



Town of Surfside

DOWNTOWN VISION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 18, 2021 – 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
Committee Member Cuenca
Vice Chair Zoya Pashenko (arrived at 6:08 pm)

Also, present: Commissioner Charles Kesl, Commission Liaison
Frank Trigueros, Tourism Manager
Evelyn Herbello, Deputy Town Clerk
Clara Diaz-Leal, Tourist Board Liaison

2. Agenda and Order of Business

3. Approval of Minutes – December 15, 2020

A motion was made by Committee Member Rote to approve the December 15, 2020 minutes as amended, seconded by Committee Member Kula. The motion carried with a 4-0 vote with Vice Chair Pashenko absent.

Chair Meischeid asked for an update on the parking incentive item.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that Commissioner Kesl had it added to the last meeting's agenda in an effort to explore different parking incentives for the downtown district.

Commissioner Kesl stated that he has a memo regarding that item and will have it on the April Town Commission meeting agenda.

Chair Meischeid stated that she hoped the Town Commission would address it at their next meeting given the topic's importance.

4. Resort Tax Collection & Vacancies Report

Tourism Manager Trigueros gave a presentation on the Resort Tax Collection and the vacancy report. He noted shrinking differentials in the collection versus the previous year, indicating that the numbers are beginning to stabilize.

5. Tourist Board Update

Tourism Manager Trigueros updated the Committee on the Marketing Recovery Budget that was approved at the recent Tourist Board meeting. It included funds for marketing initiatives that will engage the community and promote Surfside with limited spending. He stated that next month they will be putting into place some of the practices and initiatives that are on the list.

6. Downtown District Survey Results

Public Services and Communications Director Dauginikas introduced herself to the Board Members and provided the summary of the survey. She stated that respondents were looking for a more modern aesthetics. She continued with additional respondent feedback including need of widening the sidewalks and more bike racks and biking areas.

Tourist Board Liaison Diaz-Leal asked how this correlates with the Downtown District Walkability.

Tourism Manager Trigueros answered Tourist Board Liaison Diaz-Leal's question noting this was a separate initiative, but that feedback collected may yield interesting findings that can further inform the walkability item.

Board Member Kula asked if there is something on the list that they as a committee can be useful in advancing.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that they can look through the survey's entered data to find feedback addressing aesthetics, for example on outdated façades.

Board Member Kula asked if there is something more concrete that they can approach and finish during their term on DVAC. He asked if there are any short-term projects that they can address and complete.

Tourist Manager Trigueros responded to Board Member Kula's question primarily pointing out opportunities to improve on communications related to information on the downtown district as indicated by the survey, which showed channels like the Town website and

social media had room for improvement. He stated that the next item, walkability, would incorporate many components including aesthetics and be more of a long-term project.

7. Downtown District Walkability

Chair Meischeid stated that this has been a concern and priority for DVAC for several years, adding that she spoke to the Town Manager about increasing sidewalk space and improving pedestrian the surface of the sidewalks. She also spoke regarding freshening up the look of the entire downtown district. She continued by referencing several diagrams created by fellow resident George Kousoulas. Mr. Kousoulas' files included ideas to widen sidewalk space by eliminating a strategic handful of parallel parking spaces along Harding Avenue.

The following individuals spoke regarding the item:

George Kousoulas spoke and walked the Committee through his findings and recommendations.

Jeff Rose

Chair Meischeid commented on the need for the walkability project.

Committee Member Cuenca asked if Mr. Kousoulas' recommendations would mean gaining or eliminating greenspace. She stated that they need to maintain their greenspace and thinks the plan is a good one.

George Kousoulas stated that his plans do not call for removing any greenspace.

Further discussion took place regarding greenspace, cross section and storm drainage.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Pashenko to recommend to the Town Commission to consider and act on widening the sidewalks collectively in order to improve sidewalk dining and walkability as well as transmitting the diagrams provided by George Kousoulas to the Town Commission for their consideration, seconded by Committee Member Cuenca. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

Public Services and Communications Director Dauginikas provided a presentation on the different ground coverings and the types that are available.

