

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD
October 26, 2006 – 5:30 PM
City Manager’s Large Conference Room – Third Floor – City Hall
112 South Osceola Avenue, Clearwater, Florida
Special Meeting to Discuss Downtown Marketing and Implementation Plan
Vaughn Wedeen Creative, Inc.

Members Present:	David Allbritton	Chairman
	Bob Fernandez	Vice-Chairman
	Geri Aranjó	Member
	Josee Goudreault	Member
	Dean Nichols	Member

Also Present:	John Doran	Councilmember
	Carlen Petersen	Councilmember
	Geraldine Campos	Director, ED & Housing
	Anne Fogarty	Main Street Coordinator
	Linda Byars	Board Administrator
	Dwight Matheny	Clearwater Downtown Partnership

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM at City Hall.

To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

ITEM #2 – Citizen Comments – Items Not on the Agenda

Dwight Matheny, representing the Clearwater Downtown Partnership (CDP), came before the board to advise that the Partnership has been working to create a strategic plan to improve downtown Clearwater and has engaged the services of David Quick, a professional in that field, who will include all the players and stakeholders in the development a strategic plan for downtown (see attached exhibit “A”). He invited the DDB to be part of the overall process.

Chairman Allbritton asked if the strategy would be “retail based”.

Mr. Matheny answered that retail has been the direction of the CDP. Lisa Mansell recently attended a shopping center conference in Atlanta, Georgia and brought back a lot of good information. She has met with representatives from Chico’s and others in the retail field and has motivated them to take a look at Clearwater. Retail recruitment and business retention is critical to the success of our downtown.

Mr. Matheny indicated that Mr. Quick would be on-board in a couple of months and would contact the stakeholders including the DDB, CRA, Council and others. At this point, exactly when this would occur is questionable and all the details are not yet available. Everyone’s viewpoint is critical. To make sure that all elements of the community are incorporated into

the plan, the CDP will provide for a round-table discussion that brings everyone together with the CDP Advisory Board and Mr. Quick.

Mr. Matheny offered an invitation to the DDB members to attend the November 15, 2006 CDP membership meeting at the OPUS Sales Center located at the corner of Osceola Avenue and Cleveland Street. Local developers have been invited to provide their project presale and financing information.

Mr. Matheny advised that Triangle Development is within eighteen (18) months of securing financing for Harrison Village and Island View. The company has been aggressively offering substantial incentives to realtors and purchasers. By the time of the CDP membership meeting Triangle may have met the presale requirement. An assigned person will brief the audience at the November 15th meeting.

Conversation ensued regarding the Shopping Center Conference in Las Vegas next year, where, on behalf of the Clearwater Downtown Partnership, Lisa Mansell may operate a booth to promote downtown Clearwater to retailers.

ITEM #3 – Cleveland Streetscape Construction – Perry Lopez, City of Clearwater Construction Manager

Perry Lopez, construction manager for the city of Clearwater, introduced Mr. Phil Sharp, Cleveland Streetscape project manager for the contractor, Gibbs and Register.

Mr. Lopez stated that, at the Cleveland Streetscape hard-hat meeting, the city introduced a new concept to finish Cleveland Street ahead of schedule. With merchant buy-in the contractor has proposed closing the street one block at a time commencing at one intersection then to the other. This proposal would call for closing the entire street within a specific block for an estimated three (3) week period. Once each block is completed construction crews would continue to the rest of the blocks performing all the necessary work including sidewalks, curbs, gutters landscaping and irrigation, everything except the final coat of asphalt. Construction would also include street parking within the blocks. The change would “shave off” a month or a month-and-a-half from the total job schedule and provide for a more quality product. More importantly the safety issues with pedestrian and vehicle traffic may be alleviated.

Currently, the construction team has begun to petition the merchants on Cleveland Street for buy-in to the change. An appeal is being made to the Downtown Development Board because of its direct connection with the businesses and merchants. The city is seeking support from the DDB and others who influence the downtown.

Discussion ensued regarding the maintenance of traffic in the areas not under construction and the three (3) weeks the intersections will be closed beginning with Osceola Avenue.

Chairman Allbritton asked when Ft. Harrison Avenue would be closed.

Mr. Lopez answered that Ft. Harrison Avenue will be closed in mid-November and open again the 1st of January. He explained that pedestrians would continue to have access to the businesses on Cleveland Street. Gibbs and Register is committed to deliver and is doing a

good job; they are on schedule, working quickly and have been responsive to the needs of the businesses and were very accommodating to the Jazz Holiday Event in Coachman Park.

Chairman Allbritton thanked Mr. Lopez. "Looks like a good plan", he said and requested that the DDB continue to be informed.

