



Opinion

In Daytona Beach's downtown, push the ball to get it rolling | LETTERS

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From the Chamber of Commerce's walkabout in Daytona Beach's Main Street area last Friday: Some of the comments make sense, and could be the spark of an idea. One comment I would like to highlight is, “It takes private investors to be part of the solution,” said City Manager Jim Chisholm. “We can have the greatest plan, but an investor has to see they can make a wise investment.” And another one from Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Nancy Keefer, who said it can take 30-40 years for a community to turn around.

[READ: Daytona leaders tour Main Street area, dream about its potential]

Let me re-phrase both into one. Governments can “plan” improvements, but investors have to see value, and this takes time. How do we cut down the time? How can we shine a light on the investment opportunities?

[READ: Daytona city manager Jim Chisholm's ouster goal of local group]

I would like to suggest one easy step might be to temporarily suspend some of the regulations we have in these CRAs and surrounding areas, from Silver Beach to Seabreeze. There are a lot of “beachy” houses on the beachside. Over the years, the city allowed these homes to be sub-divided into multiple units. If these homes, through small investors and investments, could be returned to family vacation homes, it could start something. Once they are established, grocery stores and other family oriented investments would take hold. Would these relaxed regulations help make Main Street/East International Speedway Boulevard an investment district? Could, for example, a McDonalds on East ISB be successful and better than an empty lot? And once started, the ball would keep rolling.

Mike Denis, Daytona Beach

Denis is a board member of Sons of the Beach and Friends, a political action committee.