

Downtown Economic Development Committee Meeting Notes

February 24, 2015

8:00 AM

Lower Level Meeting Room B-8

In Attendance:

Council: Mayor Jill Hardy, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Katapodis, Councilmember Dave Sullivan

City Staff: Ken Domer, Chief Robert Handy, Travis Hopkins, Janeen Laudenback, Kellee Fritzal, Captain Dave Bunetta, Lieutenant Kelly Rodriguez, Bob Stachelski, Teri Baker, Julie Toledo, Chris Cole, Simone Slifman, Jennifer Villasenor, Denny Bacon, Dottie Hughes, Max Daffron, Corinne Hoffman

Public: Brett Barnes, Steve Grabowski, Susan Welfringer, Lori Eckman, Mary Ann Senske, Kelly Miller, Ed Pinchiff

Mayor Jill Hardy called the meeting to order at 8:07 AM.

1. **Public Comments** – Planning Commissioner Ed Pinchiff introduced himself and announced that he is the liaison from the Commission to the Downtown EDC.
2. **Minutes** - Councilmember Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Mayor Hardy, to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2015 meeting.
3. **Updates:**
 - **BID Organization -**
 - Steve Grabowski thanked the Council for the free parking promotion on Valentine’s Day weekend; indicated that the BID postponed the meeting they had requested to discuss the maintenance at the Main Promenade Garage and are working to reschedule it; Grabowski reported that the BID is holding their strategic planning workshop on February 27th and requested status on the scheduling of a planned downtown property owners meeting. Kellee Fritzal indicated that it is in process.
 - **Downtown Huntington Beach Activities/Future Events –**
 - Susan Welfringer reported that Artwalk returns on March 19th and requested clarification as to the ability to utilize music during Artwalk outside the Electric Chair. She indicated that the BID has been utilizing the opportunity to advertise on the back page of the Sands for various

programs at a cost of \$10,000 annually and that it has been very beneficial. Councilmember Sullivan inquired as to whether the Sands is mailed, and Janeen Laudenback indicated that the Sands is mailed to all HB households. Welfringer requested data on the Valentine's Day weekend parking promotion, which was provided by Dottie Hughes as follows:

- 8,923 vehicles total during open hours
 - 3,563 paid standard parking rate
 - 214 displayed disabled placard - free
 - 620 under 30 minutes – free
 - 305 employee validations
 - 566 employee monthly passes used
 - 1,712 Annual Beach Pass (\$50 for Senior and \$150 for Standard)
 - 1,284 Customer Validation
 - 677 2 hr free promotion
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- Mary Ann Senske reported that Surf City Nights is attracting about 500 new people from the Harbor area, and that many of the residents had misconceptions about the availability of parking and initially chose not to come downtown because they anticipated a parking problem during Surf City Nights. She also indicated that a free 30-minute parking sign is needed outside the garage entrance across from the Post Office, as people are using the street parking that is needed for postal customers who don't realize that they can park in the garage for free for short visits. Senske reported that during the off-season Surf City Nights can become stagnant, so in addition to the success of Surf City's Got Talent, they are also looking at establishing a concert series pilot project at Pier Plaza which would take place during the earlier hours of Surf City Nights.
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- **Restaurant Association:** Brett Barnes stated that he is in process of helping to revive the former Restaurant Association website, hbra.com. He is working with VHB on this effort, and will be charging a nominal fee to restaurants to participate in having their listing on the site. Barnes reported summer-like numbers for restaurants during the Valentine's Day weekend; Sandy's had its busiest day ever on February 14th and many restaurants reported their best day or weekend of the past five years.
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- **Visit Huntington Beach Surf City USA:**
 - Kelly Miller reported that the November 2014 Average Daily Rate for hotel rooms in Huntington Beach was \$215 per night, an increase of 7.6% over the same period last year. Occupancy was also up by 2.9% and revenue per available room (revpar) was up by 10.7%. TOT in December showed a 5% increase over last December, and is up overall by 14.3% year to date.
 - The annual visitors guide will be again put together by the publishers of OC Magazine, and will include editorial items from local bloggers and writers. VHB is also working with a firm to target key nationwide media and asking their opinions about Huntington Beach (perceptions, etc.) and will use that

information to hone future messaging. HB has been identified as the most instagrammed city in Orange County. VHB is continuing to work on the wayfinding system and the pilot trolley program which will start Memorial Day. The Ambassador Program is now centralized to their office and they have hired Russ as an employee.

- **The Strand -**

- Lori Eckman reported that sales at The Strand during Valentine's Day weekend exceeded forecasts for many retailers and that the garage was full. The Strand continues to see increased foot traffic during Surf City Nights. The LED lighting project in the garage is complete. The Strand is now under new ownership and management of Cypress Equities and there will be a property management team visiting the site in March.

- **Community Services/Specific Events –**

- The calendar was distributed and Chris Cole reported on various events happening outside of the Downtown as well in March, including the Japanese Festival in Central Park.

- **Downtown Development –**

- Jennifer Villasenor reported that the Pacific City Residential Project has been approved and that they withdrew their application for a parking variance. They are in process of submitting for plancheck and their public art is going to the Planning Commission. The approval of beer and wine for US Taco is going to the Planning Commission on February 24th and staff is recommending approval, along with the recommendation by the Police Department that the patio be closed earlier once alcohol is approved.

- **Public Works Update –**

- Travis Hopkins reported that the planned installation of the bike racks will take place within the next two weeks in various areas within the downtown including under the pier and in two existing parking spaces on Main Street. Mary Ann Senske inquired about putting them somewhere else instead as she indicated that no one was aware of this project, that they are potentially hazardous, and that perhaps they could be in the Main Promenade Garage instead. Hopkins provided clarification on the purpose of placing them in the installed areas. Chief Handy indicated that that installing them in the garage is not recommended because they cannot be openly observed so it increases the risk for theft. Dottie Hughes added that having bicycles riding around in the garage is unsafe as it is not intended to be shared with both vehicles and bicycles. Kellee Fritzel added that this item has been discussed multiple times at the DTEDC within the past 6-8 months. Hopkins added that it has gone to City Council as well, so there have been opportunities for the public to be aware of the project but he is happy to discuss other options if Senske would like to discuss it further.

- Hopkins indicated that the LED lighting project in The Strand was paid for with the savings achieved from the energy audit improvements at the garage. He also reported that the City is about to go out to bid for paving of the beach parking lot from the pedestrian bridge to Huntington Street.

- **Downtown Economic Development Update –**

- Kellee Fritzel provided a chart illustrating the sales tax generated by quarter in the downtown from 3rd quarter 2011 to 2nd quarter 2014, which ranges from 3-5% of the City's total sales tax, and by fiscal year for 11-12, 12-13 and 13-14, illustrating 4% for each fiscal year. The chart covers the first seven blocks of Main Street as well as Orange, Walnut and Olive.

- 4. Adjournment:** Mayor Hardy requested that the agenda reflect that the meeting be adjourned to the correct time of 8:00 AM on March 24th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 AM.