

# Downtown Economic Development Committee Meeting Notes

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July 27, 2016  
2:00 PM  
Lower Level Meeting Room B-8

## **In Attendance:**

**Council:** Mayor Jim Katapodis, Mayor Pro Tem Dave Sullivan

**City Staff:** Fred Wilson, Ken Domer, Chief Rob Handy, Captain Dave Bunetta, Kellee Fritzal, Jennifer Villasenor, Bob Stachelski, Denny Bacon, Simone Slifman, Chris Cole, Dottie Hughes, Corinne Hoffman

**Public:** Kelly Miller, Nicole Thompson, Kate Leigh, James O' Callaghan

Mayor Katapodis called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM.

**1. Public Comments** – None

**2. Minutes** – Mayor Pro Tem Sullivan, seconded by Mayor Katapodis, made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2016 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. Discussion Items:**

- **Presentation by Downtowner Proposing Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV) Shuttles in the Downtown:** Jack Alsop, Steve Murray and Sam Knapp of the Downtowner, a neighborhood electric vehicle company, presented an overview of their service, which would provide transportation in the Downtown from 11 AM to 11 PM. They proposed starting with six vehicles, which would have the ability to travel up to 35 miles per hour. NEVs are permitted to cross Pacific Coast Highway but are not permitted to drive on the Highway itself. They are currently providing the service in South Florida, Newport Beach, and Aspen, Colorado with seven vehicles. The Downtowner solicits the businesses for support. Mayor Katapodis inquired about how long they have been in business, where they are currently based, if they have competitors and, if so, how many and where they are. The team advised that they are a four year-old company based in Del Rey Beach, Florida. Their service overall has transported over 500,000 people thus far. They also indicated that there are some competitors, mostly in the ridesharing (i.e. Uber & Lyft) genre. Mayor Pro Tem Sullivan inquired about the sponsorship that would need to be in place for the service to operate. They indicated as much as possible, and Sullivan suggested

perhaps a minimum of 50%. Mayor Katapodis inquired about startup costs, which they indicated they need to generate revenue of approximately \$3000-\$4000. Jim O'Callaghan of the Chamber of Commerce inquired about where they would charge their electric vehicles, and they replied that it remains to be determined. Captain Dave Bunetta asked about driving/pickup zones or designated areas, and Jake Alsop stated that the system is more of an on-demand system vs. a fixed route stop system due to safety concerns. Ken Domer asked about self-regulation of on-vehicle advertising. They indicated that bars and restaurants are frequent advertisers but they do not allow advertisements for tobacco or other adult uses.

#### 4. Updates:

- **Police Update:** Chief Handy reported that PD has been focused on the US Open. They experienced a small issue with a crowd participating in a spontaneous political rally, and a couple of fights/altercations but that event have been otherwise quiet. There have been very few issues with alcohol, and quite a bit more families than in the prior years. They currently have two officers armed with rifles patrolling Pier Plaza due to the occurrence of terrorism within large crowds and recent police officer shooting deaths, but the reaction to the event and police presence thus far has been overwhelmingly positive. The Chief and Chris Cole responded to a question regarding which activities the City regulates or permits, by outlining what the requirements are and identifying the permitted areas under our control this year, as a result of our request to have greater control over the area surrounding the event. A question was also asked regarding regulation of individuals utilizing a bullhorn, and the Chief indicated that if the bullhorn is amplified sound, we have the ability to regulate it, but overall that often crosses into First Amendment issues for which we have a difficult time controlling.
- **BID Organization/Event Update:** Nicole Thompson thanked the Police Department for their recent efforts and indicated that the BID is thrilled with having eight officers assigned to Downtown. She reported that the BID Board is working on their bylaws and has approved their new budget for 16/17 with increased expenditures for ambassador security. They are still working with their accountant on their final audit for 14/15. She also reported that as a result of a successful Chili on the Beach the BID was able to donate \$6000 to the Boys and Girls Club again this year.
- **Strand Update:** Kate Leigh of The Strand reported that Pizza Press is scheduled to open in mid-November and they are continuing negotiations with HB Gastropub for the former RA Sushi space. They also will begin a facility-wide painting project starting in September for a three-month period, and have completed recent pressure washing. They are also working with the City on landscaping change to be approved and implemented soon as well.

- **Visit Huntington Beach Surf City USA:** Kelly Miller reported that May TOT was up 6.9% from the same time last year and a 3.5% overall increase from October to May thus far. He also reported that occupancy was up May 1<sup>st</sup> and Average Daily Rate (ADR) is up 3.6% for the calendar year, although occupancy is currently down and revenue per available room is flat. They are cautiously optimistic that this is short-term due to events beyond our control including shark sightings, sewage spills, fires in Southern California and other occurrences, but are projecting the best July ever for Huntington Beach, which was also recently included in the top ten most group friendly beaches in America. VHB is in process of completing its Economic Impact of Tourism Report. Miller reported that the summer shuttle is doing well and increased their use on July 4<sup>th</sup> more than double over the prior year. They are implementing the 7-day per week ambassador schedule. Chief Handy indicated that there was a recent inaccurate news item about an issue between a citizen and one of the ambassadors. He clarified that this was a dispute, and that it was more a confrontation related to an individual being asked not to ride a bicycle in a crowd of pedestrians. Mayor Pro Tem Dave Sullivan complimented Miller for doing a good job at the City Council meeting in responding to comments and concerns expressed regarding the recent “Soul of Surf City” presentation.

  - **Community Services/Specific Events:** Chris Cole indicated that the main focus at the moment is on the US Open of Surfing and related events including the Surfing Walk of Fame and the Surfing Hall of Fame. He stated that the US Open is going very well and is very pleasant, with many families, kids and shoppers in attendance, and very few injuries. Cole gave credit to the Police Department for their efforts. He also mentioned that the venue itself looks a bit lighter than in prior years in terms of attendance, although there are more consumers, and beach/open space and is hopeful that the event will meet its retail goals.
- **Downtown Development:** Jennifer Villasenor reported that they have received a new application for live entertainment at Ola in Pacific City, as well as a preapplication for a CUP to allow beer and wine at Bombburger, and that Pizza Press will go to the DRB in August or September and have applied for a CUP to sell beer and wine as well. An application has been submitted for construction of a live-work residence at 111 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and that 122-124 Main is in Plan check and will soon be ready for construction.
- **Public Works Update:** Bob Stachelski reported that the finish work will be done within two weeks on the Main Promenade Parking Structure, but that the work on the stairwell has been postponed until after Labor Day. There will be a pre-meeting prior to that work taking place. The Mayor mentioned that he would like to see this work take place earlier as the stairwell is in very bad condition, and Stachelski replied that it has been delayed because it is very disruptive to the businesses and users so it will be delayed until after the summer to try and mitigate that issue to the greatest extent possible. He also reported completion of the bollard installation on 5<sup>th</sup> Street

and that installation of the new LED lights on 10<sup>th</sup> Street is finished, and that the new light is slightly yellower than others, now that we are moving toward a warmer color or light. He also asked for any feedback on the LEDs in the garage. Mayor Katapodis inquired as to whether the garage is completely open, and Dottie Hughes of Community Services indicated that yes, the garage is open and that the stairwell work is about 5-6 weeks from commencing.

- **Downtown Economic Development Update:** Kellee Fritzal introduced Jim O'Callaghan, the new president of the Chamber of Commerce.

**5. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 PM.