

RDA Board Meeting Minutes  
August 11<sup>th</sup> 2020

Attendees: Debbie Trice, Howard Davis, Jim Lampl, Melody Odell, David Lough, Moriah Taliaferro, Emmett Gregory

Absent: Richard Mones, Tracee Murphy

Author: Moriah Taliaferro

Board Meeting Minutes from July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Approved.

Conversation with Commissioner Shaw. He brought up getting BotA and 10th St improvements in the budget for the upcoming year; and thanked us for our advocacy which rallied additional support for it on the City Commission. Howard clarified that we are looking at the fiscal year starting in 2 months, and Commissioner Shaw agreed. The first year of the project would entail developing a plan. Commissioner Shaw was asked to make sure that staff includes community engagement in the planning process. Later in the conversation he expressed enthusiasm for upcoming development (e.g., Lofts on Lemon, The Pines moving its operations further south on its property) which will increase connectivity among the neighborhoods.

The Board will invite other Commissioners to attend the first 20 minutes of future RDA Board meetings on a regular basis. Hagen Brody will be invited for September; Jen Ahearn-Koch for October, and the person who wins the District 2 seat for November (with the pattern continuing with the District 1 Commissioner in December).

City Commission Candidate Forum: Board selected the format which includes all 4 candidates "on stage" together. Suggestion was made that the forum be limited to 1 hour. Howard will join Debbie on the Committee. (We could use additional help.) At the September meeting, we should decide whether or not to give the candidates the questions in advance.

Open Space Report: Neighborhood Tree Plan- David suggested we "take a time out" until after Labor Day giving the Department's new manager, Luisa, a chance to settle into her job. Howard recommended we use the time to find allies (nearby neighborhoods, passionate individuals) to build a coalition for a joint citizen/city effort to develop a tree plan for the Downtown-adjacent area. David will reach out to start identifying allies.

Proposal re Board Goals: There was general agreement that much of what we had hoped to accomplish is impossible because of the pandemic. Consequently, the Board passed the motion to simply maintain and strengthen relationships and handle important issues as they arise for the remainder of this Board's term.

Leonard Reid House: The historic Leonard Reid house (which until recently housed Canned Ham Vintage) was in danger of demolition because the owner of the land is moving forward with new development. [Carrie Seidman reported in the July 31 Herald-Tribune](#) that agreement was reached for the landowner to donate the building and cover the cost of moving the house to land that the City is purchasing for it in Newtown. It will become the initial location of an African-American Art Center and History Museum. RDA

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Board voted to donate \$250 toward the cost of connecting the house to utilities and readying it for use. Debbie will write an accompanying letter indicating that RDA is committed to preserving and celebrating our Overtown heritage, and is thankful that the Newtown community is both protecting the Leonard Reid House from being lost to development, and creating a place where everyone can learn the often-overlooked role of Overtown and Newtown and their residents in the history of Sarasota.

Next Board Meeting: September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020