

APPROVED

**BEACH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2009 – 3:30-4:30 P.M.**

<u>BID COMMITTEE MEMBERS</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Amaury Piedra, Chair	A	0	1
Carlos Molinet, Vice Chair	A	0	1
Andreas Ioannou	P	1	0
Joseph Geluso	A	0	1
Jim Oliver	P	1	0
Alfred Rosenthal	P	3	0
Bill Cunningham	P	3	0
Philip Poppinga	P	1	0

At this time, there are 8 appointed members to the Board, which means 5 would constitute a quorum

Staff

Stephen Scott, Economic Development Director
Earl Prizlee, Engineering Design Manager
Eileen Furedi, Economic Development Representative
Diana Alarcon, Director, Parking and Fleet Services
Todd Hiteshew, Environmental Services Manager
Laura Voet, Aquatic Complex Manager
Jennifer Picinich, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

- Recommend by consensus that the City contribute \$2,500 toward a fourth ground display of holiday lights, previously provided by private contributors.
- Recommend by consensus to allow food and beverage establishments to be able to serve food and non-alcoholic beverages in front of their establishments.

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 3:41 p.m. and it was determined a quorum was present.

Mr. Scott introduced new member Phil Poppinga, Development Director for Beach Place.

II. Approval of Minutes: September 14, 2009

Motion made by Mr. Oliver, seconded by Mr. Rosenthal, to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2009 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

III. Police Update

No member of the Police Department was present to provide an update.

IV. Fort Lauderdale Green Committee Action Plan Presentation

Heike Lueger, Chief Environmental Scientist for Carbon Solutions America, explained this company was contracted by the City to help create a sustainability action plan.

Ms. Lueger stated the company would create a baseline for the City's greenhouse gas emissions inventory, and help the new Green Committee with long-term planning and goal-setting. They will also help to set up a monitoring plan for the City's gas emissions, including software specific to this plan, and help the City apply for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Bloc Grant (EECBG) funding. The City's application must be complete by November 24, 2009.

Ms. Lueger stated a baseline must be created before a sustainability plan can be launched; once this phase is complete, the City should take on "a more strategic approach." She noted that in the Beach Business Improvement District alone, there are EECBG opportunities; the City also needs education, and regular progress and review, for a successful sustainability plan.

She concluded that she would like to know about any potential partnerships and strategic alliances the Committee could suggest, as well as the members' input on the sustainability action plan. Ms. Lueger felt there are many opportunities within the hospitality sector – for example, replacing older appliances with more energy-efficient models could be a worthwhile EECBG project.

Mr. Ioannou asked for more information regarding the scope of the new committee. Ms. Lueger offered to provide "general ideas" regarding the group's plans, or perhaps some specific projects in which the Committee might be interested. She agreed to provide Mr. Scott with this additional material.

V. Wayfinding Signage Presentation

Diana Alarcon, Director of Parking and Fleet Services, stated that the Department has put together a prospective sign system, which they are presenting to various stakeholders within the City. The project will result in a more uniform sign system throughout the City.

The project is broken down into the following three phases:

1. Signage for visitors coming in for the Super Bowl;
2. Signage to be rolled out with FDOT on rights-of-way;
3. Signage for vehicular or pedestrian gateways within the City.

This conceptual design will feature directional, parking identification, transit, beach regulatory, and gateway signage. Lots will be identified, and there will be additional directional signage to help visitors find parking. Ms. Alarcon pointed out that the sign package is focusing on international icons, as there are a great many international visitors to Fort Lauderdale. The Department is looking for ways to feature “green” items as well, such as solar features that will light up in the evening.

She displayed slides of pedestrian wayfinding signs. In an attempt to make regulatory signs more inviting, she explained, these would also use international icons, identify the amenities available at a particular location, and feature icons instead of a repeated “no” for what is not allowed.

Some of the gateways will also provide photo opportunities, such as signs that reflect the design of the wave wall by the beach. Ms. Alarcon stated that three points on Las Olas Boulevard, as well as sites at the Causeway and Sunrise Boulevard, have been identified as gateways to the community.

