

**Ybor CRA/YCDC Inc. Board and Community Advisory Committee  
Meeting Notes**

January 24, 2023, at 4 p.m.

Attendees		City Staff	
Steve Barbas, Chair	Liz Welch, Vice Chair	Courtney Orr	Int. Chief Lee Bercaw
Rich Simmons, Secretary	Chip Williams, Treasurer	Corine Linebrink	Capt. Alex Thiel
Aislinn Stone	Peter Wright	Brenda Thrower	Offc. Jasmine House
David Bailey	Claire Fenlon May		Officer Victor Vasquez
Walter Pinillos	Michael Murphy		Darius Stallworth
Marcia Austin	Tee Ann Bailey		
Damon Shiver	Joshua Frank	Guests	
Fran Costantino	Casey Gonzmart	Lee Bell	Alice Price
Armando Edmiston	Fran Costantino	Meredith Berwick	Karen Kress
Arnold Trueba	Chris Wojtowicz (call in)	Lynda Remund	Manny

**Excused**

Cristal Lastra  
Ken Jones  
Brittney Barrie  
Chris Vela  
Larissa Baia

**Unexcused**

Steve Barbas, YCDC Chair, called the January 24, 2023, **YCDC Board of Directors’ Meeting** to order at 4:05 p.m. as an in-person/call-in meeting. Roundtable introductions were made. This meeting followed the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Rebricking Project presentation.

**Public Comment:**

Peter Wright complimented Steve Barbas on his great presentation to CRA Board and Courtney for helping Bre Caiaze with Domar Investors – She appreciates the new YES Team but requested assistance with Solid Waste and the dumpsters in the alleyway.

**YCDC Minutes of November 15, 2022:** The minutes were offered for review by Rich Simmons. Barbas asked for comments on the minutes. ***There was a motion (Frank/Murphy) to approve the November 15, 2022, YCDC minutes. Vote unanimously approved.***

**YCDC Inc. Treasurer’s Report for November and December 2022:** Chip Williams provided the Treasurer’s report for both months and the reports were included in the packet. Barbas asked the Board if there were any comments or corrections. Hearing none he entertained a motion to approve. ***There was a motion (Welch/Edmiston) to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Vote unanimously approved.***

**New HEYNGA Representative:** Jose Cayon is stepping down and Meredith Berwick was nominated by Historic East Ybor Neighborhood Civic Association to represent HENCYA on the YCDC Inc. Board. She is the new president. There was a motion made **(Edmiston/Austin)** to approve Berwick’s application to serve on the Ybor CRA/YCDC.

**Clifton Larson CPA Accounting Services:** Orr reported that the accounting service cost provided by Clifton Larson has increased significantly and recommends looking for a new provider for next year. The services include preparing and filling tax paperwork for our non-profit organization.

Meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

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The Ybor CRA Community Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. as an in-person/call-in meeting by Barbas.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** See YCDC Inc. comments

**Introduction of Interim Police Chief Lee Bercaw:** Interim Chief Bercaw addressed the CAC and shared his background and history working in Ybor City for many years. He described himself as a problem solver and believes in working together collaboratively to find solutions to community issues. He says Ybor is near and dear to his heart and worked on many special projects over the years. He supports community policing and soon, there will be an announcement of a new deployment plan for officers. The new model will be “zone policing” to enable officers to get to know the community and work with them to solve problems. Wright asked the Chief what the challenges are today in Ybor City. He said the reputation that there is lots of enforcement in Ybor.

**TPD District 3 Stats Grids 128 and 129 and Business Liaison Officer Update** – Cpt. Alex Thiel presented the crime stats that included traffic stops that were doubled. He went over the deployment today that includes additional officers and bike patrol. There is an Ybor liaison position that was added that includes Brandon Caines position. The Player’s Club has been a problem and more complaints are coming in on it. He contacted the owner of the property to inquire about activity and working with other enforcement agencies to address the complaints. Barbas asked is crime up Thursday to Sunday per the stats or is it because there is more police presence in the district. Costantino asked about the extra duty officers at the problem club and Thiel said that was offered. Officers volunteer for those positions so difficult to fill at times. Department is subsidizing officers that offer to work those shifts.

**TPD Homeless Liaison Updates:** Officer House provided a report on the homeless situation. She was joined by Darrius Stallworth and TPD Victor Vasquez. The State Attorney’s Office has implemented a new program to assist services requested by the homeless that require follow through or consequences.

**FDOT Onboard Tampa Bay:** Alice Price, FDOT Senior Project Manager, addressed the CAC and gave a report on the new jobs that have been created with all the new FDOT projects in the area. February 21 is a Job Fair at Julian B. Lane and partnered with the city on it.

