



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

Thursday, September 12, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Board Members (BMs) Present: L. Ott (Chair); J. Berling; M. Brockelman; K. Craig; E. Davis; C. Dawson; P. Deiuliis; and J. Loretta

Board Members Excused: F. Jones

DIA Staff Present: Susan Kelly, City Planner Supervisor; Guy Parola, Director of Operations, and Ava Hill, Administrative Assistant

Office of General Counsel: Terrence Harvey, Esq.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ott called the meeting to order at **2:00 p.m.** and asked for introductions from Board Members and Staff. The Chair also welcomed two new members to the Board, Kevin Craig and Peter Deiuliis.

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 8, 2024, DDRB REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Chair asked for a motion regarding the August 8th regular meeting minutes. Board Member Brockelman made a motion to move the meeting minutes, and Board Member Davis seconded the motion.

The August 8, 2024, meeting minutes were approved, 8-0.

B. FORM 8B: VOTING CONFLICT DISCLOSURES

The Chair explained that voting conflict disclosures would be announced at the top of each meeting as opposed to at the time each item is heard.

No voting conflicts were disclosed.

C. DDRB 2024-003: LOFTS AT SOUTHBANK, FINAL REVIEW

The Chair opened the public hearing and asked for ex parte declarations. Susan Kelly, staff, provided a staff report for the proposed mixed-use building located in the Southbank District. Staff recommended approval.

Seeing no questions for staff from the Board, Chair Ott invited the applicant to give their presentation. Karie Kovacocy, with Group 4 Design, gave the presentation.

Chair Ott asked if the Board had any questions for the design team. Board questions centered around understanding the landscaping, the reasoning behind the unadorned stucco portion on the Prudential elevation, the visibility of the self-storage uses through the spandrel glass, and the height of the ground floor parking with regards to moving/storage trucks.

Seeing no additional questions from the Board for the applicant, the Chair asked if there was any public comment. One speaker, Ms. Powell, noted her appreciation for the project's improvement.

The Chair closed the public hearing and opened the floor for Board discussion. Board Member Dawson made a motion to approve the item, and Board Member Loretta provided a second. The project received mostly favorable comments. Several Board Members noted that the Southbank would likely see increased density in the future. Board Member Davis commented that the project does not adequately meet the façade differentiation criteria established in the code, particularly along the Home Street elevation.

Seeing no additional discussion, the Chair called for a vote.

DDRB Application 2024-003 was approved with a vote of 6-2 (Ott and Davis in opposition).

D. DDRB 2024-008: 841 NEW MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING, CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The Chair opened the public hearing and asked for ex parte declarations. Susan Kelly, staff, provided a staff report for the proposed two-story medical office building located in the Southbank District. Staff recommended approval with one condition:

- 1) All mechanical equipment, appurtenances, and access areas on the roof of the building shall be architecturally screened in a manner that is compatible with the design of the building.

Seeing no questions for staff from the Board, Chair Ott invited the applicant to give their presentation. Brooke Robbins, with Robbins Design Studio, gave the presentation.

Chair Ott asked if the Board had any questions for the architect. Board questions centered around specifics regarding the materiality, the need for retention/detention ponds, discussions with adjacent property owners, and activation of the plaza space.

Seeing no additional questions from the Board for the applicant, the Chair asked if there was any public comment. Seeing none, the Chair closed the public hearing and opened the floor for Board discussion.

Board Member Dawson made a motion to approve the item, and Board Member Loretta provided a second. In general, the Board found that the proposal is acceptable for conceptual approval but needs to be further articulated for final approval, specifically that the south elevation should be broken-up to respond to the courtyard space at the rear of the building.

Seeing no additional discussion, the Chair called for a vote.

DDRB Application 2024-008 was approved with the staff condition, with a vote of 8-0.

E. DDRB 2024-007: AC HOTEL AND PARKING DECK, DEVIATION WORKSHOP

The Chair opened the deviation workshop and handed the floor over to Guy Parola, with the DIA. Mr. Parola provided maps related to property ownership and Park Street improvements. Board Members thanked Mr. Parola for his work. The Chair invited the applicant to the podium to present their requests for deviation.

Chris Allred, with the RBA group, presented the requests for deviations. The applicant requested three deviations: one related to reducing the requirement for 25-feet of Urban Open Space before a vehicular drop-off; another related to reducing the transparency requirements for the ground floor along a public right-of-way; and lastly, the ground level activation requirement for a new parking garage. Ms. Kelly provided clarification to the Board that the project likely did not require a deviation from the transparency requirement due to a calculation overestimate on the part of the applicant.

The Chair opened the floor to Board questions and discussion. Questions centered around the possibility of adding a third floor to the parking deck and allowing for retail at the ground level; of providing a heritage market in homage to Liddy's Machine Shop; and of coordinating with adjacent landowners regarding use of the parking garage.

F. DDRB OFFICER ELECTIONS

Chair Ott introduced the officer slate recommended by the Nominating Committee – Board Member Berling for Vice Chair and Board Member Dawson as Secretary.

Board Member Dawson made a motion to approve the slate, and Board Member Brockelman provided a second. Seeing no discussion, the Chair called for a vote.

The DDRB Officer slate was approved, with a vote of 8-0.

III. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. ST. JOHNS RIVER PARK AND FRIENDSHIP FOUNTAIN – PRESENTATION

The Chair introduced the park presentation, and Mr. Parola reminded the Board of the recently approved code change that requires a design review of CIP projects; no action taken. Mr. Parola also provided a brief handout explaining the scope of the approved CIP project for St. Johns River Park and Friendship Fountain.

Jill Enz, Division Chief with the Parks Department, provided a brief history and some background regarding the design theme of the park. Joe Loretta, with Halff, resumed the presentation.

Questions and comments from Board Members centered on the authenticity of the heritage architecture, as well as concerns regarding the perception of cultural appropriation. Board Member Davis offered to connect the design team with regional communities.

Chair Ott invited public comment. Ms. Powell stated that the coordination is needed among the three proposed structures on the site.

In closing, the Chair provided some impressive visitor statistics on Friendship Fountain since it's reopening in February.

B. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Former Board Member Lee was acknowledged for his contribution to the DDRB via DDRB Resolution 2024-09-01.

Board Member Brockelman made a motion to approve the resolution, and Board Member Craig seconded the resolution.

Resolution 2024-09-01 passed with a vote of 8-0.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at approximately **3:54 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 Guy Parola at 904-255-5305 or gparola@coj.net.