. He asserted, however, that “that doesn’t mean it shouldn’t happen.”

Vice Chair Molinet commented that he understood the City would “get 25 cents on the dollar,” which he felt created a vested interest on the City’s part in

ensuring the hoteliers received necessary services. He did not feel the vendor had a workable plan on how to provide these services.

Mr. McGaunn asked if the vendor was obligated to provide a certain number of chairs for each individual hotel in addition to those chairs made available on the public beaches, or if he was required to purchase these items in order to reserve them for his hotel.

Chair Piedra felt part of the problem is the vendor's failure to respond quickly to the hoteliers' needs, and the City should encourage them to move faster as well. He noted that after the recent meeting between the hoteliers and the vendor, he had expected "to be further along" in the process and have seen further results by this time.

Mr. Scott reiterated that he would communicate the Committee's concerns to Business Enterprises. He also noted that he understood some of the hoteliers' dissatisfaction with the underlying agreement.

Vice Chair Molinet expressed concern that a representative of Business Enterprises had been promised as a liaison to take care of these issues, which has not happened. Ms. Lee added that she felt Ms. McCaffrey or another representative of Business Enterprises should attend the BID meetings for some time, as this issue is that Department's responsibility. She asked when the current beach vendor's contract would lapse and be due for another RFP, and pointed out that the Committee had spoken in favor of the current vendor during the selection process.

Moving on, Ms. Lee advised that the next meeting of the Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board (BRAB) has been rescheduled for April 30, 2009, in order to view Sasaki's final presentation for the Beach Master Plan before it goes to a public meeting. She emphasized the importance of BID members attending the upcoming BRAB meeting, as many residents attend the public meetings but few members of the business community attend. She stressed that the Beach Master Plan will determine the development of the beach area "for the next two decades."

Mr. Ioannou asked if the meeting will be a presentation only or if the floor will be opened for discussion of the Master Plan. Ms. Lee confirmed that there will be discussion, and the public will be able to comment as well as the BRAB members.

Ms. Lee requested an update on the July 4 "Fireworks on the Beach" plan, as she had heard the possibility that this might not be allowed. Mr. Scott replied that this was discussed at the last City Commission meeting, and the City Commission spoke in support of the holiday fireworks.

In addition, the issue had been discussed at a Staff meeting as well, and the cost of the event will be reduced to \$85,000, a price the City Commission "could live with." The full half-hour show is expected to be possible at this cost, and Staff will report back to the City Commission regarding the change of expense. The event will not be combined with "Lauderdale by the Sea."

Ms. Lee felt it is important that the hoteliers are able to weigh in on the importance of a fireworks show on the beach.

Guest Jan Idelman announced that she is working with the City to raise sponsorship funds for the fireworks show, and asked if the Committee members had suggestions on who might be willing to partner with the City in this effort. She added that any additional exposure of the event, such as flyers and posters at various places of business, would be helpful in this endeavor.

Mr. Morris recalled that he had recently sent Committee members an email regarding the City's efforts during spring break. He pointed out that resources will be limited in the next few years, so it's important to get feedback from the Committee about their spring break experiences, and their suggestions on how the City might change or improve their efforts next year.

Mr. Rodriguez commented that he "couldn't come to terms" with police citing people for drinking on the beach, as he did not feel an infraction of this nature should be a major focus of law enforcement. He pointed out that the BID is a "special entertainment district," that allows alcohol consumption within particular facilities, and he was concerned that his tenants had been approached and warned against leaving the premises with alcohol.

Mr. Morris stated that there is a focus on communicating the message against drinking on the beach to the facilities that serve alcohol, as the owners of these businesses would not want their patrons to go onto the beach with a beverage and receive a citation for it. He noted that this was planned as a "friendly effort" with the intent of having businesses "help us out."

Mr. Rodriguez agreed that the City may have intended a friendly effort, but he had received reports of uniformed officers approaching individuals with this warning, which presented a different impression. He added that the officers failed to understand that, in the entertainment district, individuals may "roam the facility" with drinks in hand.

Mr. Morris agreed that the police seemed to have been mistaken in this case, and stated that he would pass along Mr. Rodriguez's concerns.

Ms. Lee noted that Mayor Seiler planned to drop in on today's meeting and take the opportunity to meet some of the hotels' general managers.

It was noted that the level of enforcement of turtle lighting restrictions seems to have been "stepped up" in recent years, and has become a "sore subject" among some beach businesses, as they are required to dim or turn off lights at their facilities, which can become a safety concern.

Ms. Lee explained that Mayor Seiler wished to meet the beach business managers, as his public statements have expressed support specifically for tourism and the marina district. She noted that thus far, he has heard from representatives of the tourism industry, but none of these have been from the "high-end" hotels, who might offer a different perspective from what he has already heard.

Mr. Scott agreed that the Mayor has placed "a very high premium" on economic development in general and tourism in particular. He also noted that in terms of tourism, Fort Lauderdale seemed to be faring better than many other areas of the State, and the Mayor feels the upcoming Super Bowl, Pro Bowl, Orange Bowl, and Boat Show provide opportunities to increase this further.

Ms. Lee pointed out that another major issue related to these upcoming events is the South Beach Parking Lot, which, for several reasons, remains unfinished. She suggested that Mr. Morris provide an update on the timing of its construction, and the importance from the business community's perspective that this parking lot is not "ripped up" during the Super Bowl.

Mr. Morris stated that the City had anticipated receiving permits from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) at the beginning of the year, but had instead received these at the end of March. This has slowed the process, as DEP permits are required before obtaining other permits from other agencies. He explained that while the original plan had been to begin construction in late spring and summer, this would not happen due to the size of the project and outstanding approvals; the City is now planning to begin construction after the Boat Show. However, the Super Bowl will take place not long after the Boat Show, and the project's construction will take at least one year. The difficulty, he concluded, is in deciding which event will be impacted by the construction.

Mr. Prizlee pointed out that during the construction of the wall around the parking lot, the parking facility itself may remain open. He added that "there is no good time to do this," as the beach concert will now take place in May 2010.

Mr. Ioannou suggested locating a "satellite parking" area that would provide transportation for those patrons parking there to be shuttled to event locations for the Boat Show, Super Bowl, or concert. Ms. Lee proposed waiting until June

2010, after the concert, to begin construction; however, Mr. Morris pointed out that this would fall during turtle season.

Mayor Seiler joined the meeting at this time, and the Committee members introduced themselves.

Mayor Seiler pointed out that an “open container” law had been put into effect in previous years in order to address spring break concerns; he felt now, however, the specific spring break concern was less of an issue than the “damper” this law may place on some of the “high-end” tourists in the City. With this in mind, he stated that he had asked City Staff to help address this issue, possibly with a pilot project during some of the upcoming major events which would suspend enforcement of the open container rule if the alcohol in question is in a plastic cup from a business establishment. The City Manager and City Attorney planned to research this possibility and bring it back before the City Commission. Mayor Seiler requested the Committee’s feedback on the prospective program.

He pointed out that none of the major City events overlap with spring break. There was also some question as to whether such a policy would be event-specific or location-specific, or a combination of the two. Mayor Seiler agreed to keep the business community “in the loop.”

Mr. Rodriguez shared his earlier concern regarding police enforcement. Mayor Seiler pointed out that it is their job to enforce the law, and the appropriate reaction was to find a way to suspend the need for enforcement. He also clarified that the City Commission would ultimately make this policy decision.

Chair Piedra thanked the Mayor for attending the meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

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