

DDD Commission Meeting
May 14, 2019, 8:00 a.m.
Louisiana Art & Science Center, 100 South River Road

Attending: Eric Dexter, Scott Hensgens, Cheryl McCormick, Melanie Montanaro

Absent: Fran Gladden, Ric Kearny, Gordon LeBlanc

Others in Attendance: Gary Anderson, Paul Arrigo, James Avault, David Beard, Nicholas BeJeaux, Gary Black, Timothy Boone, George Bouvillain, Shelly Bullion, Kevin Broussard, Shelby Bullion, Bubba Cashio, Will Chadwick, Derrell Cohoon, Marie Constantin, Sonja Cotter, Melanie Couvillion, Suzette Crocker, Les Crooks, Holly Duchmann, Councilwoman Barbara Freiberg, Joseph Furr, Trevor Gauthreaux, Brian Goad, Brooke Goodrich, Sam Karlin, John Kaufman, John Kelton, Don Kors, Mathew Laborde, Meghan Landry, Theresa Langlois, Frances Lee, Johnathan LeMaine, Jeannie Magdefrau, Michelle Mahaffey, Mary Jane Marcantel, B. J. Miletello, Donnie Miller, Scott Miles, Susan Miles, Nita Mitchell, Aaron Mollura, Serena Pandos, Enriquer Pinerua, Davis Rhorer, Jim Rigot, Whitney Sayal, Saska Spanhoff, Daniel Stetson, Casey Tate, Courtney Taylor, Alex Thibadeaux, Lauren Tompkins, Clark Vega, Gabe Vicknair, Bryant Voth, Chase Weatherly, Chauncha Weathers, Meghan Weiler, Sheree Westerhaus

1. Mr. Scott Hensgens called the meeting to order.
2. Mr. Scott Hensgens declared a quorum.
3. Mrs. Melanie Montanaro moved to approve the agenda, Mr. Eric Dexter seconded and the agenda was approved.
4. Mr. Eric Dexter moved to approve the April?? 12, 2019 minutes, Ms. Cheryl McCormick seconded and the minutes were approved.

Mr. Scott Hensgens thanked LASM for hosting the DDD Board Meeting and introduced Ms. Serena Pandos, LASM Executive Director. Ms. Pandos welcomed everyone to the facility and spoke about the new exterior lighting project at the LASM Planetarium.

Ms. Pandos also briefed the Commission on the upcoming exhibit ReTooled: Highlights from the Hechinger Collection, a thought-provoking look at the unexpected subject of tools. The exhibit will be on display from June 1, 2019 through August 7, 2019.

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 – Engrossed: Extends the sunset of the Rehabilitation Tax Credits for Historic Structures to January 1, 2026.

- To Senate Revenue & Fiscal Affairs Committee

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

- Floor Debate – May 14

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

- To House Transportation, Highways, and Public Works Committee.

HB 339 – Engrossed: Provides relative to hotel occupancy taxes levied by certain tourist commissions and convention and visitors bureau.

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

- Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that there is ongoing discussion with the neighborhoods regarding short term rentals. Mr. Rhorer encouraged everyone to relay their concerns to Councilwoman Tara Wicker.

Financial Impact Analysis – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of City Hall and downtown museums. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the City Parish released a financial impact study of the proposed incorporation of the City of St. George. The study projects a revenue loss of \$48 million for the city. Currently the City Parish contributes to the funding of a number of outside agencies as well as LASM, RDA, USS Kidd, OSC, DBA, Arts Council, and other festivals/events. The City Parish is requesting that all City Parish departments develop a 2020 budget that shows a reduction of 20%.

The community has worked hard to create a tourism base downtown. Mr. Rhorer complemented the Mayor and the administration for their commitment to tourist attractions and downtown stakeholders.

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:

- **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 6th & 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. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that construction continues and the projected completion date is October 30, 2019.

Downtown Parking Management – 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 the City Parish is currently reviewing proposals for the management of the 2 City Parish parking garages, B1 & B2 parking, and surface parking lots. Bids will go out June 6, 2019 for new parking meters and parking stations downtown.

Ebay Retail Revival Program – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the Ebay logo. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Gabe Vicknair informed the Commission that Baton Rouge has been selected to participate in the Ebay Retail Revival Program. This is a twelve month program that gives the small businesses the tools to effectively compete in the global retail market. The program will kick off summer of 2019 and everyone was encouraged to visit [www. ebayinc.com/BatonRouge](http://www.ebayinc.com/BatonRouge).

Downtown East Update – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Hotel Lincoln and the interior of Red Stick Social. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Planning Commission approved the rezoning for the Hotel Lincoln. The project will go before the Metropolitan Council for final approval May, 15 2019.

Red Stick Social and Electric Depot have opened and everyone was encouraged to support the development. Mr. Rhorer congratulated everyone involved with the project.

Passenger Rail Poll – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the proposed passenger rail station and an image of the poll results. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Baton Rouge Area Foundation recently conducted a poll regarding the BR-NOLA inter-city passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Mr. Rhorer reviewed the results of the poll which indicate that citizens would support a passenger rail.

EBR Bike Pedestrian Master Plan – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the proposed network for the city and downtown. Ms. Whitney Sayal informed the Commission that the EBR Master Plan has been a collaborative of different agencies including BREC, BRAF, DOTD and the City to develop a draft bike pedestrian master plan. A draft network was created following a series of public meetings. The plan/network is in the final stages of approval and is being reviewed by several committees with the goal of the final Metropolitan Council approval in the summer of 2019. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that a meeting was held Monday, May 13th with stakeholders, BREC, DOTD and the City to discuss implementation of the master plan.

