



DSCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2022

Broadway Promenade and Zoom

Board Members Present: David Lough, Clark Lauren, Catherine Sellers, Bob Pirollo, Patrick Gannon, Peter Fanning, Ken Shelin. **Absent:** Judy Mower and Roger Barry

Member Representatives Present: Rosemary Krimbel, Alinari; Susan Lehrer, Embassy House; Peter Blanton, Ritz-Carlton Residences Sarasota-Quay; Steve Mannik, Royal St. Andrew; Bill Diehl, Condo on the Bay;

Associate Members Present: Kevin Downs & Todd Hillhouse, Ask an Adjuster; Samantha Spano & Melissa Rodriguez, Brown & Brown; Stacy Crowley, CIT – Banking; Terry Phelps, Socotec (Forge Engineering); Fred Grady, Alderman Oaks

Guests Present: Alan Anderson, Architect; Joel Freedman, Planning Consultant; Richard Hopkins, Producing Director, and Patrick Mulva, naming gift donor and board member, Florida Studio Theatre

1. Meeting called to order by Board President David Lough at 4:02 pm. Quorum established.
2. **Minutes** of September 7th Board Meeting approved (Gannon/Fanning).
3. **Treasurer's Report: C. Lauren:** Seacoast Bank DSCA account balance: \$5,881.28.
4. Guest Speakers: **Florida Studio Theatre - Mulva Arts Plaza** Presentation:

Reasons for, and benefits of, the Plaza, described by Richard Hopkins, were: 1) need for more parking (130 new spaces); 2) two floors of performance and related spaces, including a children's theater and a second cabaret-type theater; 3) 15 housing units for visiting artists (actors, directors, musicians, etc. who come for 12 to 15-week stays), replacing 11 housing spaces scattered around the city, some in need of much repair, and lessening the number of rented cars needed; 4) 40 two-bedroom, two-bath affordable apartments for FST employees, most of whom commute long distances from other communities because of high housing costs in Sarasota. Those apartments will also be open to other area artists who qualify as low-income, some of whom can be young people on scholarships. Patrick Mulva in added comments emphasized that FST is a critical asset to downtown Sarasota, staging 250-300 acts each year, many to sold-out audiences, bringing an economic benefit of around \$300,000 to downtown per season. The philanthropy-supported Plaza will enable FST to keep ticket prices affordable (as opposed to raising those prices as an alternative funding strategy). Alan Anderson displayed an artist's rendering of the building, pointing out various features and how city codes and requirements are being met. Joel Freedman further explained that two adjustments to those codes will be requested at a future Planning Board meeting, one allowing for a relaxation of setback requirements in one street-side location, the other concerning signage. He also described some of the details of the layouts of the apartments and added that suites for visiting artists can be rented out as hotel rooms when available in between occupancy by artists. The predicted timeline for the project is to break ground in March or April of 2023, with completion in two years – during which losing around 45 parking places now in the lot to become the building site will be an inconvenience for FST patrons. Closing discussion about project costs included that numbers are being re-calculated. Almost \$20 million in promised donations, added to an additional \$8 million to be gained from sale of

the housing properties mentioned above, was once thought to be sufficient to meet project costs, but those costs have doubled since the pandemic and could be as much as \$50 million. More fundraising will be needed. In general terms the project was inspired by the philanthropy-supported Manhattan Plaza in New York City, which also has a mission to provide affordable housing for artists. Discussion ended with questions about proposed changes to First Street streetscape alongside the new building, and a recommendation on behalf of the board that use of canopy trees be considered for that area.

5. **Old Business:**

David Lough, with others adding comment, reviewed the City Commission's votes taken on September 19th, which were all 4-1 (Jen Ahearn-Koch being the dissenting vote in all cases) to approve 5 new ordinances with changes to be made to the City Comprehensive Plan. Affecting downtown the most was the vote to potentially increase allowed building density (now 50 units per acre) to 200u/a or more in DTC and DTB zoning districts. Supposedly the change will create affordable/attainable housing units, but the income level and other criteria required for prospective buyers/renters, or the specifics on per-building number/unit size/etc. of such housing are data still not being made generally available. Those specifics will be defined in Zoning Text Amendments yet to be written. City Manager Marlon Brown promised "robust" community input will be sought as the process continues early next year – Second readings of the new ordinances presented on Oct 17th to take place on November 7th. Information will start coming out this Thursday.

The Sep. 19th Commission meeting also featured two proclamations.

