

APPROVED

**BEACH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2010 – 3:30-4:30 P.M.**

<u>BID MEMBER/CATEGORY</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Amaury Piedra, Chair (Yankee Trader Hotel, A1A Trader, LLC)	P	5	5
Andreas Ioannou, Vice Chair (Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, Beach Council)	A	7	3
William Stanton (LXR Luxury Resorts & Hotels)	P	6	4
Joseph Geluso (The "W" Hotel, Capri Hotel, LLC)	P	6	4
Jim Oliver (The Ritz Carlton Hotel, Castillo Grand, LLC)	A	8	2
Alfred Rosenthal (Beach Place Towers, Marriott Resorts Hosp. Cor.)	A	6	4
Bill Cunningham (Marriott Courtyard, PHF Oceanfront LP)	P	9	1
Paul Motta (EVP/Beach Place)	P	8	2
Aiton Yaari (Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board)	P	6	2

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

Staff

Stephen Scott, Economic Development Director
Donald Morris, Beach CRA Director
Eileen Furedi, Economic Development Representative
Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative
Barbara Hartmann, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

A motion was made by Mr. William Stanton, seconded by Mr. Joseph Geluso, to recommend the following to the City Commission:

That the City Commission support the Beach Community Redevelopment funding request for special events for 2010 and 2011 in the amount of \$405,000.

The motion was passed unanimously.

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

Chair Piedra called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes: August 9, 2010

Motion made by Mr. Stanton, seconded by Mr. Motta, to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2010 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Discussion of Beach Cleaning Contract

Mr. Morris stated the last time the beach cleaning contract had gone out for RFP, the contract was for two years. The number of power washings in the contract had been reduced in order to “free up” money for other Committee activities, such as Saturday Night Alive. The current cost is approximately \$391,100, which “pays for eight hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year” of supplemental cleaning in addition to the City’s beach cleaning responsibilities.

He explained there is a set of required cleaning responsibilities for the contract vendor, including picking up debris, cleaning shower areas, and emptying trash cans, from 12:00-8:00 p.m. This was reduced from the earlier time frame of 10 hours per day in order to save money. The vendor also provides four power washings per year, which accounts for “almost half” of the contract amount.

Mr. Yaari asked who “polices” Prism to ensure work is done as specified. Mr. Morris replied that at least one member of his office is on the beach each day to “look at all the vendors” for this purpose. Any issues are addressed with the vendor.

He continued that the City cleans “the east side of A1A” beginning at 5:00 a.m. and working until noon. They empty trash and remove sidewalk debris before the majority of visitors to the City arrive in that area. They also provide power washing on the east side “much more frequently” than Prism does in the beach area.

Chair Piedra recalled that the amount of BID funds going toward beach cleaning has been the subject of discussion “since day one.” It had originally been an initiative of the former City Manager. He felt one challenge facing the Committee is to balance this responsibility with other Committee initiatives so a smaller percentage of BID money goes toward “augmenting City services” and a greater

percentage is spent on marketing special events and other interests that show a greater return on investment.

He noted that the City cannot be expected to take on 100% of beach cleaning due to budget restraints; hopefully the BID can determine and present a plan that will make the sharing of beach cleaning responsibilities "more equitable."

Mr. Scott advised that if cleaning services are discontinued by the BID, it would be "a decision we'll all come to regret." He noted that most business improvement districts nationwide have "a cleaning component." With regard to the budget, he acknowledged that the contract uses "a large percentage" of BID dollars and may limit other initiatives.

Some of the possibilities the Committee might consider include using City employees to perform the cleaning services. This would not reduce the amount of cleaning or power washing that is done, but the cost might be less. Mr. Scott pointed out, however, that this is an informal proposal, and the Parks and Recreation Department would be responsible for the services. The BID would need to vet this proposal before the City Commission. He noted that the Parks and Recreation Department is losing employees, and the proposal could result in saving two jobs in that Department. He concluded that performing these duties "in-house" would cost approximately \$150,000 less per year.

Mr. Morris added that the former Beach Foreman, who is now responsible for other parts of the City as well, is "a stickler for cleanliness" and would be responsible for the beach cleaning crew. He felt even more would be done on the beach than at present if the services were done by the City.