**Downtown Tampa Partnership Special Services District Expansion Proposal:** Lynda Remund, President, and CEO of the Tampa Downtown Partnership (TDP), addressed the committee. She introduced herself and explained the Tampa Downtown Partnership, a private, not-for-profit organization established in 1984. The TDP provides enhanced services to Downtown Tampa, Channel District, and Tampa Heights, which comprises about 192 acres. There are five main service areas: Clean Team & Safety Ambassadors; Transportation; Planning & Beautification; Activating Spaces & Business Grants; and Marketing. They activate public spaces through special events, to include the fireworks display, markets, fitness classes. Approximately nine months ago, a group of business owners approached her/TDP to propose expanding their services into Ybor City and created an extended district map to include Central Park (Gas Worx) and Ybor City (excluding concentrated residential areas). She recently

met with City Council members, TDP Board and YCDC Executive Board to share this Special Services District Expansion (SSD) plan. The process to expand the SSD requires City Council approval and she is moving forward to make the deadlines with Council vote on February 23, 2023. TDP is holding stakeholder meetings starting next week and the schedule was passed out. If the expanded area is approved by City Council, all non-exempt property owners in the SSD area would be assessed at a rate of \$1.0285 per \$1,000 of assessed property value and services would begin October 1, 2023. She estimated the yield to be approximately \$600,000, in the first year.

Welch asked, "Who were the stake holders who came to you?" She said it was Darryl Shaw, Mr. Capitano, and Richard Gonzmart. Did they approach you? She said Darryl Shaw did and Mr. Capitano and Mr. Gonzmart are supportive. Welch posed several questions and was surprised how the newspaper reported on the meeting in Ybor. Welch recalls follow-up information being requested but she has not received it. She asked if Remund could explain what are the current gaps in service now? Remund says she does not know at this point. She mentioned the services they provide include Marketing, Activating Public Spaces, Clean Team/Ambassadors, Beautification, Homeless Liaison, etc. Lee Bell asked Remund about her recent expansions and how she is keeping the money in those districts. She said they basically reinvest based on needs identified by the SSD. Welch asked how would that money be spent? Did the other areas that came to you to expand have a structure in place like we do or were they floundering? Some CRAs are in those areas. Frank said that he sees value with a special services district, especially since the CRA will eventually expire but what kind of mechanism is in place to ensure money collected in Ybor is spent in Ybor? One of the benefits of a CRA is money must be spent in that CRA. SSD is not the same. At this point, this expansion looks like a way to siphon funds from Ybor to support Downtown. So, how can you formalize that? Can we have an agreement? Remund said their structure does not have such agreements. All funds go into one pot and its distributed based on funding "needs" in the entire SSD. Frank said there is a potential for the Ybor district to not receive its fair share. Bell said the SSD could help support special events since the CRA grant is going away. He asked Remund to share information on their grant programs.

Costantino asked about the map and to describe the boundary again. Remund said they left out residential areas deliberately since the services are more geared toward business. Williams asked about representation on the TDP Board and who elects that person? She said there are two Ybor stakeholders on the Board currently that include Chappell Roberts and The Columbia Group. She mentioned that there is an SSD Advisory Committee in place for resident representation. How big is the Board? 48 people. Could Ybor have an Ex-officio seat? Remund said that is possible. Murphy asked about allocated Arts and Culture funding? Remund said they have grants. Edmiston asked Remund again to explain why the SSD is necessary at this time and "How do you determine their needs in different districts? How much money did you spend in downtown?" She could not tell.

There was a concern about Ybor losing its unique branding and identity. Remund is sensitive to the uniqueness of all the districts and will launch a branding campaign so Ybor City would not lose their identity.

Bell started to explain connectivity and that we need a mechanism to connect Ybor City to downtown. Chair Barbas told Bell that he has been more than generous by letting him speak up at this meeting but reminded him that he cannot speak for he is not an Ybor CAC/YCDC Board member, so he is cutting him off. This discussion and portion of the meeting is for CAC members only.

Welch said when GasWorx is built, those that buy into that project will then be paying the SSD assessment. We need to see the overall gap in services to understand the benefits of the SSD for Ybor. Bailey agreed we need more information. Remund said that they have been talking about this SSD expansion for nine months. Bailey

said this proposal is extremely fast tracked and has never seen something pushed through the city like this before.

