



Town of Surfside

SPECIAL DOWNTOWN VISION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 15, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

Opening Items:

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

The following Members introduced themselves:

Chair Marianne Meishcheid
Committee Member Elliott Kula
Committee Member Meghan Rote

Absent: Vice Chair Zoya Pashenko
Committee Member Cuenca
Clara Diaz-Leal, Tourist Board Liaison
Commissioner Charles Kesl, Commission Liaison

Also, present: Frank Trigueros, Tourism Manager
Evelyn Herbello, Deputy Town Clerk
Andrew Hyatt, Town Manager

2. Agenda and Order of Business

3. Approval of Minutes – December 1, 2020

A motion was made by Committee Member Rote to approve the December 1, 2020 minutes as amended, seconded by Committee Member Kula. The motion carried with a 3-0 vote with Vice Chair Pashenko and Committee Member Cuenca absent.

4. Resort Tax Collection & Vacancies Report

Tourism Manager Trigueros provided an update on the final collection number for FY 19/20 which was \$2.6 million versus the \$3.8 million in FY 18/19. He also discussed the business district including new openings and closures in addition to the holiday lighting.

Chair Meisheid asked regarding the status of the small business grant and the importance of it.

Town Manager Hyatt stated that they had a great response and will find out with Assistant Town Manager Greene how many applicants responded.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that many business owners have applied and he will get back with the Committee with a follow-up of which applications were received.

Town Manager Hyatt stated that the deadline has passed and the Town received 50 applicants and those applications are being reviewed to see which ones qualify.

5. Tourist Board Update

Tourism Manager Trigueros provided an update. The Tourist Board is targeting January to start working on a recovery plan for the business district and tourism post COVID. They are anticipating and hoping to be able to execute more initiatives by spring and summer; approved ideas will be brought before the Town Commission for additional funding approval to be able to support the businesses. He stated that this summer could be busy since it might be the first-time people will be able to get out which would mean more tourists.

Chair Meisheid asked regarding the doors at the Four Seasons being blocked off and if the restaurants are open.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that one of the restaurants closed in April or May and they are introducing a new concept/restaurant soon. He stated that the Peacock Alley entrance is closed for now.

Committee Member Rote spoke regarding the Find Surf Scavenger Hunt idea and thought it was great.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that the Parks and Recreation Department came up with this interactive game with the residents and children which is being promoted through the website and Parks and Recreation Department.

Discussion took place among the Committee Members regarding the amount of tourism during these recent months, basic gift giveaways through the Tourist Board and finding local ways to activate the businesses.

6. Parking Vouchers and Incentives

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that Commissioner Kesl gave some information regarding this item by helping businesses by looking at parking revenues as an

incentive for businesses to have better parking and initiatives. He stated that possibly deferring this item until Commissioner Kesl is able to attend.

Chair Meischeid asked Town Manager Hyatt if he had any information regarding this item.

Town Manager Hyatt stated that they are working on this and looking at gaining some traction.

Chair Meischeid stated that she believes this would help downtown businesses.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that the item will be brought to the Town Commission once the Committee provides a recommendation.

Committee Member Kula asked regarding if this Committee could designate a DVAC liaison to be present at the Commission Meetings.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that Commissioner Kesl would likely be able to provide further context at a future meeting since he was not in attendance tonight.

Further discussion took place among the Committee regarding parking in the business district, incentives to alleviate inconveniences to the businesses, as well as how to best present the issue to the Town Commission.

A motion was made by Committee Member Rote to recommend to the Town Commission a form of parking incentive to the businesses in Surfside in order to help alleviate the parking issues the businesses are encountering, seconded by Committee Member Kula. The motion carried with a 3-0 vote with Vice Chair Pashenko and Committee Member Cuenca absent.

7. Downtown District Survey

Tourism Manager Trigueros provided an update and gave a presentation on the DVAC survey and the questions that will be proposed. They are looking at deployment date of January 15, 2021 and they can continue to look at the questions and final approval.

Committee Member Rote agreed with the recommendation to be more specific with the reply options in questions gauging purchasing behavior across businesses on Harding. She also recommended a separate question specifically on the subject of take out and delivery given its popularity due to the pandemic.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that they will look into adding that as well.

Committee Member Kula stated he like the changes and the categories are more manageable. He stated if there is anything that they can put in there that have to do with décor or environmental related ideas like recycling, plastic straws, etc. He spoke about the cleanliness of the sidewalks at the businesses as well.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated those are great points and he will incorporate those ideas and the aesthetics of the businesses as well.

