

DDD Commission Meeting
September 8, 2020, 8:00 a.m.
The Estuary at the Water Campus, 1110 S. River Road

Attending: Scott Hensgens, Eric Dexter, Melanie Montanaro, Erin Monroe Wesley, Madeline Brown, Prescott Bailey

Absent: Jude Melville

Others in Attendance: James Avault, Matt Bailey, Rex Cabaniss, Steve Carter, Holly Duchmann, Mary Durusau, Joey Furr, Jay Gaudet, Rosehn Gipe, Kyle Huffstickler, Allen Kirkpatrick, T.C. Lamb, Annette Leon, Patrick Michaels, Aaron Molwa, Whitney Hoffman Sayal, Mary Jane Marcantel, Tina Rance, David Rhymes, Davis Rhorer, Rhonda Ruffino, Cheri Soileau, Richard Sprinkle, Daniel Stetson, Casey Tate, Gabe Vicknair, Tara Wicker, Dwana Williams

1. Mr. Scott Hensgens called the meeting to order.
2. Mr. Scott Hensgens declared a quorum.
3. Mrs. Erin Monroe Wesley moved to approve the agenda Mr. Melanie Montanaro seconded and the agenda was approved.
4. Mrs. Erin Monroe Wesley moved to approve the July 14th, 2020 minutes, Mr. Eric Dexter seconded and the minutes were approved.

Mr. Scott Hensgens thanked The Water Campus for hosting the DDD meeting and introduced Ms. Tina Rance to the commission. Ms. Tina Rance welcomed the attendees and informed the commission that construction is finishing on 200 Water Street and the Main Square. The Estuary space at the Water Campus has had a few events since COVID regulations. She welcomed all to consider the space for future events.

Mr. Davis Rhorer recognized Representative Steve Carter. Mr Steve Carter remarked on the progress he has seen in downtown over the years and indicated his continued support of downtown initiatives and developments

Mr. Davis Rhorer recognized Whitney Hoffman Sayal for her contributions to the Downtown Development District during her 8 years of service and wished her well on her future endeavors at BREC as the Assistant Director of Urban Trails. Ms. Whitney Hoffman Sayal thanked the DDD commission, staff, and stakeholders for their support.

5. Board Action – There was no board action.

6. Governmental Issues – Current COVID Orders – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of Phase Two updated guidelines. Phase Two COVID-19 guidelines have been extended to September 11th and include a mask mandate and closing bars. Restaurants and businesses remain at 50% occupancy and groups of more than 50 should be avoided. Live music and other entertainment venues remain closed.

Main Street Recovery Program - The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, an image of the Main Street Recovery initiative. Mr. Gabe Vicknair briefed the Commission on the program's COVID relief funds available for small businesses. Minority owned businesses and businesses

not receiving prior assistance were prioritized for the first round of grants. Most expenses/losses outside of profit loss are eligible for a grant up to \$15,000. Applications are being accepted until November 4th. The DDD continues to update the downtown businesses about grant opportunities.

Scooter Ordinance/Legislation – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images of electric scooters. Mr. Rhorer highlighted a proposed ordinance regulating scooters/share mobility devices in Baton Rouge. The ordinance would allow licensing for up to two companies for 3 years. The devices would not be allowed on the sidewalks and defined parking “corrals” may be defined in certain areas. The devices would also be rebalanced daily and the intent of the ordinance is to keep the public safe and the public realm uncluttered.

7. Update from Previous Board Meeting – There was no information to report.

8. Development Initiatives – Developments Underway – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, videos and photographs of current projects. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the following projects:

Water Campus Update – Water Street – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, current photographs of the 20 residential unit complex under construction at the Water Campus, 200 Water Street and the main square. Ms. Tina Rance briefed the commission on both developments and highlighted the square’s fountain designed by Reich Associates and manufactured in Germany. The naming of the square is expected to be announced soon. Both developments are expected to be complete in October.

The water working space at the Water Campus is also expected to be leased soon.

Elysian III - The Commission viewed via Powerpoint, images of the Elysian III development. Mr. Rhorer informed the commission that the project is in Downtown East and will have 42 residential units. The units are mixed income and complement the housing opportunities available downtown. Mr. Rhorer highlighted the importance of connecting these developments to downtown’s core.

St. James Episcopal Church Renovation – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, images of the interior renovations at St. James Episcopal Church. Renovations include new floors and organ in the sanctuary.

USS KIDD Renovation – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, images of the renovations of the USS KIDD theatre/event space. Ms. Rosehn Gipe indicated that the project is within 3 weeks of completion.

Chase South Tower – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, plans and renderings of the Chase South Tower. Mr. Rhorer briefed the commission on the plans for the building including retail space, 144 residential units, exterior plazas, and pool. The Planning Commission approved the site plan in August.

861 Main Street – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, plans and renderings of a proposed office building at 861 Main Street. Mr. Davis Rhorer briefed the commission on the 3-story building proposed by the Louisiana Relator’s Association. The DDD is marketing the space to potential tenants for the office space.

Squeaky Pete's -- The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, images of the exterior of Squeaky Pete's on Third Street. The restaurant/entertainment venue has reopened Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Rio Taco & Tequila - The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, images of the exterior of Rio Taco & Tequila on Third Street. Construction continues on the full-service restaurant and is expect to open soon.

Cecelia Creole Bistro - The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, images of the Cecelia Creole Bistro exterior signage. The restaurant has reopened after being closed for a few months this spring/summer.

