



**Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB)
Meeting
Hybrid Virtual/In-Person Meeting
Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:00 p.m.**

MEETING MINUTES

Board Members (BMs) Present: M. Brockelman (Chair); L. Ott (Vice Chair); G. Monahan (Secretary); J. Berling; J. Loretta; and B. Schilling

Board Members Excused: C. Harden; T. Lee; and F. Jones

DIA Staff Present: Susan Kelly, Redevelopment Coordinator; Ina Mezini, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator; and Jovial Harper, Administrative Assistant

Office of General Counsel: Carla Lopera, Esq.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brockelman called the meeting to order at **2:02 p.m.**

II. ACTION ITEMS

The Chair elected taking one item out-of-order. From “New Business,” Resolution 2023-04-01 recognized Craig Davisson for his time and outstanding contribution to Downtown and the DDRB. The resolution passed unanimously.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER OTT, SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER MONAHAN APPROVING DDRB RESOLUTION 2023-04-01.

THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0.

A. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 9, 2023 DDRB REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Brockelman opened the floor for comment. Seeing none, Chairman Brockelman called for a motion.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER SCHILLING TO APPROVE THE MARCH 9, 2023 MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER LORETTA.

THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0.

B. DDRB 2023-006: 562 Park Street, Special Sign Exception

Susan Kelly with the DIA gave the staff report (request for a monument sign), and the applicant provided their presentation. Chairman Brockelman opened the floor for Board Member questions.

Board Member Ott asked about dimensions, and the applicant stated that the copy area was 24 square feet. The Chair asked if the site rendering was out-of-scale, and the applicant replied that it was likely out-of-scale.

The Chair invited public comment.

Tracy Arpen expressed opposition to the request, citing that the request was not “exceptional” and was not in keeping with a pedestrian scale.

Chairman Brockelman asked for Board discussion.

In general, the Board expressed concern that the size of the sign was too large and should be scaled to a pedestrian versus a car.

Board Member Monahan stated that the position of the sign would block the view of on-coming traffic from the parking lot and requested that the applicant consider rotating the sign so it faces the sidewalk versus traffic on the Park Street corridor.

Chairman Brockelman suggested that the item be deferred until next month, and the applicant agreed.

Board Member Loretta stated that the text does not need to be larger than 18-inches, and that 14-inches for the logo and text would be most appropriate.

DDRB APPLICATION 2023-006 IS DEFERRED TO THE MAY DDRB MEETING.

C. DDRB 2023-007: JEA Building, Special Sign Exception

Ms. Kelly gave the staff report (request for a monument sign), and the applicant provided their presentation. Chairman Brockelman opened the floor for Board Member questions.

Board Member Loretta asked about the size of the concrete pad, and the applicant confirmed the size in the submittal documents is accurate.

The Chair invited public comment.

Tracy Arpen expressed support for the size and design.

Chairman Brockelman asked for Board discussion.

In general, the Board was complementary and supportive of the proposed sign. Board Member Loretta felt that the copy area should be limited to 32 square feet, and Board Member Ott expressed that the length of the concrete base might feel a little large.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER SCHILLING TO APPROVE DDRB APPLICATION 2023-007 FOR A SPECIAL SIGN EXCEPTION FOR THE JEA MONUMENT SIGN. THE ITEM WAS SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER BERLING.

THE MOTION PASSED 5-1-0 WITH BOARD MEMBER LORETTA IN OPPOSITION.

D. DDRB 2023-008: 301 West Bay Street Garage Expansion, Conceptual Approval

Ms. Kelly gave the staff report, and members of the development team (Staci Rewis, Craig Davisson, and Matt Anders) provided the presentation. Chairman Brockelman opened the floor for Board Member questions.

Board Member Ott asked about the reference to a master plan for the block. The applicant stated that nothing is concrete, but that the property owner is setting the stage for future development. Ms. Ott also asked about ground floor retail, and the applicant said that, while it is feasible, they opted for Urban Open Space considering that ground floor retail would be more appropriate for future development on the remainder of the block.

Board Member Loretta asked about the ADA accessible route from the ground floor of the proposed garage, specifically for a more clear and efficient path. The applicant noted the comment and said it was possible.

Board Member Berling asked about maintenance for the elevated planters and had a question about the lighting plan. The applicant has stated that the lighting will be addressed in the final submittal.

Board Member Schilling asked about the programming for the kiosks in the Urban Open Space. The applicant stated that the intent is for static information to be posted regarding the evolution of the riverfront.

The Chair invited public comment.

Nancy Powell stated that Scenic Jax feels that ground floor retail should be provided and that the current lot has beautiful shade trees.

Chairman Brockelman asked for Board discussion.