The following individual from the public spoke on the item:
George Kousoulas

Tourism Manager Trigueros addressed the comments made by Chair Meischeid regarding the reply options on questions gauging the frequency of purchasing visits to the district. He asked if they had time to look at the 2010 FAU downtown survey for further context.

Committee Member Rote stated that it had interesting information.

Committee Member Kula stated that it included sidewalk designs.

Chair Meischeid asked if Tourism Manager Trigueros could provide the Committee with a summary.

Tourism Manager Trigueros then screen shared the PowerPoint presentation overview of the 2010 survey, going over some of its key findings.

The following individual from the public spoke on the item:
George Kousoulas

Tourism Manager Trigueros will tweak the questions to define the time frames for the category questions and bring back to the Chair for final approval. They are anticipating starting-distribution on January 15, 2021.

8. Revisiting: Harding Avenue Sidewalks, Art in Public Places

Tourism Manager Trigueros provided an update. He commented on the 2019 Public Works Beautification Study and the hefty price tag for some of the options encompassed. He recommended the Committee re-examine those options in case there is a recommendation they would like to make.

Chair Meischeid asked if the funding would come from the Resort Tax.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that funding request may need to go before the Town Commission.

Chair Meischeid spoke regarding the funding and the amount that is available in the Tourist funds.

Committee Member Kula spoke regarding the cost and the maintenance cost of the project and if it is a feasible financial expenditure.

Further discussion took place among the Committee Members regarding the cost and the lead time and where the funding would be coming from.

The following individual from the public spoke on the item:

George Kousoulas

Jeff Rose

Committee Member Kula responded to the comments made by George Kousoulas.

Chair Meischeid addressed the comments made by Jeff Rose regarding the parking issues and there is need for a wider sidewalk to make it easier to walk down Harding Avenue.

Committee Member Kula stated the parking dilemma is something difficult to fix and perhaps the Committee should consider ways of bringing pedestrian traffic from Collins to Harding Avenue.

Further discussion took place among the Committee Members regarding the parking issues and crosswalks for better walkability. One option is making the sidewalks wider by removing certain parallel parking spaces, but that could potentially create a parking deficiency.

Chair Meischeid asked how they can proceed at looking into sidewalk space and how to do it.

Committee Member Kula asked if that could be included in the survey. He requested that to be included in the survey and depending on what the survey brings back then they know what to recommend to the Commission. Centralized parking structure or specific removing street side parking to allow expanded sidewalk space.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated they could include it on the survey but must come up with a specific recommendation that would go to the Town Commission. He addressed the comments made regarding the changes to the survey to add the parking situation and eliminate parking for additional sidewalk space.

Further discussion took place among the Committee Members regarding the parking situation in the Downtown district and how they address removal of parking for

additional sidewalk took place while they addressed the comments made by George Kousoulas.

Tourism Manager Trigueros summarized the art in public spaces conversation from the previous Committee, noting that there is nothing in the code that establishes a process by which to approve the art. He stated that he would send them the memo on this topic which appeared on the Town Commission January 2020 agenda. It included a recommendation to establish DVAC as a designated approval body for art displays via the special events permit.

Committee Member Rote likes the idea and would like to move forward with it, adding that it would help bring something exciting to Downtown. She stated that Bal Harbor has a similar display and program.

Chair Meischeid asked if such program could be executed everywhere in Downtown.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that they have limited space and area to place the art and gave different ideas of where they can place the art which includes windows of vacant businesses. He spoke regarding different designs and some of the options available.

Further discussion took place among the Committee Members and Tourism Manager Trigueros regarding different places and ideas to place the art.

A motion was made by Committee Rote to make a recommendation to the Town Commission to adopt a new art in public places process for applicant to go before DVAC to fill application for a temporary art installation and for approval, seconded by Committee Member Kula. The motion carried with a 3-0 vote with Vice Chair Pashenko and Committee Member Cuenca absent.

9. Future Meeting Date – March 18, 2021

Tourism Manager Trigueros advised the Committee of the next regularly scheduled meeting for March 18, 2021.

10. Public Comment – (3-minute limit)

There were no speakers during public comment.

11. Adjournment


A motion was made by Committee Member Kula to adjourn the meeting 7:27 p.m. The motion received a second Committee Member Rote. The motion carried with a 3-0 vote with Vice Chair Pashenko and Committee Member Cuenca absent.

Respectfully submitted:

Accepted this 18th day of March, 2021.


Marianne Meishcheid, Chair

Attest.


Evelyn Herbell
Deputy Town Clerk