The recently passed road improvement tax, MovEbr, has selected with two engineering firms to implement the proposed road projects as well as ADA, sidewalk, and bicycle infrastructure improvements.

BREC is hosting public meetings this week regarding the North Baton Rouge to downtown bicycle/pedestrian network.

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.

Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that 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 Plaza – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current improvements. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that construction is wrapping up on the renovations to the plaza. The project is an entryway for riverboat visitors and an attraction on the riverfront. The project was funded by state sales tax rebate. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the improvements to the plaza. A bike ramp for the pedestrian bridge has been ordered and the sound system will be installed shortly.

Town Square Phase II – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current construction. Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission construction continues with trees planted in the tree wells and placement of moveable tables and chairs. The improvements on St. Phillip and on the corner of North Blvd. & Third Street in front of Stroube's are nearing completion and improvements to the opposite corner on Third Street will follow. There will also be an Auxiliary Transit shelter at 4th 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 May 2019. North Blvd. at 4th Street plaza improvements will include a visitor's kiosk – shade trees, seating and tables.

Downtown Greenway – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the rendering for East Boulevard improvements. Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission that City of Baton Rouge has accepted the low bid from T. L. Hawk, LLC for \$1,470,961 and a construction kick off meeting will be scheduled with DDD, Design Workshop, Reich Associates, and the City-Parish once the Purchase Order is released. Construction on the pedestrian and bicycle path in the median of East Blvd./T.J. Jemison will start to mobilize at the end of May 2019 – complete by end of 2019. This portion of the greenway will connect the completed portions at Expressway Park to North Blvd.

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

Mr. Rhorer recognized Mrs. Courtney Taylor, Visit Baton Rouge Director of Destination Services, Mrs. Taylor is in charge of the riverboats that dock in downtown Baton Rouge.

Mr. Rhorer also mentioned a meeting scheduled with Mr. Shawn Wilson, DOTD Secretary, to discuss tying the greenway into the Interstate 10 expansion project.

Downtown Maintenance – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the employees at Cocha Restaurant. Mrs. Sayal informed the Commission that the May 2019 winner of the Downtown Distinction award in the small business category is Cocha Restaurant. Mrs. Saska Spanhoff expressed her appreciation for the recognition expressed and encouraged everyone to visit the restaurant.

The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of Clean City contest judges in town, Mr. James Avault, City Landscape Maintenance, informed the Commission that Louisiana

Garden Club Federation has holds a state wide competition based on population density Baton Rouge won district award this year.

The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the Spanish Town May Clean-up Ms. Sayal informed the Commission that the STCA organized a cleanup on North Street under the interstate and over a 1 ½ tons of trash and debris was picked up.

Downtown Arts Exchange Recap – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Downtown Arts Exchange on North Blvd. Mrs. Sayal informed the Commission that the Downtown Arts Exchange partnered with DBA / Live After Five and had a pop up retail on Town Lawn, which was very successful.

9. New Business – Weiler Plastic Surgery, LLC. – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the logo. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Bryant Voth, director of Weiler Plaster Surgery informed the Commission that Weiler has located an office at 240 Laurel St., 202. Mr. Voth briefed the Commission on the services offered at the clinic.

Elifin – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the logo. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Mathew Laborde, CEO, expressed his excitement to be located downtown at 640 Main Street. Elifin is a commercial real estate brokerage company. The company has grown in the past 1 ½ years from 13 to 196 properties under their representation. Mr. Laborde is looking forward to returning to upcoming DDD board meetings to introduce businesses locating downtown. Mr. Rhorer commended Mr. Laborde for reaching out to the DDD to get involved with downtown.

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

- Live After Five – May 17,31
- Sunday in the Park – May 19
- 2019 Oyster Festival / Color Run – May 18
- Soul Food Fest – May 25-26
- Memorial Day Concert – May 27
- 4Forty Fitness Matherne’s Grocery Store Tour – June 10
- Preserve Louisiana/Old Governor's Mansion
- Manship Theatre
- LSU MOA
- Capitol Park Museum
- Old State Capitol
- River Center Events
- LASM
- USS Kidd

In recognition of Tourism Week, Visit Baton Rouge encourages everyone to participate in the Second Line scheduled for Friday, May 17, 2019 beginning at 4:00 p.m. at North Blvd. Town Square and ending at Live After Five.

11. Ongoing Projects – BREADA – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the logo. Ms. Theresa Langlois briefed the Commission on the following events:

- **Butterfly Extravaganza** – May 25
- **Fresh Fest** – Begins June 1
- **Farm Fest** – September 19

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:

- Cocktails and Conversations – May 30
- Live After Five – May 31
- 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

12. Correspondence – There was no information to report.

13. Public Comment – Mr. Nicholas BeJeaux, LASM Audience Engagement & Public Relations Manager, briefed the Commission on upcoming events at the LASM.

Mr. David Beard, USS Kidd, briefed the Commission on the upcoming fund raising gala for the USS Kidd. The event is scheduled for Thursday, May 30, 2019 at the Hilton, Riverview Room, 6:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. Tickets are available on the web site at usskidd.com

Mr. Daniel Stetson, LSU Museum of Art Executive Director, informed the Commission that the store sales have increased by 13% and credits it to the visitors from the river boats. Mr. Stetson briefed the Commission on upcoming events.

Meeting Adjourned: