

DDD Commission Meeting  
August 13, 2019, 8:00 a.m.  
Raising Cane's River Center, 275 S. River Rd.

Attending: Eric Dexter, Fran Gladden Scott Hensgens, Ric Kearny,  
Cheryl McCormick

Absent: Gordon LeBlanc, Melanie Montanaro

Others in Attendance: Gary Anderson, Paul Arrigo, Brad Bates, Bradley Bates, Nicholas BeJeaux, Ben Blackwell, Timothy Boone, Kevin Broussard, Cpl. Bunch, Gayle Carnahan, Eric Carnegie, Derrell Cohoon, Sonja Cotter, Les Crooks, Noah Dugas, Kirstin Erwin, Councilwoman Barbara Freiberg, Dr. Lucas Fry, Brooke Goodrich, Rannah Gray, Blaine Grimes, Nathan Hall, Lauren Hatcher, Hank Henagan, Kyle Huffstickler, Chad Hughes, Lowell Johnson, Sam Karlin, John Kaufman, John Kelton, David Kors, Jason, Langlois, Theresa Langlois, Danae Leake, Jeannie Magdefrau, Lauralyn Maranto, Mary Jane Marcantel, Mary Virginia Middleton, B. J. Miletello, Susan Miles, Nita Mitchell, Aaron Mollura, Samantha Morgan, Grant Murphy, Lisa Nice, Chris Nichols, Mary Olinde, Brian Ott, Ingolf Partenheimer, Katie Pryor, Cokie Reed, Davis Rhorer, Jim Rigot, Rhonda Ruffino, Frederick Sargent, Whitney Sayal, Claire Shirley, Priscilla Simpson, Lisa Smith, Andrew Soltau, Daniel Stetson, Casey Tate, Clark Vega, Gabe Vicknair, Matt Vonderstein, Stephen Waguespack, Chase Weatherly, Councilwoman Tara Wicker, Samaer Zaitoon

1. Mr. Scott Hensgens called the meeting to order.
2. Mr. Scott Hensgens declared a quorum.
3. Mr. Eric Dexter moved to approve the agenda, Mr. Ric Kearny seconded and the agenda was approved.
4. Mrs. Fran Gladden moved to approve the June 11, 2019 minutes, Mr. Ric Kearny seconded and the minutes were approved.

Mr. Davis Rhorer thanked Raising Canes River Center for hosting the DDD board meeting and introduced Mrs. Rhonda Ruffino, Director of Sales, Marketing & Events. Mrs. Ruffino welcomed everyone to the River Center.

5. **Board Action** – There was no board action.
6. **Governmental Issues** – There was no information to report.
7. **Update from Previous Board Meeting** – There was no information to report.
8. **Development Initiatives – Developments Underway** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current projects. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the following projects:

**First United Methodist Church** – Work continues on \$3.5 million renovations.

**St. James Episcopal Day School** – The school is renovating a building on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Florida Streets to house a 2-3 year old pre-school. A covered drop off area is also being constructed.

**Hotel Lincoln** – Mrs. Whitney Sayal briefed the commission on the status of the Hotel Lincoln project. Mr. Solomon Carter is applying for EBR City-Parish restoration tax abatement on the project and has submitted the second part of the historic tax incentive application to the State Historic Preservation Office. Mr. Carter is also currently working to secure leases for the two commercial spaces that are part of the development. Mr. Rhorer commended Mr. Carter for his contribution to downtown east.

**Spencer Calahan** – Construction continues on the development on the corner of St. Louis and South Blvd.

**Library** – Construction continues and the projected completion date is October 30, 2019.

**N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street Park** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendering and photographs of improvements underway. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the improvements are expected to be complete within the next weeks. Improvements include the following: Fencing, exterior lighting, window and door updates, exterior painting, tree and concrete removal, basketball goals and a mural. Completion is expected by end of summer 2019.

**Third Street Update – Diversity of Third Street** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a map indicating the diversity of Third Street. Each Commissioner received a copy of the Diversity of Third Street. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the stability and diversity of Third Street.

**Gotcha Bike Share** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Gotcha bicycle and an aerial indicating the proposed bike station locations. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Ms. Cokie Reid, Gotcha Community Manager informed the Commission that bike share launched July 18, 2019. Ms. Reid & Mr. James Amihud, Operations Manager, demonstrated how to access and unlock a bike.

**Downtown Parking Managements / Meters** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of a modern parking meter. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Metropolitan Council will execute a contract with LAZ Parking in the amount of \$764,000 annually to provide management of the River Center Garages and B1 and B2. Mr. Rhorer introduced, City Parish Chief Traffic Engineer, Mr. Ingoff Partenheimer. Mr. Partenheimer informed the Commission that the Metropolitan Council will vote on a contract to purchase 845 new parking meters for parking spaces downtown. There will be multi-meters and single meters that will accept credit cards and coins.

**LABI Headquarters** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images of proposed improvements. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Stephen Waguespack, LABI President and CEO, informed the Commission that LABI purchased the building at 500 Main Street approximately 2 years ago and it has been occupied by Stantec. Stantec will be relocating at the end of August to an office building on the Water Campus. Mr. Waguespack briefed the Commission on the renovations that are expected to commence with the “Wall Breaking” scheduled for September 5, 2019. Renovations are expected to be completed first quarter of 2020. Mr. Rhorer commended Mr. Waguespack for his commitment to downtown.

**River Center Theatre** – Ms. Lisa Nice, Post Architects, informed the Commission that the Metropolitan Council will vote Wednesday, August 14, 2019 on the low bid for the improvements to the Raising Cane’s River Center Theatre for the Performing Arts. Ms. Nice briefed the Commission on the proposed improvements.

**Louisiana School Boards Association** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the building. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Louisiana School Board Association has purchased the building at 620 Florida Street and will eventually move their operations to the building.

**Downtown East Social Ride** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of previous bike rides. Ms. Samantha Morgan, journalist, briefed the Commission on the Downtown East Social Ride. The ride begins at the Electric Depot every Monday at 6:00 p.m. and explores the history of buildings located in downtown east area. Everyone was encouraged to visit the Facebook page and participate in one of the rides.

**Beauregard Town Historic District** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of a home in Beauregard Town. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Beauregard Town Civic Association is in the process of establishing a local historic district. Ms. Whitney Sayal reviewed the process to become a local historic district. An updated building survey must first be conducted and is funded by grant through the State Historic Preservation Office with the EBR Planning Commission as the applicant. Design guidelines specific to the wants and needs of the community would also need to be developed and approved by the EBR Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, and the Metropolitan Council.

**Town Square Phase II** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current construction. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission that Town Square phase II is nearing completion and briefed the Commission on the highlighted improvements:

- Expanding the footprint of North Boulevard Town Square by two full blocks.
- Curbless/raised pedestrian intersections on North Boulevard at Lafayette Street, Third Street, Fourth Street, and other intersections.
- Expanded sidewalk/public space areas at Third Street and North Boulevard.
- Additional transit shelter/small stage at St Louis and North Boulevard.
- St. Phillip Street Pedestrian Promenade adjacent to Old State Capitol and the 'Crest' sculpture linking the River Center/Repentance Park to Town Square.
- Grand promenade on North Boulevard from the Old State Capitol to River Road linking River Road/LASM to Town Square.
- Additional 39 on-street parking spaces.
- Additional benches/seating on the Boulevard between Fourth Street and Fifth Street.
- New Fourth Street Plaza (Fourth Street/St. Ferdinand and North Boulevard) will include a new visitor's information kiosk, seating and lighting.
- Boulevard improvement connecting Town Square to the Downtown Greenway entrance at Fifth Street.
- Bike share station and bicycle roadway markings that will link the Downtown Greenway to the River Road Multi-Use Path.

**Downtown Greenway** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current construction. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Vicknair briefed the Commission on the continuation of the downtown greenway starting at 8<sup>th</sup> Street with the construction of the pedestrian and bicycle path that continues to the median of East Blvd./T.J. Jemison. This portion of the greenway will connect to the completed portions at Expressway Park and North Blvd.

**Riverfront Improvements** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current improvements and mural. Mr. Gabe Vicknair informed the Commission that construction is complete and reviewed the improvements with the Commission. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that a ribbon cutting will be scheduled soon.

Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission that the mural on the retaining wall on the riverfront between Laurel & Main Streets is complete and has been named “Chromatic Currents”. Mr. Rhorer commended the DDD Staff for their work on this project and briefed the Commission on public art located along River Road from South Blvd. to Hollywood Casino.

**Downtown Maintenance** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the employees of the Shaw Center. Mrs. Whitney Sayal informed the Commission that the July 2019 winner of the Downtown Distinction award in the Entertainment Venue category is Shaw Center. Mrs. Priscilla Simpson expressed her appreciation for the recognition and encouraged everyone to visit the museum.

**Development Toolkit** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of cover page of the toolkit. Each Commissioner received a copy of the Toolkit. Mr. Vicknair briefed the Commission on the contents of the Toolkit and encouraged everyone to review the Development Toolkit on the DDD web page.

**New Business – Third Street Hospitality Group** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of downtown establishments. Mr. Eric Carnegie informed the Commission that he and his business partner Mr. Chad Hughes established HC Hospitality, LLC and own the following downtown businesses.

- Happy’s Irish Club
- Boudreaux & Thibodeaux’s
- City Bar
- Bengal Tap Room
- The Register

Mr. Chad Hughes expressed his excitement to be invested in downtown and commended the DDD for their support. Everyone was encouraged to contact him with any issues.

**The Basin Music Hall** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the logo. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Matt Vondenstein informed the Commission that he and Mr. Brian Ott will be opening The Basin Music Hall located at 336 Third Street. The club will feature local acts and is available for private parties. The grand opening is scheduled Friday, August 30, 2019.

**Food Tour** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of a previous food tour. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. John Kelton briefed the Commission on the food tours that he offers downtown. Everyone was encouraged to visit the web site at <https://enjoybatonrouge.com/>

**Art Venue** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of exterior of the venue. Mrs. Sayal briefed the Commission on a new art venue downtown that will have locations at 315 Florida Street and 207 Florida Street. The owner/artist is Mr. James Curtis and the business concept will include a focus on street art. The venues are expected to open in September.

**Romph Pou** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the logo. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Ms. Mary Middleton briefed the Commission on the full service marketing agency and expressed her excitement to be locating downtown on the first floor of One American Place.

**Squeaky Pete's** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an exterior photograph of the building. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the lounge is located at 326 Third Street and is open for business.

**10. Events** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, the logos for the following events. Each Commissioner received flyers on the events. Mr. Tate briefed the Commission on the following events.

- Live After Five Lineup Reveal – August 15
- Wine Down Summer Series – August 16, 23,30
- Firehouse Gallery Reception – August 23
- Ryan's Run – August 24
- Baton Rouge Arts Market – September 7, October 5
- 13<sup>th</sup> Gate Haunted House – September 27 – October 31
- Preserve Louisiana/Old Governor's Mansion
- Manship Theatre
- LSU MOA
- Capitol Park Museum
- Old State Capitol
- River Center Events
- LASM
- USS Kidd

**11. Ongoing Projects – BREADA** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the logo. Mrs. Theresa Langlois briefed the Commission on the first annual fundraiser “Farm Fete” scheduled for September 19, 2019, at White Oak Estate and Gardens. The event will include cocktails, tastings from local farmers and chefs, tours of the farm, and a small auction.

**DBA** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DBA logo. There was no information to report.

**12. Correspondence** – There was no information to report.

**13. Public Comment** – Ms. Rannah Gray informed the Commission on that the book “Familiar Evil” will be featured on Investigation Discovery Network, Thursday August 22, 2019 at 9:00 p.m. Ms. Gray encouraged everyone to view the show “Lives that Bind” at the Watch Party to be held at Uncle Earls and thanked everyone involved.

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Ms. Kirstin Erwin, Premium Parking Service, LLC encouraged the Metropolitan Council to revisit the Request for Proposals for downtown parking. Ms. Erwin also briefed the Commission on the petition circulating to install street lights on Nicholson Drive near Jennifer Jean and East Boyd.

Councilwoman Tara Wicker acknowledged the lighting issues at the Nicholson Drive location and is working with the City-Parish to address that location's lighting and safety.

**Meeting Adjourned:**