

BEACH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Monday, February 13, 2023, 3:30 P.M.
CITY HALL, 8th Floor Conference Room
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

MEMBERS	September 2022 – August 2023				
	REGULAR MTGS		SPECIAL MTGS		
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Present</u>	
<u>Absent</u>					
The “W” Hotel, Capri Hotel, LLC <u>Anna MacDiarmid</u> Alex Caceres, Alternate	P	4	1	0	0
Marriott Courtyard, PHF Oceanfront <u>Michael Fleming</u> Steve Zunt, Alternate	P	4	1	0	0
Ritz Carlton Hotel <u>Bosther Kusich</u> Samuel Fuerstman, Alternate	P	3	2	0	0
Greater FTL Chamber of Commerce <u>Stuart Levy</u>	P	5	0	0	0
The Westin Ft Lauderdale Beach <u>Vacant</u> Laurie Johnson, Alternate	P	4	1	0	0
B Ocean Fort Lauderdale <u>Rizwan Ansari</u> Alternate Vacant	P	5	0	0	0
Bahia Mar Doubletree <u>Lisa Namour</u> Michael Munroe, Alternate	P	5	0	0	0
Sonesta Hotel <u>Michael Medeiros</u> Fernando Calvo, Alternate	P	5	0	0	0

Staff

Sarah Hannah-Spurlock, Nighttime Economy Manager and BBID Liaison
Ingrid Kindbom, Nighttime Economy and BBID Program Manager

Guests

Jamie Opperlee, Prototype, Inc.
Tasha Cunningham, The Brand Advocates
Kyle Smith, Lauderdale Air Show, LLC
Dev Motwani, President, Merrimac Ventures

Communication to the City Commission

Motion made by Mr. Ansari, seconded by Chair MacDiarmid to request a joint meeting with the City Commission. The City Commission last met with the BBID on October 18, 2017. As such, the committee members would like the opportunity to discuss BBID initiatives with the new City Commission and establish a mutual vision for the district as both a venue and a destination. In a voice vote, **motion** passed unanimously.

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I. Call to Order / Roll Call / Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair MacDiarmid. It was noted a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- **Regular Meeting – January 9, 2023**

Motion made by Mr. Levy, seconded by Mr. Kusich, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2023, Regular Meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Event Funding Request – Lauderdale Air Show, LLC (\$100,000)

Kyle Smith, Lauderdale Air Show, LLC, provided a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the Lauderdale Air Show event and website, and sharing visitor data. He discussed event costs and outlined the event funding request.

Sarah Hannah-Spurlock, BBID Liaison, distributed a budget sheet and explained the unencumbered funds available in the current and next year. She stated that any additional events approved would need to come from fund balance, which is limited, and pointed out that fund balance is a pot of money which does not replenish. As such, with the dollars that have already been designated for this year and next, there will not be money available to fund many of the same events next year.

Mr. Levy asked when the budget was replenished. Ms. Spurlock responded that the new fiscal year begins October 1. Discussion continued regarding the budget and existing commitments.

Mr. Ansari asked how long the BBID had been funding the Air Show. Chair MacDiarmid stated they had been a funder since 2013. Ingrid Kindbom, BBID Program Manager, noted funding had been \$75,000 in two (2) years and \$100,000 in the other years.

Mr. Fleming pointed out one of the principles of the BBID had been for starter funding, but it did not appear that had been applied in this situation. Mr. Ansari asked whether the event would continue if the BBID did not fund them at the \$100,000 level. Discussion ensued as to the benefits to the BBID of different events.

Dev Motwani, President, Merrimac Ventures, explained his family had stepped in when the event went away. He stated the event lost money for many years in large part due to City support costs. He noted they had made a commitment for the next two (2) years but did not know if there would be an appetite beyond that if the BBID funds did not help to offset the City support costs.

Mr. Kusich asked whether the event makes money. Mr. Motwani responded that sometimes it does, and sometimes it does not. He asserted the show is a passion, not a money maker.

Chair MacDiarmid posited whether the hotels would be as busy without the show. She stated food and beverage on the beach would be very busy. Discussion continued on whether the event had an impact on the BBID hotels.

Chair MacDiarmid stated those hotels which had recently obtained licenses to serve food and beverage on the beach would be impacted. Mr. Medeiros asserted he thought the City has the right to deny their ability to serve during any special events.

Ms. Spurlock stated Mr. Medeiros was referencing "high impact events," and noted she did not believe the air show was marked that way. She confirmed the City Manager has the discretion to determine amenities on the beach during high impact events.

Mr. Fleming suggested that based on the commitments already made and the very limited existing funds available, they should fund a lower amount. Discussion ensued on the appropriate amount.

Motion was made by Ms. Namour, seconded by Mr. Levy, to approve funding of \$75,000 for the Lauderdale Air Show out of the fund balance. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. Medeiros left the meeting at 4:05 p.m. and Mr. Calvo took his place as alternate.

IV. Website Review

Chair MacDiarmid stated she had reviewed the website and found a number of outdated items. She encouraged Board members to check their information.