Mr. Ioannou felt the new concept was “great,” but noted that there are still difficulties facing some area businesses with regard to signage, such as the fact that businesses are not allowed to put a sign with a restaurant’s name facing the beach. He stated he did not understand this particular regulation, which prevents business owners from marketing their business on the beach.

Ina Lee, private citizen, asked if the City was aware that there has been an official name change for the area formerly known as South Beach. This area of the beach is now known as Fort Lauderdale Beach Park. Ms. Alarcon affirmed the City is aware of the change, and added that signage on the beach, as well as on the website, has been changed accordingly.

Ms. Lee asked if part of the funding for the wayfinding project is coming from the CRA, as some of the signage is in that area. Ms. Alarcon stated it is hoped that the CRA will participate, and the Department plans to speak with them.

VI. Chair Vendor Agreement Update

Mr. Scott recalled that at the previous meeting, members had requested an update on the status of this agreement. He introduced Laura Voet, manager of the Aquatic Center, and added that representatives of the Boucher brothers, who hold the vendor contract, are present as well.

Ms. Voet explained that the City had entered into a three-year contract with the Boucher Brothers Beach Management Fort Lauderdale on October 23, 2008. She invited the Committee to ask questions at this time.

Mr. Ioannou stated the Committee would like an update on the status of issues previously discussed, such as training for the beach attendants. Ms. Voet replied that the training is "Sensational Service" training, administered at the Convention Visitors Bureau (CVB). Charlie Perry, representing Beach Management, added that two attendants had completed training at one hotel, and new hires would attend the next available course. He explained that the training available by hotels could be undertaken in conjunction with the CVB's course.

Mr. Ioannou advised that he was referring to more standardized service training for each beach attendant. Mr. Perry stated there is information each employee is asked to read as part of his training, regarding greetings and other service standards.

Mr. Ioannou responded that he hoped to see uniform organized training throughout the beach to provide a more "world-class" experience for beachgoers. Perry Boucher, also representing Boucher Brothers Beach Management, observed that they would like to set employees up with additional training "above and beyond" the Sensational Service training available at the CVB. Ms. Voet noted that if a particular hotel offered additional training, the employees could attend it as well.

Mr. Rosenthal asked if there is a "continuing education" aspect to the training available. Mr. Boucher responded that the attendants are continually monitored by Beach Management, and "secret shoppers" report on their progress as well.

Mr. Cunningham asked how attendants are assigned in the beach area. Mr. Perry explained there are usually individuals at the Ritz-Carlton, the Hilton and W Hotels, Beach Place, and others, depending upon the volume of business. The same employee is often assigned to the same area, as they are sometimes asked questions about specific hotels.

Mr. Perry added that Beach Management urges its attendants to recommend restaurants in the hotel/beach area.

Mr. Ioannou asked that the attendants' hours on the beach be clarified, and if these might be extended in the summer. Mr. Perry advised that the attendants work until 5 p.m. at present, by which time many beachgoers leave the area. Ms. Voet pointed out that due to the City's contract with Ocean Rescue, the beach is unguarded after 5 p.m., and the vendor contract stipulates that attendants would not be offering chairs or other amenities after this time. She noted that the vendor may contract with specific hotels to extend service until 7 p.m.

Mr. Ioannou asserted that he has received complaints when attendants are not present to provide towels or other amenities after 5 p.m. Ms. Voet recalled that towel service is not part of the beach vendor contract, and would be considered an additional service.

Mr. Perry stated that the absence of City lifeguards is a liability consideration.

Ms. Voet agreed that extension of hours is something that could be considered and discussed with the City Attorney's Office; however, the contract specifies service until 5 p.m., and additional time would require further discussion with the contractor as well.

Mr. Oliver asked if there has been further consideration of additional services on the beach, such as food and beverage service. Mr. Scott replied that these conversations are ongoing, and would try to bring additional information to the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Ioannou asked if there had been progress regarding the possibility of allowing alcoholic beverages on the beach. Mr. Scott stated that this proposal was brought forward with regard to the Super Bowl, and would allow open containers from Holiday Drive to Sunrise Boulevard, but would exclude the beach itself. Many of the City Commissioners supported this proposal, and a reading of the Ordinance that would make this official is expected at an upcoming City Commission meeting.

VII. Holiday Light Discussion

Mr. Scott reminded the Committee that the Holiday Lights ceremony will be at the Atlantic Hotel on November 19, 2009, at 6 p.m. He thanked former member Ramola Motwani for making these arrangements.

In the past, the Committee has paid for three ground displays as part of the holiday lighting package. A fourth display, in front of the old Holiday Inn, was formerly paid for by Blackstone, the previous property owners. Currently no financial commitment has been made by the property's new owner. Mr. Scott explained that this display, located by Sunrise Boulevard, is important; the tree wrappings on Las Olas Boulevard are included as part of the package with this

display. He requested that any Committee member who knows a private donor who may be willing to fund this \$5000 display should pass on the information that this site is available.

Another option, he continued, would be for the Committee to access its \$12,000 in budget reserves if they wished to fund this additional display. The current cost of their three displays is \$54,000.

Mr. Prizlee noted that one display is northbound on A1A at The Oasis, a second is southbound where A1A divides, and a third is on Las Olas Boulevard approaching the beach.

Ms. Lee pointed out that the City contributes toward the lighting at Riverwalk, and suggested asking them to take on the cost of the fourth display as well. Mr. Ioannou asked if this suggestion should be in the form of a motion; Mr. Scott recommended that the Committee instead include this proposal as a Communication to the City Commission.

He added that the City, and City employees, may not solicit donations. Ms. Lee offered to call the present owners of the Holiday Inn property to ask if they are interested in funding the lighting at their location, as well as the tree wrappings.

Mr. Oliver asked if the Committee might consider requesting 50% of the cost of the fourth display from the City and donating the remaining 50% from their reserves. Mr. Rosenthal advised that they not limit the City's contribution to 50%. Mr. Scott noted that this might be more realistic than asking that the City fund the entire display.

The Committee concluded that they would commit reserve funds toward the fourth display, with a request for additional support from the City. This would be in the form of a Communication to the City Commission.

Ms. Lee asked if there was a ceremony for the unveiling of the completed beach mural. Mr. Scott stated the CRA had held a thank-you event for the students who had created the mural.

VIII. Communications to the City Commission

Mr. Scott asked if the Committee wished to include a communication regarding "beach service," including but not limited to the service of alcohol. He noted that this idea had been overtaken by the experiment of loosening open container rules for the Super Bowl; if the Committee wished the City Commission to weigh in on this issue, he suggested they add it to Communications.

Mr. Oliver pointed out that food can be served on the beach in Miami, but in Fort Lauderdale, beachgoers have to go elsewhere. With the exclusion of alcohol, which he felt was a separate legal issue, he felt the City Commission that providing some food and beverage service on the beach is "essential." He added that hotels would like to be able to provide this service for their guests, although a vendor could also provide quality service.

Mr. Ioannou felt hotels and restaurants along the beach could provide this service as well. Mr. Scott urged the Committee to arrive at a consensus and make a recommendation to the City Commission.

It was decided that the Committee would recommend allowing hotels or food service establishments to serve food and non-alcoholic beverages on the beach in front of their establishments.

IX. Old / New Business

Mr. Rosenthal stated that the owners of Beach Place have identified some issues with the pedestrian tunnel, including safety and stability concerns. In response to FDOT and independent testing, Phase 1 of repairs will include shoring up the tunnel temporarily; Phase 2 will either completely renovate or close the tunnel.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there is a plan in place to deal with the possibility of graffiti on the beach mural. Mr. Scott noted that the City's usual response to graffiti is to cover it with a solid color, although this would not be practical for the mural. It was suggested that some of the beach merchants might be willing to contribute funds toward repair, should the need arise.

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

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