ITEM # 4 – Cleveland Street Banners and Sandwich Board Signs – Geraldine Campos City of Clearwater Director of Economic Development and Housing

Geraldine Campos stated she has received numerous e-mails and there has been much discussion regarding the suggestion that the city provide banners and/or signs for downtown that may assist businesses through the streetscape construction project. Overall, such signs and banners are not allowed. However, she has obtained approval from city management to proceed with "public purpose banners and signs" for the downtown core. The city's attorney has agreed that the city manager has authority to approve such "public purpose signs".

Staff has researched the cost to purchase banners and sandwich board signs to be between \$1800 and \$3600 dollars depending on size and style.

Sandwich board signs in the downtown were approved by city ordinance some time ago. The plan is to place sandwich board signs at the corners of each block between Osceola Avenue east to Myrtle Avenue with the names of the businesses located within that particular block. Approximately 12 signs would be needed.

Treasurer Bosi suggested a simply designed banner including the names of both retail and restaurant establishments. He asked if the same could be done on Ft. Harrison Avenue and if the placement of signs and banners fits within the recommendations in the Vaughn Wedeen Creative, Inc. marketing report.

Ms. Campos answered that Ft. Harrison is a state road under the jurisdiction of the State of Florida Department of Transportation. Most probably banners would not be allowed. The Vaughn Wedeen report did suggest the use of banners and signs.

Anne Fogarty suggested purchasing sandwich board signs that might be used for downtown events in the future.

Member Aranja moved to approve an allocation of \$5,000 for purchase and installation of banners across Cleveland Street, which would include the names of those businesses on Cleveland Street affected by the construction of the streetscape project; Treasurer Bosi seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Bosi moved to approve an allocation of \$3,000 for purchase and installation of sandwich board signs to be located at the intersections between Osceola Avenue east to Myrtle Avenue to include the name of those businesses located within each block; Member Nichols seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

ITEM # 5 – Downtown Marketing and Implementation Plan – Next Steps – Chairman Allbritton

Chairman Allbritton opened the discussion to evaluate the Vaughn Wedeen Creative, Inc. Downtown Marketing and Implementation Plan, which was presented to the Downtown Development Board on October 11, 2006. Perhaps the next step might be to determine what we would like to “attack” and “go ahead” and do it. We need to be specific, talk about it and move forward. To recap the Vaughn Wedeen report: It is most important to create a “brand campaign”, which wasn’t covered in the initial “scope” and would develop over time. However, we don’t want to wait until the streetscape is done. We have to begin now.

Councilmember Petersen asked if there was discussion regarding the “Cleveland Street to do list”, which recommends an Ambassador Program. Currently we have the Beat Team volunteers who act as ambassadors of the Main Street program.

Chairman Allbritton answered that Steve Wedeen and Michael Berne made their presentation to the DDB that was designed as an open public discussion. Conversation was broad and not specific.

Ms. Campos stated that it might be too early for the ambassador program. Vaughn Wedeen has suggested new renderings of the Cleveland Streetscape, which are forthcoming. The DDB has set aside \$35,000 for a virtual reality downtown model to include the new buildings: OPUS and the Station Square Condominiums. The model will illustrate what downtown would look like after the streetscape is complete and the new buildings are constructed as if one was flying through the streets much like that of the new Memorial Bridge while it was in the planning stages.

Chairman Allbritton remarked that Vaughn Wedeen has suggested a website specific to the DDB and the downtown, which could be entitled: *downtownclearwater.com* or *ClevelandStreet.com*.

Ms. Campos added that the website could link to other sites, something we’ve been talking about for a long time as we have the virtual model of downtown, which could be a part of the website. The possibility of adding additional pages is endless. The city continues to work with HDR Engineering to develop the animated model, which in part, is designed around the Façade Design Analysis and the Sidewalk Café District. The Façade Design Analysis was submitted to the Florida Redevelopment Agency (FRA) and received an award at the FRA annual conference in Miami last month. The report generated a lot of interest from other cities. We are looking forward to moving into the next phase.

Chairman Allbritton drew the member’s attention to the Vaughn Wedeen Creative marketing plan timeline for October through December and the budget recommendations, which includes commissioning and designing a Cleveland Street Branding Program. The brand identity for Cleveland Street includes creative direction, design, copywriting, computer production and client services to develop a logo/logotype and tagline/slogan and final mechanical artwork for reproduction. The estimated cost of this service is \$20,000.

Treasurer Bosi asked if Vaughn Wedeen was the only option for services.

Ms. Campos responded that VWC could provide the style, look and image that we are looking for.

