

DDD Commission Meeting  
June 11, 2019, 8:00 a.m.  
Courtyard Marriott, 260 Third Street

Attending: Eric Dexter, Fran Gladden Scott Hensgens, Cheryl McCormick,  
Gordon LeBlanc, Melanie Montanaro

Absent: Ric Kearny

Others in Attendance: Paul Arrigo, James Avault, Will Barker, Brad Bates, Nicholas BeJeaux, Timothy Boone, Michael Brassett, Gayle Carnahan, Bubba Cashio, Cordia Clark, Derrell Cohoon, Sonja Cotter, Les Crooks, Lamar Drummond, Holly Duchmann, Laura Ferguson, Councilwoman Barbara Freiberg, Trent Fresina, Dr. Lucas Fry, Joseph Furr, Brooke Goodrich, Blaine Grimes, Nathan Hall, Lauren Hatcher, Hank Henagan, Kyle Huffstickler, Sam Karlin, John Kaufman, John Kelton, Don Kors, Jason, Langlois, Theresa Langlois, Mark Laperouse, Frances Lee, Erica LeJuene, , Johnathan LeMaire, Adelina Lepine, Jeannie Magdefrau, Lauralyn Maranto, Mary Jane Marcantel, Ernie Matherne, Tony Matherne, Jason May, B. J. Miletello, Donnie Miller, Scott Miles, Susan Miles, Nita Mitchell, Aaron Mollura, Kristen Mosbrucker, Mikayla Moss, Mary Olinde, Serena Pandos, Jiang Pang, Katie Pryor, Cokie Reed, Davis Rhorer, Jim Rigot, Dr. Taylor Sanders, Whitney Sayal, Lisa Smith, Andrew Soltau, Nick Speyrer, Daniel Stetson, Casey Tate, Alex Thibadeaux, Lauren Tompkins, Clark Vega, Gabe Vicknair, Sheree Westerhaus, Diane Zhang

1. Mr. Scott Hensgens called the meeting to order.
2. Mr. Scott Hensgens declared a quorum.
3. Ms. Cheryl McCormick moved to approve the agenda, Mrs. Fran Gladden seconded and the agenda was approved.
4. Ms. Cheryl McCormick moved to approve the May 14, 2019 minutes, Mrs. Melanie Montanaro seconded and the minutes were approved.

Mr. Scott Hensgens thanked Courtyard Marriott for hosting the DDD board meeting and introduced Mr. Andrew Soltau, Assistant General Manager. Mr. Soltau welcomed everyone to the Courtyard Marriott. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Courtyard Marriott is built on the site of the former Hotel Istrouma and commended everyone involved in the construction of the hotel. The DDD along with Hospitality America is working on maintenance improvements and beautification efforts to the Third and Florida Street intersection

**5. Board Action** – There was no board action.

**6. Governmental Issues – State Legislation** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs pertaining to the state legislation session. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the status of the following bills:

**HB 83** – Extends the sunset of the Rehabilitation Tax Credits for Historic Structures to January 1, 2026.

- Stalled / Ended in the Senate without approval. Scheduled to sunset in 2021.

**HB 466** – Provides Relative to notice requirements for property that is subject to tax sales.

- Enrolled and signed by the speaker of the House

**SB 91 & HB 534** – Provides relative to electric low-speed scooters.

- Passed by House & Senate. Enrolled / sent to Governor

**HB 602** – Levies a statewide tax on short-term rentals of overnight lodging.

- Stalled / Ended in the House without approval.

**Short Term Rentals** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of residential properties in Spanish Town. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that there is ongoing discussion with the neighborhoods regarding short term rentals (STR). Ms. Mary Jane Marcantel, Spanish Town neighborhood representative, informed the Commission that Spanish Town Civic Association (STCA) has reviewed the proposed draft ordinance from Councilwoman Tara Wicker and have expressed some concerns with the language. STCA has no objection against STRs as long as it is owner occupied. Currently, an ordinance or law to regulate SRTs does not exist. Although initially the discussions focused on protecting the historic districts from issues related to STRs, Councilwoman Tara Wicker is considering applying the Short Term Rental ordinance City-Parish wide. Ms. Marcantel also indicated that the neighborhood is reviewing the current Spanish Town Parking permit ordinance for possible updates that may assist in mitigating the parking issues associated with STRs. She indicated that 459 parking permits have been issued for Spanish Town with approximately 268 street parking spaces available. STCA is working with Councilwoman Wicker and the Parish Attorney's office on the parking ordinance review and discussing restrictions as to who can obtain a parking pass.