Tasha Cunningham, The Brand Advocates, provided a presentation on the website, including changes made since taking it over at the end of December, including visits, unique visits, and visit duration. She noted improvements in numbers resulting from removing the pop-up ad and bad code. Continuing, she shared mock-ups of suggestions to focus the new site on planning a trip and reviewed the blog and sample pages. She explained the plan to simplify the hotel pages by linking directly to the booking pages and tracking traffic data using a UTM parameter. She noted this would eliminate several clicks on the website and would link directly to the hotel sites.

Chair MacDiarmid stated the change would be easier to manage, instead of the hotels having to keep their information on the BBID site up to date.

Continuing her presentation, Ms. Cunningham reviewed items for the Board to consider, including whether businesses outside of the BBID should be shown on the website. She noted reviewing the sites of other business improvement districts, she found they only promoted the businesses within their strict boundaries. She stated other considerations included whether to have translation, and whether to integrate with other travel sites.

Ms. Johnson stated she did not like linking to booking.com and Trivago, as best rates are on the branded websites and hotels are trying to reduce fees. Consensus was that other members of the board agreed.

Ms. Johnson noted she did not like the use of Trip Advisor to a degree, as reviews are important. She asked how things like top five (5) restaurants would be determined for the blog. Ms. Cunningham explained the blog content would change frequently to follow holidays and promotions.

Ms. Johnson stated she thought including Google translate was important, and stated she liked the transportation inclusion. She asked how attractions outside the BBID would be handled, noting she would sell close to shopping and attractions, including the Galleria Mall and other trendy places.

Discussion ensued regarding how to draw the line on what to promote. Mr. Fleming expressed concern that beach businesses would be upset if shopping outside of the BBID was included on the site. Chair MacDiarmid agreed that the hotels were present to speak up for themselves, but the shops were not. Consensus was not to include hotels or businesses outside of the BBID area on the website, but to link to foundational attractions like Broward Center for the Performing Arts and the world-famous Las Olas Boulevard.

Ms. Namour stated she liked that the website would link directly to the hotel websites for

reservations. Mr. Fleming asked whether restaurants would also have that option. Ms. Cunningham stated if the Board chose to have direct links, it would also apply to all restaurants and any business with a reservation page.

Ms. Namour suggested posts with themes such as what to do with four (4) hours at Fort Lauderdale beach.

Mr. Ansari inquired about tracking visitors who leave the site. Discussion ensued regarding cookies, algorithms, and tracking. Ms. Cunningham stated she would research.

Mr. Fleming inquired regarding listing how the events on the site would be managed. Ms. Cunningham shared the event calendar and explained hotels and businesses send listings, and any events sponsored by the BBID would be included.

V. Smart Media City – Annual Contract Renewal (\$4,775)

Ingrid Kindbom, Program Manager, explained the contract with Smart City Media, the company that manages the kiosks, had expired. She stated she and Ms. Cunningham had spoken with them about updating the data on the two (2) information kiosks, which are owned by the BBID.

Chair MacDiarmid expressed the importance of keeping the information up to date. Ms. Cunningham stated The Brand Advocates was in the process of creating manual tiles for each business instead of linking to the previously broken RSS feed. Discussion continued regarding the kiosk content and timeline.

Motion was made by Ms. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Levy, to approve a one year renewal of the Smart Media City contract. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

VI. Joint Workshop with City Commission

Ms. Spurlock stated she had noticed a disconnect between the beach advocates and what the City Commission wants at the beach. She noted that disconnect has always existed, because the Commission hears from citizens on the beach who do not like the events. She noted the City Commission periodically has meetings with individual Boards but had not met with the BBID for years. She stated it would be helpful to meet to have a shared vision for the beach and suggested the Board make a request for a joint meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Ansari, seconded by Chair MacDiarmid, to request a joint workshop with the City Commission via a Communication to the Commission. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair MacDiarmid stated she and Mr. Kusich would be traveling on business and unable to attend the March meeting. Discussion ensued, and it was determined funding applications would be moved to April and there may not be a need for a March meeting.

VII. Sarah Says

Ms. Spurlock explained the solicitation for the BBID expansion would be going out soon. She noted that six (6) FY 2024 funding requests had been received, and the deadline was extended to February 15. She noted that requests exceed budget and suggested a process to approve events themselves and set the funding amount later. She pointed out that the three (3) year commitment to Tortuga and Audacy had one (1) year remaining, and the Board had determined it was no longer accepting multi-year funding requests.

VIII. Board Member Input

Chair MacDiarmid noted that only three (3) hotels had started food and drink service on the beach. Discussion ensued regarding the application process, concerns with on-premises liquor license parameters, and the costs associated with the pilot program.

Ms. Johnson shared that the St. Patrick's Day Parade organizers had shared with the Beach Council that they planned to bring the parade down A1A this year.

IX. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m. The next Regular Meeting of the BBID will be March 13, 2023, at 3:30 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by C. Parkinson, Prototype, Inc.]

Attachments:

Lauderdale Air Show Funding Request PowerPoint
Website Review Power Point