

# River District Alliance

Membership Monthly



## Annual Membership Meeting

The River District Alliance Annual Meeting will be **Monday, September 29th**. Tentatively to be held at the new Downtown Library, a meeting reminder will be sent to all members. We hope to see you for an enjoyable discussion as we prepare for another busy season!

## GARDNER'S PARK

The Gardner's Park neighborhood is overflowing with energy and enthusiasm! Just east of Fowler Street the residents, property owners, and merchants are working hard to return the brilliance of this historic neighborhood.



Part of the Downtown River District, Gardner's Park represents one of a handful of residential neighborhoods, including Woodford Park and Dean Park. Their work is a great sign of success and synergy that has developed as core downtown has had such vibrant changes.

To support this effort, the CRA has hired the downtown based planning and design firm Ensite to prepare a neighborhood plan for Gardner's Park. Work should get underway within the next few weeks. [www.gardnerspark.com](http://www.gardnerspark.com)

The RDA will offer support and assistance to these efforts and we encourage all members to take some time to visit the neighborhood.



## RDA to Launch 3rd Monthly Event!

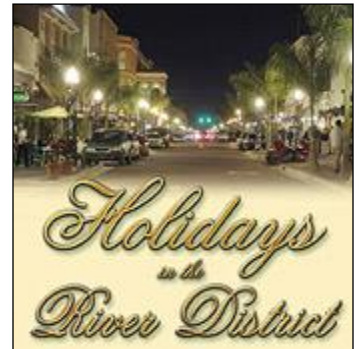
Beginning this December, the RDA will launch the third monthly event downtown. The event will loosely follow the ArtWalk & MusicWalk concept and is scheduled for the second Friday of each month, but with a little "mystery" included!



November will be the first event, with a planned monthly schedule beginning in January/February, 2015. For sponsorship opportunity please contact the RDA. Updates on the event will be forthcoming.

## Holiday Stroll & Holiday Joy to Join

The success of Holiday Stroll will continue this year and be enhanced by joining with the City Recreation Department as Holiday Joy returns downtown. The events will be done in partnership to expand the evening and provide a broader series of activities for event attendees, scheduled for Saturday, November 29th.



Official tree lighting, live performances by the Southwest Florida Symphony, traditional holiday stroll, merchant activities, and a family friendly movie in the park will be included.

## Want to Be Involved?

The Special Events Committee welcomes energetic downtowners to join with the fun of planning new and expanding existing events!

## CRA Update

The major CRA project currently underway is the convention center hotel. The negotiations on the land lease for the hotel are nearly complete and the lease is scheduled to go before City Council for a public hearing and a vote on September 15, 2014. This will be followed by a lease or management contract between the hotel developer and the City on Harborside.

Construction could get underway by the first or second quarter of 2015, with an estimated cost for the hotel of \$55 million. The City is cognizant of downtown events and programming, and will work to minimize construction impact.

Don Paight, CRA



News-Press



### **RDA Voicemail**

During a recent audit of our phone system and provider, a disconnect between messages left and some messages received was discovered. The Board takes this very seriously and wants to be certain our membership knows, that to the best of our knowledge, this has been remedied.

We are currently working through the aged messages and returning them to ensure that our callers understand they were not ignored.

If you personally have left a message, or hear of others who have and not had returned calls, please extend our apologies.

- RDA Board

Being a member of the River District Alliance comes with benefits! Just a few of the reasons to join include:

- *A unified voice to elected officials and decision makers*
- *Input on special events & programming*
- *Cross marketing & promotion opportunities*
- *Notice of all city projects, programs & events impacting downtown*

## **Downtown Parking**

Numerous members have expressed challenges with recent changes to the parking administration and enforcement downtown. Please know your concerns are being heard.

If you have not received informational rack cards and fliers for use in assisting your guests, please contact the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) or the RDA for pickup. These are being distributed for all merchants. Additionally, Dennison Parking should be visiting downtown merchants to develop an effective long-term solution.



Parking needs to be understood and ticketing practices reliable. Please do not hesitate to contact the CRA or Dennison Parking directly to share your concerns and thoughts.

**Dennison Parking:**  
2118 Bay Street  
(239) 337-3338

# Entertainment District up for Consideration

The RDA is optimistic two key issues ahead will come to clarity later this September.

Currently, the City is underway with creating two separate ordinances that will impact downtown merchants, property owners and residents.

One ordinance up for consideration is the creation of an Entertainment District within downtown that will create City policy addressing alcohol consumption on downtown streets. Uncertainty exists among downtowners as to how this will apply to merchants and property owners, enforcement policies, and how this ordinance, if adopted, will work in conjunction with or against existing State law that regulates many of our merchants.

A second ordinance is the creation of an Entertainment License. Although this ordinance would apply throughout the City, its impact on downtown merchants is not yet fully understood.

To assist in bringing clarity and guidance in this process, the RDA has received a grant allowing us to co-sponsor a weekend workshop for all interested downtown merchants, property owners, and residents the weekend of September 19th.

Mr. Jim Peters, President of California based Responsible Hospitality Institute, will be in town to observe MusicWalk, a representative downtown event, and then lead a series of interviews, round-table discussions, and meetings Saturday and Sunday, ending with a formal presentation of recommendations Monday morning. A key anticipated outcome of the weekend will be for Mr. Peters to advise the City on ordinance and policy modifications that will meet the City's objectives while also addressing the concerns of downtowners.

Mr. Peters and his firm have worked with more than 50 cities around the country addressing these issues, including Seattle, WA, Austin, TX, and Tampa. Updates on the weekend specific schedule and opportunities to learn and share your thoughts will be forthcoming.



Downtown Fort Myers River District

Welcome to the RDA Ma Peggy's  
Emporium, LLC.

## Membership Renewal

Membership dues for 2014-2015 are coming soon! Attending the Annual Membership Meeting is a great time to hear more from your Board, share your thoughts on the upcoming year, and renew membership dues.

## September Dates:

**Friday, 5th:** ArtWalk

**Monday, 8th:** RDA Board Meeting, 4 pm at the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau, 6th floor.

**Friday, 19th—Monday, 22nd:** Responsible Hospitality Institute Workshop; Entertainment District. Additional information to be announced.

**Friday, 19th:** MusicWalk

**Saturday, 27th:** Car Cruise-In

**Monday, 29th:** RDA Annual Membership Meeting. Time and location to be announced.

The River District Alliance is the non-profit entity representing downtown merchants, and any interested individuals or groups within the River District, having a common goal of promoting and enhancing the continued development of the historic downtown as a hub of economic, social, and cultural activity.



The Alliance is comprised of a 15 member board, elected for two year terms. Each board member is required to own property or a business, be a resident, or an employee representing an organization located downtown.

As a collective group, we are an independent organization, and therefore are guided entirely by own approved by-laws, policies, and programs.

We encourage becoming engaged with the Alliance, and welcome you to join any of our of board or committee meetings, volunteer, or be inspired to challenge us with new ideas!

[www.fortmyersriverdistrictalliance.com](http://www.fortmyersriverdistrictalliance.com)

---

River District Alliance  
PO Box 1686  
Fort Myers, FL 33902