



**Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) Meeting
In-Person Meeting**

Thursday, November 9, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Board Members (BMs) Present: L. Ott (Vice Chair, Acting Chair); G. Monahan (Secretary); F. Jones; T. Lee; and J. Loretta

Board Members Excused: M. Brockelman; J. Berling; E. Davis; and C. Harden

DIA Staff Present: Susan Kelly, Redevelopment Coordinator; Guy Parola, Operations Manager; and Ric Anderson, Marketing Specialist

Office of General Counsel: Carla Lopera, Esq.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Board Chair Ott called the meeting to order at **2:01 p.m.** Ms. Ott reviewed the agenda, noting that the rezoning application would be moved up and be heard first.

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 12, 2023 DDRB REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Chair asked for a motion regarding the October 12th meeting minutes. Board Member Loretta made a motion to move the meeting minutes, and Board Member Monahan seconded the motion.

The October 12, 2023 meeting minutes were approved, 5-0.

B. ORDINANCE 2023-0751: 331 WEST ASHLEY STREET CONVENTIONAL REZONING

Chairperson Ott opened the public hearing. Susan Kelly with the DIA gave the staff report, recommending approval of Ordinance 2023-0751, which would rezone 331 West Ashley Street from PUD (1996) to CCBD.

Seeing no questions from the Board for staff, Ms. Ott asked for the applicant's presentation. Steve Diebenow, representing the owner, made a brief statement about the reason for the rezoning and made himself available for questions.

With no questions from the Board to the applicant and no public comment, Ms. Ott closed the public hearing, and requested a motion.

Board Member Monahan made a motion to move the item, and Board Member Jones provided a second. Seeing no discussion, the Chair called for a vote.

Ordinance 2023-0751 was recommended for approval, with a vote of 5-0.

C. DDRB APPLICATION 2023-022: CSX SPECIAL SIGN EXCEPTION

Chairperson Ott opened the public hearing, and Ms. Kelly provided a staff report for the item. Staff recommended approval of the special sign exception with five conditions. Importantly, staff found that signage innovation and technology should be allowed to progress, so long as conditions are in place to guard against the potential for negative impacts.

The Chair opened the floor to Board questions for staff. Board Member Monahan asked staff to clarify the total size of the proposed sign relative to the currently approved signs' square footage. Board Member Loretta requested clarification regarding the bounding box used for the train image sign; Mr. Taylor, the applicant, explained that the bounding box was the installed screen, rather than just the train image.

Seeing no more questions for staff, a representative from CSX introduced the item to the Board, and Mr. Taylor, from Taylor Signs, explained the technical components of the sign. He also explained that the intent is for the sign to remain static with the exception of occasional holidays and events, and that the owner agrees to the staff's conditions.

Chairperson Ott asked for questions from the Board. Board Member Loretta had a question about the "extra" space around the train image. Chairperson Ott asked if the applicant could provide any examples; the applicant provided two images of real-world installations.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment. Tracey Arpin from Scenic Jax expressed opposition to the sign, stating that it fails to meet the criteria for a special exception.

Seeing no additional public comment, the Chair asked for Board discussion. Board Member Monahan moved to approve the item with staff's conditions. Board Member Jones seconded the motion.

Board Member Loretta requested an amendment to conditions 3 and 4 such that "cultural and sports" events be included along with waterfront activations. Board Member Loretta made a motion expressing the same, and Board Member Monahan seconded the amendment. The amendment passed, 5-0.

#3 – Images/colors on the signs shall remain static; no animations, movements, or flashes shall be permitted, unless the signs' images/colors are being coordinated with City-sponsored waterfront, cultural and sports activations...

#4 – Images/colors on the signs shall have a hold time (dwell time) of no less than 24 hours, unless the signs' images/colors are being coordinated with City-sponsored waterfront, cultural and sports activations...

Board Members Lee and Jones spoke in favor of the item and suggested that the Board consider removing condition #1, which would limit the size of the proposed sign to the currently approved sign. Board Member Monahan felt that the sign creates visual interest. Council Member Miller had no direct comment, but suggested that the Board consider whether this item would be precedent-setting. Overall, Chairperson Ott spoke favorably about the sign but commented that the train image seemed too large and should be reduced.

Board Member Monahan made a motion to approve the item, as amended, and Board Member Loretta seconded.

DDRB Application 2023-022 was approved with amended staff conditions, 5-0.

D. DDRB APPLICATION 2023-009: DEDALUS WINE BAR, DEVIATION WORKSHOP

Chairperson Ott reminded the Board that no action will be taken as part of the deviation workshop and that the workshop is for discussion purposes only as the deviation decision is incorporated into final approval.

Ms. Kelly provided a staff report, which explained staff's positive findings with regard to the deviation criteria.

The Chair asked if the Board had any questions for staff. Seeing none, the Chair invited the applicant, Tom Duke (architect on the project), if he had anything to add. The Board had no questions or discussion regarding the item, and there was no public comment.

As a side note, Board Member Loretta would like to revise the deviation section of the code so that workshops are not held unless necessary.

III. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

None

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Ott adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:08 p.m.

The written minutes for this meeting are only an overview of what was discussed. For verbatim comments for this meeting, a recording or transcript is available upon request. Please contact Susan Kelly at 904-255-5307 or ksusan@coj.net.