



**Recap**  
**Economic Development / Government Affairs Friday Forum**  
**Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 8:00am**  
**Guest Speaker: Sergio Piedra**  
**Discover the Palm Beaches**

**Delray Beach Chamber**

Producing weekly Lunch & Learn Webinars which will be posted on our website. [www.DelrayBeach.com/webinars](http://www.DelrayBeach.com/webinars) You can sign up via our website and we will email you a Zoom link.

Last week was an overview of the Federal CARES Legislation. Coming up:

- April 14<sup>th</sup> – 12:30pm- Marketing, PR and Social Media during a Global Pandemic
- April 15<sup>th</sup> – 8:30am – Delray Morning Live – Facebook Live show
- April 21<sup>st</sup> – 12:30pm – Urgent Items Business Owners need to know during Virus Crises

Go to [www.DelrayBeach.com/covid19](http://www.DelrayBeach.com/covid19) for the latest updates as well as offers from Chamber members.

**City of Delray Beach – Suzanne Fisher**

5 Task Forces have been initiated by City Manager Gretsas.

- Business and the Economy
- Clergy
- Seniors
- Youth
- Non Profits

There are common issues among all groups.

The City is supporting weekly food distribution on Wednesdays. The first week served 500 families. There was a 50% increase to 750 families this past Wednesday. The CRA

and DDA assisted in getting meals to people directly during the first two weeks of the crisis.

The City issued a mandatory mask resolution this week. All first responders are in full PPE gear.

The City is producing a daily show on Facebook with the latest updates. There is also a Helpline – 561-243-7777

Q: What about rescheduling events?

A: Groups can submit applications for special events. The City will take them under review and determine when it is safe to begin holding events.

Q: Are there any exemptions to mandatory closings?

A: No but the City will be offering guidance to help business owners work through the State and Federal assistance available.

### **City of Delray Beach – Gemma Torcivia – Economic Development**

- We've developed the Delray Beach Business Assistance Partnership among the City, Chamber, DDA and CRA to support our local businesses.
- There are four Federal programs and one State program that are designed to provide assistance to small businesses.
- The City and CRA will staff the Helpline to provide individualized support to businesses who are applying for this assistance. 561-243-7777
- There will be a Webinar that addresses this as well. The Chamber and other partners will promote the link.

### **CRA - Renee Jadusingh**

- [www.DelrayCRA.org](http://www.DelrayCRA.org) lists resources to aid job seekers. We have done extensive research into grants available for artists, small businesses and even bartenders. All are listed on the website.
- Partners such as the SBDC and Career Source are still operating and can connect people to resources and job openings.
- Freebee and Connect are helping with deliveries of all kinds. Contact the CRA if your organization needs assistance with small transport requirements within the City.
- All current CRA projects are moving forward as normal.

**Q: Are we doing We Heart Small Biz month in May? The Library wants to participate.**

A: The Business Assistance Partnership discussed that yesterday. We are working on launching this at a later date and will let everyone know.

## **Planning & Zoning – Elizabeth Eassa**

- P&Z is processing applications that are currently in the pipeline.
- They are also accepting emergency permit applications.
- They are working on a procedure to be able to collect applications for future work via a drop box system. Once the procedures are confirmed they will get the word out.

## **DDA - Heather Purdo**

- The Emergency 411 page on the DDA site features “Pick Up Delray” which has a listing of restaurants that are open for takeout as well as hotels that can accommodate emergency workers or displaced individuals. [www.downtowndelraybeach.com/news-updates](http://www.downtowndelraybeach.com/news-updates)
- We held the First Friday Artwalk virtually this month featuring art, galleries and artists.

## **PD – Chief Sims**

- Overdoses are on the rise. This week was the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest since 2015-- primarily due to heroin.
- Overall crime is down 11%
- The curfew has the benefit of allowing Law Enforcement to approach people if they are out on the street past curfew
- The police has increased their visible presence in the Downtown area.

## **Speaker: Sergio Piedra – Discover the Palm Beaches**

- Discover’s website [www.ThePalmBeaches.com](http://www.ThePalmBeaches.com) is a resource for tourism related businesses and visitors.
- We believe that Tourism will lead the way in this recovery as it has always done in the past.
- In February, Palm Beach County had a 90% Occupancy rate which is record breaking. It is down to 21% now. Hotels are able to accommodate people in 15 categories of essential lodgers.
- Our projections indicate that the demand will bottom out in April/May and being a climb up in June and July.
- We predict that Staycations will lead the way in demand. Ex: Visitors from within the county or visitors from nearby counties (Broward, Dade) looking for a change of scenery that they can get to by car.
- Our website as has a Virtual Experiences page where you can find promotional videos and classes from our Palm Beach County attractions. This is an effort to keep people interested in our destination and to keep their sites top of mind with

the public. Palm Beach To Go also features restaurants that are continuing to provide takeaway meals.

- Visit Florida survived during the Legislative Session and was granted a 3 year extension to 2023. They have a \$50 million budget. Visit Florida will be focusing on in-state and regional tourism efforts in the near term.
- The TDT (Tourism Development Tax) came under threat. There was an effort to divert these funds to use on infrastructure and projects other than tourism. Discover and other PBC agencies made an enormous lobbying effort to keep these funds for their intended use. This issue may come up again in next year's session.
- COVID-19 became an issue right at the end of the Legislative Session. Again, Discover the Palm Beaches and the other TDC Agencies (Cultural Council, Sports Commissioner, Film & TV) believe that tourism will help bring us out of the downturn as it did in the recession.

**NEXT MEETING:** Our next First Friday Forum will take place on May 1<sup>st</sup> probably via Zoom. We will continue to record the meetings in the future for wider distribution to our Members.