Councilmember Doran suggested conferring with the downtown stakeholders to talk about branding downtown. As a group, the partners and we can first develop an objective to know where we are all going. A lot is to be considered in marketing, recruitment and advertising. We want to get this done as soon as possible and with consensus from all who have an interest in downtown.

Treasurer Bosi asked how we can get all these folks together.

Ms. Campos replied that all are needed at the table including the CRA, DDB, the partnership and stakeholders. Not one entity can do it all. We have to look at the timeframe, which constantly needs to change to keep interest. Part of what VWC is saying is to build up to the objective to each piece, one geared to retail and one to restaurant, then focus on the market.

Chairman Allbritton acknowledged that the website is a huge undertaking and should reflect an exciting face for downtown Clearwater. It should be expandable to allow for additional modules.

Treasurer Bosi added that we have to look at what we have and how we are going to brand it. Branding and the website go together.

Councilmember Doran recommended reaching out to other groups for feedback; come up with two preferences or ideas and see what sticks. Partnership buy-in and support is important.

Councilmember Petersen agreed that a good creative team would bring in good ideas.

Conversation ensued regarding the perspective of Cleveland Street to those in Countryside and the rest of the city, the simplicity of a logo and its design and the importance of moving ahead.

Treasurer Bosi moved to engage Vaughn Wedeen Creative, Inc. to create a brand identity for Cleveland Street including creative direction, design, copywriting, computer production and client services in providing a logo and a tagline/slogan, final mechanical artwork for reproduction and a clear and specific “scope of work”. The budget for professional services shall not exceed \$20,000; Vice Chairman Fernandez seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

ITEM # 6– Final Comments

Chairman Allbritton asked if the city is moving forward with a campaign to educate the public about the proposed boat slips on Clearwater Harbor.

Ms. Campos advised that she has not yet been made aware of the plan to begin the process. She will find out and report back.

Councilmember Doran shared his experience walking the six (6) blocks of the “Grand Central District” area in downtown St. Petersburg located between First Avenues North and South near the Kenwood District and the Palmetto District, an area of subdivisions platted in

the 1920's and 30's. The district neighborhoods approached the city of St. Petersburg asking, "what can we do" to bring central area of downtown "back" to what it once was. Old gas stations have been converted with "temporary use permits" into art galleries and some are on the way to becoming valuable and practical. The planning director, for the city of St. Petersburg who was on the bus tour, has personally purchased a number of properties in the area. He has converted an old grocery store into loft apartments and restored bungalows in the residential area. The important thing is that the city of St. Petersburg did not do it. They allowed it to happen with zoning, permitting and some incentives. We should take a look at what can be done locally to allow something to happen in our downtown, which helps the city as a whole.

Vice Chairman Fernandez added that other communities have taken the same approach in the Main Street districts, which has allowed the residents to accomplish revitalization. In many communities business have allowed residential quarters in commercial buildings. Because of the close living arrangements many businesses have showed up.

Member Aranja volunteered at the Jazz Holiday and met Terry Davis, the owner of New Harmony Coffee on Drew Street, who has expressed an interest in downtown Clearwater. He has been a participant and winner in the Southeast Brewers Championship held at the Harborview Center and other places throughout the country. He has a very successful store at Drew and Hercules, where he sells equipment and serves delicious coffees.

ITEM #8– Adjournment

Vice Chairman Fernandez moved to adjourn the October 26, 2006 special meeting of the Downtown Development Board at 7:15 p.m.; Member Nichols seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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Also Present:	John Doran	Councilmember
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Carlen Petersen	Councilmember
Geraldine Campos	Director, ED & Housing
Anne Fogarty	Main Street Coordinator
Linda Byars	Board Administrator
Dwight Matheny	Clearwater Downtown Partnership

10.26.06.01

Member Aranjo moved to approve an allocation of \$5,000 for purchase and installation of banners across Cleveland Street, which would include the names of those businesses on Cleveland Street most affected by the construction of the streetscape project; Treasurer Bosi seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

10.26.06.02

Treasurer Bosi moved to approve an allocation of \$3,000 for purchase and installation of sandwich board signs to be located at the intersections between Osceola Avenue east to Myrtle Avenue to include the name of those businesses located within each block; Member Nichols seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

10.26.06.03

Treasurer Bosi moved to engage Vaughn Wedeen Creative, Inc. to create a brand identity for Cleveland Street including creative direction, design, copywriting, computer production and client services in providing a logo and a tagline/slogan, final mechanical artwork for reproduction and a clear and specific "scope of work". The budget for professional services shall not exceed \$20,000; Vice Chairman Fernandez seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

10.26.06.04

Vice Chairman Fernandez moved to adjourn the October 26, 2006 special meeting of the Downtown Development Board at 7:15 p.m.; Member Nichols seconded and the motion carried unanimously.