

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
Friday, September 17, 2021 – 10:30 AM  
Zoom Teleconference**

Chair Marsh called the meeting to order at 10:31 am.

Roll was taken and a quorum was present.

**Members Present:** Leo Marsh, Gregory Curtis, Chris Ross, Cleveland Spears, Damon Burns, Jade Brown-Russell, Jim Cook, Carla Major

**Members Absent:** Michelle Craig, Coleman Adler, Judy Barrasso

**Staff/Counsel Present:** Anthony Carter, Sabrina Smith, Devona Dolliole, John Roussell, Ryan Bordenave, Joshua Vairin, Bill Aaron (Counsel)

**Notice:** The time, location, and agenda had been adequately and publicly noticed.

**Call for Public Input**

**Public Comments – Made by the following:**

David Piscola - Hilton Riverside – He asked that now that the Board has voted on the new Interim President & CEO, that they try to stabilize the DDD and restore trust with the stakeholders. He also asks that the Board make their selection from the finalist with Winner Partners and look forward to good things ahead.

Chair Leo Marsh – He thanked the Winner Group for their hard work. He hoped he was wrong but he felt that today's meeting was going to be an attempt to delay and derail a valid search process that has cost our constituents more than \$60,000. He wanted to apologize to the constituents for the path the Board is on. There have been moves to deviate from accepted rules of order, we have likely behaved unethically. He does not feel this Board's concern is its constituents. He announced, that having said all of that, he has decided to change his roll and to channel his energy into being a constituent. He will be resigning his position as Chair of the Board effective at the end of the day. Going forward since a member of this Board has indicated that he is planning to sue him he would like to add that if the Board has anything to say that they contact him only in writing. He requested that since Commissioner Curtis is Vice-Chair, that he step in and chair the meeting.

Commissioner Curtis stated that he appreciates Commissioner Marsh's comments as it relates to the process. The process has gone awry, he is not sure why. He did say that the conversation that this may be a civil matter has nothing to do with Commissioner Marsh. Some members of the Board and the public have acted inappropriately by calling his employer. If it continues those individuals will hear from him.

**Action Items – There were no action items.**

### **Discussion of Interview Process for Candidates for President & CEO Position –**

Commissioner Curtis reminded that members that he would ask Winner Partners to expand their search but allow the interview to move forward with the final four candidates.

Counsel stated that since a quorum was now present that it should be officially called to order. Roll call was called and quorum was still present.

Tina Winner, Winner Partners, reviewed the candidate snapshot format for easy review should anyone have any questions. Commissioner Curtis asked that the DDD Candidate Snapshot be sent to the Board members. She stated that they have had the opportunity to speak with each of the candidates and are in regular contact with them. They have some dates available, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Spears asked how she believes the lack of confidentiality in our process will impact the candidates in moving through this process? We are discussing this in an open meeting and not sure if media is on the call. Are the candidates aware that this is being discussed publicly, and would not want good candidates to withdraw from consideration because of this. Tina stated that candidates were informed that at some point this would be made public and that after a previous board meeting, they were written about by the media and are interested with moving forward with the process. Commissioner Cook stated that it underlines the importance of us following a very structured and very specific questioning process where each candidate receives the exact same questions in the same format and the only real differential would be the responses in which they control the outcome. Tina stated that they had shared interview questions to be used in that format with the Board, so we do have an unbiased and standardized interview process throughout the first interviews, which were proposed to be behavior-based interview questions giving the candidates an opportunity to be interviewed by the Board and then also have a chance to ask questions of the Board as well. The proposal is set for a ninety-minute interview session with seventy minutes dedicated to the Board asking questions of the candidates and the additional twenty minutes for the candidate to ask questions of the Board, which are equally as important. She stated that you want to make sure they are doing their due diligence on the organization and the questions they're asking are relevant and show their critical thinking skills, interest, and motivation.

### **Presentation and Review of Standard Interview Questions Recommended by Winner**

**Partners** – Tina reviewed each section of the Interview Guide where the Board members were able to give input as to which questions would be asked, any editing the members might want done, and the individual members selected to ask each of the questions to the candidates. Tina would edit the Interview Guide with items noted and resend it to the members.