Mr. Rhorer encouraged everyone to relay their concerns to Councilwoman Tara Wicker.

**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. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer introduced Mr. Lamar Drummond, Director of Music for First United Methodist Church. Mr. Drummond informed the Commission that a Sanctuary Renovation campaign was initiated in May 2019 and all funds were raised within 2 days. The \$3.5 million renovations include a new chancel, flooring, acoustical, lighting, removal of original organ pipes, new organ and a sprinkler system to the entire building. Completion date is proposed for mid to late November 2019. They are also proposing construction of a new entrance that includes an elevator on the east side of T. J. Jemison Blvd. The entrance project is expected to commence October 2019.

**St. James Episcopal Day School**

Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the school is renovating a building on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Florida Streets to house a 2 year old pre-school. A covered drop off area is also being constructed.

**Louisiana School Board Association** – Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Louisiana School Board Association has purchased the building at 620 Florida Street. The Louisiana School Board Association will move their operations from Summa Drive to 620 Florida Street.

Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the following projects:

- **Elysian II** – Reviewed the current construction photographs of the 100 residential unit development on Spanish Town Rd. The project is nearing completion and are now leasing.
- **Licensing Board of Contractors** – Reviewed the current construction photographs of the development under construction on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> & North Streets.
- **Spencer Calahan** – Reviewed the current construction photographs of the development under construction on the corner of St. Louis and South Blvd.

**Downtown Library Update** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the library. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that construction continues and the projected completion date is October 30, 2019. The City-Parish plans to review the project punch list November 1, 2019.

**Chase South Tower** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendering of the proposed renovations. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Mr. Wampold is proceeding ahead with the proposed residential mixed use development. The 50 year old building is eligible for historic tax credits.

**Downtown Parking Meters** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of a modern parking meter. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that an addendum was added to the bids for new parking meters and parking stations downtown. The bids are scheduled to go out June 20, 2019

**Small Cell Towers** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of a small cell tower and tower site. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Mayor Broome has asked for a moratorium on the construction of the small cell towers until issues can be resolved. The DDD is discussing issues about an unfinished site on Third Street and the craftsmanship of the concrete upon completion. While the Mississippi River is high, no ground work within 1,500 ft. of the levee is allowed.

**APA Recognition** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint a photograph of Mr. Rhorer receiving the award. Each Commissioner received a copy of the information sheet. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that he received the APA Partners in planning award. He expressed his appreciation for the award and commended everyone who has been a part of the downtown development.

**Downtown Eateries Extended Hours** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of downtown eateries. Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the following eateries have extended their hours:

- Café Mimi's
- Matherne's

**Downtown East Update** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of Hotel Lincoln. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Metropolitan Council approved the Hotel Lincoln project.

**BREC S. 14<sup>th</sup> Street** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the rendering of the proposed improvements and photographs of improvements. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the improvements are 60% complete and 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.

**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 article. Ms. Cokie Reid, Gotcha Community Manager informed the Commission that they are currently assembling the bike hubs. Gotcha bike share is scheduled to launch during the month of June 2019. There will be 500 new pedal assisted bikes and 50 stations installed between downtown, LSU and Southern University.

**Riverfront Improvements** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current improvements. Mr. Gabe Vicknair informed the Commission that construction is complete with the exception of installation of the bike ramp. Mr. Vicknair reviewed the improvements with the Commission. Stairwell graphics will be installed on both sides of the steps Monday, June 24, 2019 creating a great photo opportunity. Mr. Rhorer thanked Visit Baton Rouge for their contribution of this enhancement to the riverfront.

**Town Square Phase II** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current construction. Mr. Rhorer 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.

Mr. Joseph Furr, JFDS, expressed his satisfaction with the project and the linking between the green spaces of the Downtown Greenway, North Boulevard Town Square, and the riverfront.

Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission construction continues with Creole Queen Elms planted in the tree wells and plans are to incorporate moveable tables and chairs. The improvements on St. Phillip promenade and on the corner of North Blvd. & Third Street in front of Stroube's are nearing completion. Plans are to create a focal point at the end of North Blvd. promenade towards LASM. There will also be an Auxiliary Transit shelter at 4<sup>th</sup> Street and North Blvd. that will serve as a transit pick up, stage & available for media usage. Phase II project is expected to be complete by the end of June 2019. North Blvd. at 4<sup>th</sup> Street plaza improvements will include a visitor's kiosk – shade trees, seating and tables.

**Downtown Maintenance** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the employees at LASM. Mrs. Whitney Sayal informed the Commission that the June 2019 winner of the Downtown Distinction award in the Tourist Destination category is LASM. Mrs. Serena Pandos expressed her appreciation for the recognition and encouraged everyone to visit the museum.

**Beacon** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the North Blvd Town media beacon. Mr. Casey Tate informed the Commission that updates are being made to the media beacon screens.

Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that a meeting will be held at the DDD office this afternoon with downtown attractions and museums to discuss how they can work together in a coordinated effort for tourism growth.

**New Business** – Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the diversity of development on Third Street. **T & T Café** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the exterior and interior of the restaurant. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Mike Brassett, owner of De La Ronde Hall, introduced the owner of T& T café, Mr. Jiang Pang. Mr. Pang informed the Commission that the restaurant offers milk tea, sushi and poke. Everyone was encouraged to visit the restaurant located at 320 Third Street.

**Squeaky Pete's** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the restaurant locating at 326 Third Street. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that "Squeaky Pete's" a country western bar will be locating at 326 Third Street.

**MeTV** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the logo. Dr. Lucas Fry, general station manager, informed the Commission that WLFT-TV will launch a new downtown station "News Net 30" utilizing ATSC 3.0 technology. The station will cover downtown events live such as Metropolitan Council meetings and evening bar scenes and is partnering with USS Kidd with daytime promotion of the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration.

**244 Lafayette Street** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the 244 Lafayette Street, former Blue’s Room. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that there is a building permit for a restaurant at 244 Lafayette Street.

**Downtown Healthcare and Wellness** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the business. Dr. Mark Laperouse informed the Commission that he and business partners Mr. Trent Fresina and Mr. Nick Speyrer are the new owners of Downtown Healthcare and Wellness. The clinic will offer the same services as well as new services. Dr. Laperouse introduced Dr. Taylor Sanders and Ms. Laurie Ferguson, NP. The marketing strategy and services are currently being developed; Dr. Mark Laperouse encouraged everyone to forward any recommendations to the clinic.

Mr. Rhorer commended Ms. Liz Eure, previous nurse practitioner for her dedication to downtown.

Mr. Rhorer recognized Mr. Ernie Matherne and Mr. Tony Matherne with Matherne’s grocery.

**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.

- Juneteenth – June 15
- Bloomsday – June 15
- Bandito Festival – June 22
- Kid’s Orchestra Music Camp – June 24
- Buddy Amoroso Memorial Ride – June 29
- Fourth of July Spectacular – July 4th
- 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. Mr. Rhorer continued everyone to support the Main Street Market.

**DBA** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DBA logo. Mrs. Lauren Lambert, Downtown Business Association (DBA) Director, briefed the Commission on the following events:

- Culmination of Live After Five Spring 2019
- DBA Member Conference – August 29

Mrs. Lambert encouraged anyone who is not a DBA member to contact her for more information or visit [www.downtownbr.org](http://www.downtownbr.org). DBA members were encouraged to check their emails for a board of directors ballot.

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

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**13. Public Comment** – Mr. John Kelton, Enjoy Baton Rouge, briefed the Commission on the Downtown East Social Ride and encouraged everyone to participate.

Mr. Nic BeJeaux, LASM Audience Engagement & Public Relations Manager, informed the Commission that the LASM had a record breaking attendance for the annual Dino Day event. Mr. BeJeaux thanked the partners that made the event possible.

**Meeting Adjourned:**