Chair Meischeid asked how much money was involved in this project.

Public Services and Communications Director Dauginikas answered Chair Meischeid question and stated that she will check on the time frame.

Chair Meischeid stated that she would like input from Public Works Director Stokes and if they are going forward with the sidewalks. She stated that she would like to have more information and the cost associated with this project.

Vice Chair Pashenko stated that she likes the white but does not know how well it will hold up and if these are the only three options. She prefers the white marble if these are the only ones available.

Commissioner Kesl asked if anyone knows the purpose of this and that it is harder to clean wood chips.

Vice Chair Pashenko stated that the water takes away the wood chips.

Public Services and Communications Director Dauginikas stated that is the reason these were used because they are more durable and do not wash away.

The following individual spoke:
George Kousoulas

Committee Member Rote stated that she likes the white better.

Committee Member Kula stated that he likes the white better.

Committee Member Cuenca stated that she likes the white better.

Chair Meischeid prefers the white rock as well.

8. Art in Public Places Final Recommendation

Tourism Manager Trigueros introduced the item and explained the recommendation to have an ordinance created to allow for art in public places using a special event permit for the approval process. Permits would be approved by the Tourist Board since they meet monthly.

Chair Meischeid requested that DVAC be consulted when it comes to any art projects in the Downtown Business area. She commented on the art installed on the corner of Harding and 95th and stated that it does look terrific.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that is ~~with~~ a different program which is a private partnership between the property owner and artist.

Tourist Board Member Diaz-Leal asked how this would be arranged since the Tourist Board meets monthly, therefore, would DVAC need to hold a special meeting.

Tourism Manager Trigueros stated that the Town would have to speak with the artist and advise them that they have to appear before the whole committee if they would like to secure approval for a downtown art display.

A motion was made by Committee Member Rote to proceed with the Art in Public Places process recommendation and that any art involving the downtown business district must also be approved by and presented to DVAC. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

The following individual from the public spoke:
George Kousoulas

A motion was made by Committee Member Kula to recommend to the Planning and Zoning Board to look into the requirements for low iron glass for the storefronts at Harding Avenue, and have more flexibility with the awnings on Harding Avenue, seconded by Committee Member Rote. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

Committee Member Kula stated that he had a call from someone that asked regarding all the Downtown District's expanded sidewalk cafes noting these may have been allowed due to the pandemic given outdoor dining restrictions.

Chair Meischeid stated that she spoke with the Town Manager regarding this same issue and asked which restaurants have permits for outside dining and that Tourism Manager Trigueros was going to follow up. She stated that the Town Manager said that the County started allowing the sidewalk dining on March 2020 and it expired March 13, 2021 and he will be addressing that issue.

Public Services and Communications Director Dauginikas stated that she spoke with the Town Manager. She stated that the Town Manager had met with Code Enforcement and he will be revisiting the permitting of sidewalk dining.

Further discussion took place regarding outside dining and what is permissible under the requirements.

Tourist Board Liaison Diaz-Leal stated that she does walk and if what they are looking for is having comfortable walking and using a stroller on the sidewalk, they do not have that currently. She stated that the businesses need walkability.

9. Future Meeting Date – June 17, 2021

Tourism Manager Trigueros advised the Board of their next meeting for June 17, 2021.

Consensus was reached to have their next meeting on June 17, 2021.

10. Public Comment – (3-minute limit)

There were no public comments.

11. Adjournment

A motion was made by Committee Member Kula to adjourn the meeting 7:23 p.m. The motion received a second Committee Member Rote. The motion carried with a 5-0.

Respectfully submitted:

Accepted this 5th day of October, 2021.


Marianne Meishcheid, Chair

Attest:



Evelyn Herbello
Deputy Town Clerk