Mr. Cunningham asked if the City also provided cleaning services every day of the year. Mr. Morris confirmed this, stating that the area "needs attention year round" although some times of the year require more work.

Mr. Scott observed that the Prism contract can be canceled with 30 or 60 days' notice if the Committee wishes to be released from it. He offered to follow up with City Staff and return in October with "a more firm proposal," including the exact time frame of the termination clause.

IV. Discussion of Holiday Lights

Mr. Morris reported that the Beach CRA has requested that the Committee match their contribution to holiday lighting; their recommendation was for \$116,000 for this project. He explained that they were interested in setting up "entry features" similar to those used before the 2010 Super Bowl. The proposal is to "keep the same... theme we had from a holiday lights standpoint." He also suggested that they consider "something for the Centennial," such as the Centennial logo.

He confirmed that the lighting would not be in conflict with turtle season, as it would be lit on December 1 to coincide with the Centennial kickoff celebration, and would remain in place through March 1, 2011, which would be the beginning of turtle season.

He advised the lighting would require special approval from the City Commission, as had the Super Bowl lighting. The item would be expected to go before the Commission at a Conference Agenda meeting and be approved before December 1. The project will go out for bid on September 14.

Mr. Yaari asked if the displays would be “recessed.” Mr. Morris said they would not be on the sand, and would be kept in a position that fulfills ADA requirements. Visitors would be able to take pictures of the displays.

Ina Lee, guest, reported that a subcommittee of the Beach Council Marketing Committee has discussed “getting music into the hotels” as well as lighting the beach during the holidays. Another proposal was staging gingerbread displays in the hotels’ lobbies, provided by their respective pastry chefs. This would increase media attention and provide “family-oriented fun” to draw people into the hotels during the holidays. The displays would remain in the hotel lobbies throughout the holiday season.

She added that the dates for this prospective event would not conflict with “Christmas on Las Olas” or lighting the downtown area. When the beach is lit, Ms. Lee explained, this would serve as the “launch event” for the Centennial. She also suggested an event “unique to Fort Lauderdale,” such as “[bringing] Santa in on a parasail.” There is also a proposal that choirs singing holiday songs be featured on hotel patios for the event.

She concluded that if the hoteliers were receptive to the idea, it would follow the Saturday Night Alive model, and sponsors would be sought for the event to provide maps of activities in the area.

Mr. Morris added that the City would sponsor a holiday lighting ceremony at Las Olas this year; this event would take place on November 22 or 23. The December 1 date was suggested for the beach events in order to “tie it in” with other events related to the Centennial.

Mr. Morris advised the Committee did not need to take action, as it had already recommended that the Beach CRA match its funds toward the holiday lighting; the CRA would need to give their approval at their next meeting.

Mr. Yaari commented that while he liked the idea, the first two weeks of December are “very slow” until Christmas Day for hoteliers. He felt there should

be events planned for hotel guests “during those two weeks” between Christmas and New Year’s Day, as this would reach more visitors and “bring more people back the following year.” Chair Piedra pointed out, however, that “if you’re going to do holiday stuff you’ve got to do it around the holiday time period.” He noted that the gingerbread creations, for example, would still be up at the end of December.

Mr. Morris continued that all lights would be up “except for the entryway to the beach” on the Monday prior to the holiday lighting ceremony. They would remain up through January 5, at which time “snowflakes” would be removed and “blue wave lights” and the entryway feature would remain up until turtle nesting season begins.

V. Visioning Discussion

Chair Piedra recalled that with Saturday Night Alive, the Committee had provided “something to do” for visitors to their hotels and other businesses. He explained this was “just step one,” and they should look at ways to attract new visitors. He requested feedback from the members regarding “what you would like to see as we go forward” and what the Committee should be doing.

He added that the CRA has tentatively approved roughly \$400,000 for beach events, and as the Committee frees up more funds, they can use them to “do more than what we’ve been doing.” Chair Piedra continued that he has reviewed Business Improvement Districts in other areas, and found that there are often individuals paid by these committees, who assume responsibility for carrying out plans and seeking sponsors. He emphasized the need for someone with sufficient time and expertise to make any BID plans a reality.