- **John Moran**, founder and Operation Manager since 2008 of the Downtown Improvement District (DID), was recognized as he now retires from the organization that has championed many landscaping, tree planting, flower baskets, and other improvements in downtown Sarasota.
- Also, **Florida Climate Week**, sponsored by the Volo Foundation, was recognized. DSCA board members are urged to check out a series of lectures on Florida climate change available on the foundation's website. <https://volofoundation.org>.

6. **President's Report:**

Lough has been in contact with a University of Florida expert on population statistics who has a record of census reports over the last 42 years. The 2020 census count showed about 5% growth in Sarasota's population (since 2010), which is probably an undercount. Estimates of growth in the two years since then are put at 3% by the University of Florida Bureau of Economic Research, and with all the construction projects planned for the downtown area over the next few years, population growth downtown could be as high as 12%. He has shared these statistics with City officials, noting the implication for expectations of state and federal funding based on those numbers.

Committee & Liaison Reports:

7. **Arts & Culture Committee:**

Turning to **Van Wezel** as his next topic, he described the severity of deterioration of the building because of problems caused by the rise of water level in nearby Sarasota Bay. The building's basement, elevator shaft, and founder's lounge have been seriously affected. The water level rise because of climate change is predicted to be 15-17 feet by 2050. His letter to the editor on the issue will appear in the Herald Tribune's Sunday edition. Cathy Sellers noted that the building continues to have a high level of public support, and some City Public Works officials still deny the seriousness

of the problem. Small group tours of the building, to better inform people about the problems, have been arranged. Board members are encouraged to go on such a tour to see the issues for themselves.

8. Associate & Events Committee:

Lough reported that DSCA's October 20th forum on new condo regulations has 77 registered to attend. He will forward to the Herald Tribune an article on the forum and its subject matter. Still is working with the Observer on more publicity. The president of the Longboat Key Federation has been given the information and asked to publicize it there. The Commission candidate forum held by DSCA, with around 50 people in attendance, was video-recorded by Gannon and that recording will be uploaded to DSCA's YouTube website. CityPAC will hold its forum in three weeks (Oct. 23).

9. Greenspace Committee: No report.

10. Homeless Committee: Fanning has arranged for monthly meetings with another organization focused on the homeless in downtown. (He called it the "new Captain Stiff" committee). Discussion of the once-proposed Sit & Lie ordinance seems to have ceased, and its future is unknown.

11. Health & Safety Committee: Sellers spoke briefly about health & safety concerns being understandably more frequently raised since the storm, especially in areas such as Northport and Venice and other south county areas more affected than Sarasota.

12. Transportation Committee: David Lough has not received a response from people he contacted for news of how the storm affected the roundabout construction. Presumably the end-of-December completion date may have to be extended. He has discovered examples of public communications methods now being used in Greenville, South Carolina, to raise awareness and inspire public cooperation with new noise control ordinances put in place there, like those just recently initiated in Sarasota. Greenville is using signs that say "Be Proud, not loud", and other clever ways of asking people to obey the new sound control laws. Their efforts have been aimed mostly at loud bands and other such annoyances. Currently in Sarasota the first target for enforcement has been loud cars. The police have been giving warnings, and will now start giving out fine-eliciting citations. He has been in contact with police and code enforcement city officials.

13. Bay Park: Pirollo reported that the \$48 million Phase II of the Bay Park Conservancy project was approved in a 5-0 vote. The grand opening of Phase I, beginning on October 14 and lasting ten days, will feature numerous events for all ages of attendees. Phase I's most prominent park enhancement has been the installation of numerous shade trees throughout the park.

14. CCNA: CCNA's Saturday meeting was canceled due to the storm.

15. Rosemary District: The Rosemary District Association has advanced its proposed project by making available the engineering plans for it, but the project's cost has still not been given and hopes are that it will be reasonable. A small group, including David Lough, gave some input about the overall concept of the project, but it isn't known what amount of input will be sought once the details of the plan, including its costs, are ready to be publicized. City Manager Marlon Brown has not yet said what his plan is for giving opportunity for city-wide comment about the project. The Rosemary District Association is to be holding a community meeting during November at which time park details available at that time are to be shared.



Associate News: Industry & company news was provided by: Terry Phelps for Socotec Engineering; Melissa Rodriguez of Brown & Brown; Kevin Downs of Ask an Adjuster; and Fred Grady of Alderman Oaks.

Next DSCA Board meeting will be **November 2**, starting at 4PM, same location.