

## Minutes of the VSC Executive Committee

November 18, 2013, 2:00 pm

Attendees: Michael Klauber, Jeff Mayers, Pete Norden

Other VSC Board members present: Drayton Saunders, Kelly Romanoff

Staff: Virginia Haley

Guests: Lisl Liang, Steve Queior, Joe McKenna, Jim Shirley, Monica Slater Van Buskirk, Rodney Hershberger, Mark Huey, Teri Hansen, Jon Thaxton

Excused absence: Paige Hartmann

Michael Klauber opened the meeting and attendees introduced themselves. Mr. Klauber provided the group with the background on the VSC Board's priority to see a unified vision for the Sarasota Bayfront properties of the former Quay and GWIZ, the Van Wezel and the proposed Proscenium, growing out of the Intercity trip to Nashville. Once the VSC Board saw the possibilities of the 75 acres on the Bayfront and looked at the timing, the need for immediate action became clear.

Jon Thaxton provided some background on the Intercity trips that have been held, and noted the revival of those cities' downtowns were always in response to a crisis and always had upfront leadership from the private sector. The decisions on Sarasota's Bayfront will impact the City of Sarasota and the region for a long time. It could be developed in a piecemeal fashion, or we can help guide the process.

There was a general discussion of the possibilities in the Bayfront:

- The Dallas cultural campus is one of the largest in the world at 68 acres; Sarasota could surpass that.
- There needs to be private investment in the Cultural District area to help drive the philanthropic support.
- There are some current height restrictions in the Cultural District of 45 feet, except for a replacement of the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and one other performing arts building.
- Private development at the Quay is needed to economically support the entire area.
- The 2007 Cultural Plan does not think on a large scale and misses the connections throughout downtown. That plan is basically a remodel of the existing uses of the Bayfront.
- We must be bold and proactive in this process and look at the venues of the future.
- City governments do not have a mandate to dream big; that must come from the community.
- How can we focus the community on a bigger opportunity?
- What is the ideal size for a performing arts center?
- TIF will be a timely opportunity to talk about a plan for the Bayfront that could benefit the entire county by way of investment in a world-class vision.
- The plan must win the hearts and minds of the community and go beyond the business community.

- In 2007 there was a heavy focus on a conference center which was the wrong direction. The current opportunities require a broader vision.

The Committee discussed potential next steps:

- CRA extension committee must include the Cultural District as a priority in its final report which is to be presented in January.
- Economic modeling, not just from the City and County CFOs but from private sector expertise, is required.
- We must create the sense of urgency in the business community and the aspirational appeal in the general community.
- A consultant should be engaged to prepare a roadmap for the vision. Jeff Mayers, Mark Huey and Drayton Saunders will coordinate.
- We must communicate with the City and its Commission that the GWIZ ITN should not move forward until a vision roadmap can be created. Implementation of discussion with City Commission should be delayed for at least a month or two.
- Get the Boards of the seven organizations at this meeting to affirm their belief that this is a priority opportunity requiring a unified visionary approach by the region, and to assign a representative to an informal coalition to build support in the private sector.
- Work on a structure for the informal coalition and determine how it might interact with other organizations.
- We will need significant donors involved who are not associated with civic/business organizations.
- Jon Thaxton, Michael Klauber and Joe McKenna will create unified message points for the group.

Michael Klauber adjourned the meeting at 3:45 pm.