What many other Districts have in common, Chair Piedra said, is “how they’re spending their money and... [that] they’ve actually got a team” or a staff to proceed with their plans. He said he would like to consider bringing on a “tourism liaison” who can make the events the Committee discusses a reality and “move things forward.” While Wizard Entertainment has done a good deal of work with Saturday Night Alive, he suggested that a person working specifically for the Committee might have more success in reaching out to sponsors.

He concluded that the BID should consider “a two- or three-day signature event,” and felt there were sufficient funds from the BID and the CRA to provide “seed money” for the project in an attempt to increase business in the District. He requested feedback from the Committee at this time.

Mr. Scott advised he had no conceptual issues with the possibility of an executive director for the BID; however, he advised the Committee to “look at the dollars.”

Chair Piedra said the prospective position could easily “pay for itself,” and stated that in his opinion he would rather have “one or two larger events” than several smaller events. He felt a “wow factor” was necessary for a signature event.

Mr. Yaari recalled that Super Bowl Saturday had been “one of the most exciting days on the beach” in recent years, and the event had gone smoothly and proved that “the beach can handle it.” He also supported the idea.

Mr. Motta recalled that the Air and Sea Show had been a major beach event that was discussed in other cities around the country. Mr. Cunningham observed that an event intended to attract visitors from outside the City must be newsworthy and bring in sponsorships.

Mr. Yaari asked how someone might be hired for this position. Chair Piedra advised the first step would be to revisit the budget to look at available funds. He added that they should also consider what kind of signature event they would like to see on the beach and the demographic they wish to attract.

Mr. Geluso expressed concern that attracting visitors from outside the state would require “a major event.” While the Air and Sea Show had been successful in the past, he felt this would only attract visitors from nearby states rather than “the east coast people,” and was not certain what venue would achieve this. He added he did not believe the Committee would have sufficient funds to “get the ball rolling” on a major event of this size.

Chair Piedra noted that in the current economy, they should estimate that staging a signature event would cost approximately \$250,000, while in the past the cost might have been much greater. He added that a successful regional event, such as the Air and Sea Show, could have significant economic impact for businesses in the District.

Mr. Stanton suggested that an executive director for the District could be a firm rather than an individual.

Mr. Yaari added that the first event might require “a bigger investment” than subsequent events: if the event is successful, it will bring in more sponsors later on. Mr. Geluso said what is needed is consistency, “the same event year after year... that just grows and grows.”

Ms. Lee asked when the \$400,000 proposed by the CRA is scheduled to go before the City Commission. Mr. Morris said this would be Tuesday, Sept 21. Ms. Lee advised the previous year’s funds for events was \$50,000, and urged the Committee members to address this with their Commissioners to make its

approval more likely. Mr. Scott advised that Committee members might wish to attend the meeting in support of the event budget.

Mr. Morris explained that the total amount in question is \$465,000, of which roughly \$60,000 would go to the TMA for operations. The amount would be approved with the understanding that each individual event proposed would be reviewed by the Beach Redevelopment Board and the CRA along with the BID.

Chair Piedra concluded that the first step would be further discussion between himself and Mr. Scott on the topic of an executive director; the second step would be to “free up some money” for a signature event. He expected to be able to discuss more possible events, along with potential dates, by the next meeting.

VI. Communications to the City Commission

Motion made by Mr. Stanton, seconded by Mr. Geluso, to support the Beach Community Redevelopment funding request for special events for 2010 and 2011 in the total of \$405,000. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

VII. Old / New Business

Mr. Scott said a Resolution was passed at the last City Commission meeting with regard to tax appraisal figures, which are often not available before July although the “BID year” runs from June to June with respect to appointments. This makes it difficult to determine the top ten contributors to the BID. With this in mind, the BID’s year was changed to run from September to September.

Another part of this discussion addressed logistical difficulties, such as the requirement to appoint a specific individual from each property. This raised a concern, as in the past other representatives of properties have been able to “sit in for” BID members representing the same property. With this in mind, the Resolution now allows each property to appoint an alternate who can attend if a BID member is unavailable. He advised that a letter from each company is required, stating who the alternate representative would be. Mr. Scott added this would not affect members who represent other Boards or Committees in the area.

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.