In general, the Board was complementary and supportive of the proposed design.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER BERLING TO APPROVE CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL OF DDRB APPLICATION 2023-008 WITH A SECOND BY BOARD MEMBER SCHILLING.

THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0.

E. DDRB 2023-009: Dedalus Wine Bar, Conceptual Approval

Ms. Kelly gave the staff report, and the architect (Tom Duke) provided the presentation. Chairman Brockelman opened the floor for Board Member questions.

Board Member Monahan asked if additional greenery could be placed along the west elevation. The applicant stated that the sidewalk along that elevation is very constrained but something other than landscaping might be possible.

Board Member Loretta requested that high quality fencing be used on the west elevation and expressed concern about the lack of lighting for the interior of the structure. The applicant stated that the owner seeks a controlled environment for the wine and cheese.

Board Member Berling asked about the intent/use for the covered wine bar structure in the courtyard space. Larry Williams, property owner, spoke via Zoom and explained that the intent is for an enlivened outdoor space, a three-season pavilion with grilling and a wine complement.

The Chair invited public comment. Seeing none, he asked for Board discussion.

In general, the Board was complementary and supportive of the project.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER SCHILLING TO APPROVE CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL OF DDRB APPLICATION 2023-009 WITH STAFF CONDITIONS. THE ITEM WAS SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER LORETTA.

THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0.

F. DDRB 2023-010: Block 9 Mixed Use, Conceptual Approval

Ms. Kelly gave the staff report, and members of the development team (Cyndy Trimmer, Tripp Gulliford, and Daniel Ashworth) provided the presentation. Chairman Brockelman opened the floor for Board Member questions.

Board Member Monahan asked if the project was located along a JTA route and requested that the streetlights be located such that buses do not hit the banner arms. The applicant and DDRB staff noted the comment.

Board Member Loretta noted that a guard rail might not be needed if the raised walkway is less than 30 inches high. If a railing is necessary, Mr. Loretta and Board Member Ott would like a more creative railing than the one provided in the rendering.

The Chair invited public comment.

Nancy Powell expressed support for the project.

Chairman Brockelman asked for Board discussion.

In general, the Board was complementary and supportive of the project.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER OTT TO APPROVE CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL OF DDRB APPLICATION 2023-010 WITH STAFF CONDITIONS. THE ITEM WAS SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER BERLING.

THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0.

G. DDRB 2023-011: RD River City Brewery Mixed Use, Conceptual Approval

Ms. Kelly gave the staff report, and members of the development team (Cyndy Trimmer, Jeff Robbins, Beatrice Hernandez, and Donald Wishart) provided the presentation. Mr. Robbins provided a history of the project, and Ms. Trimmer explained the differences between the original, approved application and the current proposal.

Chairman Brockelman opened the floor for Board Member questions.

Board Member Berling asked about the retaining wall between the Riverwalk and the property and requested more renderings or a better explanation of the project from the point of view of a pedestrian.

Board Member Loretta had questions about the topography of the parcel adjacent to the park and commented about flooding on the site. Mr. Loretta also asked if the pathway on the westerly property line could be made 8-foot wide. The applicant stated that the width of the path will be as negotiated last time.

Seeing no more questions from the Board, the Chair invited public comment.

Nancy Powell expressed a desire for the Riverwalk criteria to apply to the pathway on the western property line of the site and would like for the Riverwalk to be wider than the minimum of 25-feet. Ms. Powell also commented on the need for more, or clearer, interaction with the park.

Andrea Hook commented that the rooftop of the 8-story residential block was underutilized and that an amenity should be placed on this rooftop.

Steve Congro commented that the density of the project was appropriate but that the layout of the restaurant space and pool seemed awkward relative to the park.

Seeing no additional public comment, Chairman Brockelman asked for Board discussion.

Council Member Ferraro expressed a desire for clear and intentional water activation.

Board Member Schilling stated that the roof of the mid-rise structure could be improved and expressed disappointment with the west side of the building and at the Riverwalk. Mr. Schilling anticipates that the “picket fence” along the western edge of the property will also be improved.

Board Member Berling reinforced the need to understand the project from all angles, particularly on a human-scale.

Board Member Loretta requests a wider path at the western edge and topography of the at-grade features. Additionally, Mr. Loretta noted that the elevation along Museum Circle will need to be improved in the final submittal.

Board Member Monahan noted his interest in the interaction between the property and the Riverwalk and possibly the addition of wayfaring signage.

Board Member Ott also noted the importance of understanding the transition between the public and private space and would like a wider path along the western edge of the property. Additionally, Ms. Ott noted that DDRB would prefer shade trees to palm trees.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER MONAHAN TO APPROVE CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL OF DDRB APPLICATION 2023-011 WITH STAFF CONDITIONS. THE ITEM WAS SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER SCHILLING.

THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0.

III. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

None

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Brockelman adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:37 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.