**Determination of Virtual Interview Schedule** – The preliminary scheduled was shared and it was agreed to move forward with final scheduling with the individual candidates. They ask that everyone comes on to the meeting a few minutes early to make sure everything is working

properly and the candidate will be kept in the waiting room of the virtual meeting until such time the Board is ready to move forward. It is necessary that the interviews be done through the DDD Zoom because we need to have the recording for our records.

Commissioner Curtis asked that the Board read through the candidate profiles along with the candidate questionnaire and to also keep in mind the one thing that we have not touched on is that he would ask that Tina, even in this stage of the game, open to if any of the candidates have any general questions that they would like asked and if the Board could have those prior to the meeting?

Tina asks that we begin securing dates for anticipated final in person interviews. Her recommendation is to bring it down to two final candidates. Anthony Carter inquired as to whether or not the Board would want these dates set prior to the next Board meeting. Commissioner Curtis stated that he feels that another meeting with Winner Partners should be set after the current interviews are completed before moving into the final phase interviews. Perhaps the first week in October. We then give guidance in to how we would like to move forward.

Commissioner Cook asked that it be explained how the candidate pool took place and what was done to get to the final four. Tina stated that they develop a candidate universe, mapped out the requirements in the recruitment brochure, they began reaching to their network, asking for referrals, they did fresh research on candidates across the country starting the pool narrow. They contacted organization that are devoted to the downtown space and they did have a total of 102 candidates that were touched as part of the process and continued to narrow it down based on her team's evaluation of candidates and their interests and motivation for the process. They were asked to identify the best three to five candidates that were interested and qualified for the position and that is how they came to the final number. The position was posted on their website as well as the DDD's website. Commissioner Cook asked what the Winner Partners universe look like relevant to the virtual world. Tina stated that 50 % of their practice is devoted to organizations that create economic impact in their communities, which could be in the form of traditional economic development, downtown business improvement districts, public improvement districts, development authorities, CRA, and tourism. They have been working in this sector for eight years now.

Tina stated that they are in a war for talent at this time. Candidates have options. There are positions available and the DDD is competing against other markets. The other positions don't have a public process that has factored in. They were all comfortable moving forward in a public setting and quite a few people were not comfortable with that process. For every candidate outside of the local area it means relocation. Timing, opportunity, and money needs to be right. In the grand scheme of things the compensation is a bit low compared to other markets. One of the other positions, while a little bit of a different structure, is Denver, and the compensation for that President & CEO position is \$300,000 to \$350,000.

Commissioner Brown-Russell ask that there be further discussion on whether the Board has struck the right salary range for this opportunity. Also, what other factors influenced our ability as a city to attract the best and brightest. Did anyone walk away due to the housing market,

education, crime, etc. Tina stated that we have a global city and we are not in a position where we have to attract people to come downtown. There were challenges around the educational system and it related back to the compensation. They feel that they would need to seek private education options, which would be additional costs. The thought was raised that there were no females. The crime stats here made it less appealing to female constituents so that has factored into the equation. The current range was \$185,000 - \$220,000.

Commissioner Curtis mentioned that we were in panic mode due to the tax base earlier this year when we started this process. We are in a better place now to negotiate the salary with the selected candidate. Maybe there is a way to communicate the incentive range. Anthony will provide the last item that was for Kurt Weigle, the previous President & CEO, and information in terms of percentages in the last two or three years. He will also resend the city x city comparison, city size, tax base, etc.

Tina mentioned that if there is an adjustment in the salary range that there are a couple of candidates they can go back to.

**Old Business** –

**New Business** – John Pourciau asked that he be included in invites to meetings at his personal email address until such time he receives the office email address.

**Executive Session** – No Executive Session

**Adjournment** – Commissioner Curtis requested a motion to adjourn; Moved by Commissioner Brown-Russell; Supported by Commissioner Curtis. The meeting adjourned at 11:52 am.