Frank said there are positives and negatives here and his concern is accountability for funds and representation of Ybor on TDP Board. There are more downtown members on the board and this proposal would almost double the SSD area. He thinks Ybor City should create its own individual SSD and not be a part of this expansion. Our CRAs are going away and agree that we need to bridge the gap. Shiver asked about the pot of money and how its going to be distributed. He said that if I were other districts, then I would be concerned that Ybor may get more benefit. Simmons was hesitant about this at first but looking to the future, there is a benefit to enhance the experience in the urban core. However, it needs to be mutually beneficial and Ybor needs to maintain its individual identity. He feels that CRA's are sunsetting in time so we will need a support organization in place. Williams questioned the \$600K first year. Welch asked, "Why is this being pushed right now this year? Why not next year?" The city sets the deadlines for this process and City Council is due to vote on this February 23. Costantino asked, "Who hashed up this idea?" She feels that the stakeholders that approached you (TDP) are the ones that are most benefitting from it. The map includes a portion of East Ybor but we just improved the streetscape so there is no benefit to the property owners in that area. She advised everyone to contact City Council members and tell them how you think they should vote. Remund gave example of resident input in the Channel District recently. Residents came to TDP with several needs including additional cleaning and they extended their pressure washing services to address the issue. Murphy asked if this extension is permanent or annual renewal? Remund said once you are part of the SSD, it's difficult, almost impossible to undo. Wojtowicz supports SSD at high level but commented that our new clean team/ambassador program run by Block by Block are doing a better job in Ybor than the program in Downtown. He feels that this proposal creates an overlap of service, and it would all need to be worked out. May said more transparency is needed and feels Ybor is being coerced into something too soon. Frank recognized that with the failed voter referendum, communities are looking for creative ways to finance districts and fund projects. Wright commented about enhancement services and what the future looks like but is not 100% because more information is needed. Welch commented that although this discussion has been made here, City Council is final authority. This whole thing is being crammed down our throats and there are still questions.

Barbas thanked Remund for her time and presentation.

**Ybor CAC Chairman's Report:** Barbas reported on the following:

- **Ybor Arts Fund Presentation and Ybor Update to CRA Board** - Barbas presented a PowerPoint presentation to CRA Board on January 12 and thanked Courtney for sending out the video. Barbas reported on the question posed by CRA Board member Carlson regarding the downtown partnership expansion.
- **Attainable Housing TIF Funding Reallocation Final Motion** - The CRA Board voted on December 8, 2022, to earmark \$1.4 million (30% from Ybor CRA 1 & 2 budgets) for affordable housing. Barbas was disappointed in the motion and lack of a plan to use this money in Ybor City. The caveat is that if these funds are not used they can be re-appropriated within CRA 1 and 2.
- **Ybor Parking Lots Council Motion/Ybor Meeting Results** – Barbas will defer to David Bailey on this report but mentioned that it was a very well-attended event.

**Manager's Report** – Courtney Orr

- **7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Archway Lights Project** – The project is moving along. They have completed several blocks and running ahead of schedule. Welch asked about the Knight Parade and if the project will pause during that parade. Yes, the contractor knows about all the events.

- **Reimagine Centennial Park Master Plan Progress** – The project is moving along and working with Parks staff to secure a consultant for the project. The cost is \$225K. Project timeframe to kick-off design will be March to October with community engagement.
- **Ybor Speaks Installation** – A new sound installation has been installed in Centennial Park. It creatively highlights the past by taking you back in time with sounds and conversations from 1880-1980.
- **Ybor YES! team Stats** - Our new YES! Team is providing monthly reports on their activity. She asked for input if some data is missing.
- **CRA Action Items – Provided a list from the January 12 CRA Board meeting:**
  - Additional Streetcar Funding from all the CRA's
  - Special funding to the Ybor Museum Society through existing programs or new ones
  - Support for the Cuban Club
  - Partnership expansion and what are the “gaps” in services

#### **Committee Reports:**

**Economic Growth and Mobility Committee** – Welch reported there were great presentations and conversations about Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) and the cost feasibility of bricking 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue that took place today. Frank added that the ADU discussion was good and relevant to housing affordability needs in the district.

*Next Meeting: March 14, 2023, at 3:30 p.m.*

**Community Preservation and Sustainability Committee** – Michael Murphy highlighted the committee activities. Michelle Smith, Tampa Arts Alliance who gave an update on what her organization was working on for the Arts. They made some videos with Visit Tampa Bay that they are sharing. Orr reported that Steve Barbas did a great job presenting to CRA Board regarding the Arts in Ybor. The new Business Enhancement Micro Grant program for commercial properties was approved by CRA Board and staff is working on the rollout for the program.

*Next Meeting: March 21, 2023, at 3:30 p.m.*

**Public Safety and District Operations Committee** – Chair Bailey reported on this well-attended committee meeting that took place on January 18 to discuss Ybor parking lot requirements in Ybor City and had a report by Eric Cotton, City Zoning and Keith O'Connor, Code Enforcement. One highlight was the crime stats of private lots verses public lots. Armed security on the public lots yielded less crime activity over the private lots. This issue has been going on for a long time and City attorney has killed it. It was suggested to move this issue from Chapter 27 to Chapter 25.5. Code said their hands are tied and they have no staff to enforce the code. Wright said that we need a mechanism for enforcement of the codes and its problematic. After much discussion, the committee motioned to request postponing the public hearing/workshop scheduled for February 23, 2023, to allow time for city staff, CAC community and parking lot operators to work on code revisions that are enforceable. A committee will be established.

*Next Meeting: March 23 at 3:30 p.m.*

**Unfinished Business** - None

**New Business/ Announcements** - None

**Meeting Adjourned at 5:50 p.m.**

**Next Ybor CAC/YCDC Monthly Meetings** Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 4 p.m.