Happy's Outdoor Patio Improvements - The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, images of the construction of a covered outdoor patio at Happy's, an entertainment venue located on Third Street.

Hollywood Casino Landside Improvements - The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, images of an aerial of Hollywood Casino. The casino was approved for landside operation and they plan to provide more specifics of the reconfiguration in October. Shaquille O'Neal also plans to open a restaurant, known as "Big Chicken" as part of the planned improvements.

Mayor's Homelessness Prevention Coalition – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images of the mission, structure, and strategy of the mayor's new homeless coalition. Mr. Rhorer briefed the commission on the coalition's efforts and introduced the downtown committee members including Paul Arrigo, Mary Jane Marcantel, and Taylor Jacobsen. Mr. Rhorer highlighted a new initiative known as "Recast," a behavior health outreach pilot beginning in downtown soon. Mr. Rhorer also recognized Ms. Mary Jane Marcantel's efforts as part of the Road Home Program.

Hospitality Recovery Task Force – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of night life on the corner of Third Street and Florida Street. Mr. Davis Rhorer informed the Commission that Hurricane Laura evacuees have boosted local hotel occupancy rates.

Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, an image and rendering of the new Arts Council headquarters. Mr. Rhorer indicated that a ground-breaking ceremony is scheduled for September 8th at 11am. The demolition has begun and the renovation is expected to be complete in 10 months.

Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI) - The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, images of exterior of the LABI office on Main Street as well as a flyer regarding the ribbon cutting scheduled on September 10th at 10am.

CATS Update - The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, images of the CATS Trolley. Mr. Rhorer introduced Cheri Soileau the CATS new Director of Planning, Scheduling, and Program Development. Ms. Cheri Soileau indicated her excitement to be working at CATS and is acquainting herself with Baton Rouge's and downtown's stakeholders. She welcomed all to speak with her after the meeting and include her in community meetings as she becomes more familiar with the area.

Outdoor Programming – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photograph of the North Blvd. Town Square engaged in yoga exercise. Mr. Casey Tate informed the Commission that the DDD is coordinating with local instructors and trainers to provide exercise opportunities, with

social distancing, when appropriate. The DDD is also working with groups to coordinate small gatherings/outdoor events.

Mr. Rhorer informed the commission that the DDD is working with Opera Louisiane to feature a small opera event on the amphitheater in Riverfront Plaza.

The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, the Busking on Third program logo. Mr. Gabe Vicknair briefed the commission on an outside live music initiative the DDD is exploring. The initiative will include individual acoustic artists performing on the streetscape during the weekdays. It is expected to begin in August and will be marketed via social media.

River Center Theatre & Plaza – The Commission viewed via PowerPoint, photographs of the exterior of the theatre. Ms. Davis Rhorer briefed the Commission on the proposed renovations including an 8,000 sq. ft. lobby area that will also function as a reception hall. The project is expected to be complete in the first quarter of 2021. Plans are include future renovations to the nearby Martin Luther King Jr. sculpture.

The exterior plaza, known as Mestrovic Court, is expected to be reconfigured and to include the existing Mestrovic sculptures. The DDD is working with the architect on the final plans for the plaza and has completed rendering studies of the plaza that include planters, bamboo, and ivy.

DDD COVID Response Initiative – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DDD’s COVID-10 Business and Community Resources webpage and email announcements. The DDD continues to update the website, including financial and community resources, as well as sending emails to promote businesses and attractions in the downtown area. Everyone was encouraged to visit the DDD web page for updated COVID 19 information.

Downtown Greenway / Public Parking – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the Downtown Greenway and the wayfinding signage plan. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that a ribbon cutting for the East Boulevard / T.J. Jemison Boulevard will be announced soon. Wayfinding signage has been installed along the completed portions of the Downtown Greenway.

Mr. Rhorer also reviewed images of the Mississippi River Levee Trail currently under construction. The completion of this phase of the levee trail will connect downtown to L’Auberge Casino; approximately 13 miles. The path is expected to be completed in October.

Mr. Rhorer also informed the commission of the proposed bike lanes on 5th & 6th Street from North Blvd. to Spanish Town Rd. The bike lanes would link the Spanish Town neighborhood and into Beauregard Town neighborhoods and provide access to the Capitol Park lakes and Memorial Stadium. The DDD is working with the City-Parish Traffic and Engineering Division to implement the project.

Mr. Rhorer also highlighted the public parking available under Interstate 110. Mr. Rhorer thanked Mr. Kyle Huffstickler with the Department of Maintenance for cleaning work recently completed. He also indicated the importance of additional security improvements and energizing the space with lighting and art.

New Business – Irwin Fritchie Uruquhart & Moore – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, and image of the firm logo. Mr. Matt Bailey informed the commission that the firm is a growing firm, originally located in II City Plaza, and now on the 11th floor of the Chase North Tower.

Bonton Associates – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a construction image. Bonton Associates, an engineering firm has recently expanded their offices at 232 Third Street.

Sprinkle Law Firm - The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, and image of the firm’s marketing material. Mr. Richard Sprinkle briefed the commission of the firm’s office expansion at 301 Main Street in One American Place.

De la Ronde Nutrition - The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, and image of De la Ronde Hall on Third Street. Mr. Casey Tate informed the commission that De la Ronde Nutrition will be offering supplements and vitamins similar to Herbal Life Nutrition.

9. Events - The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images for the following events. Each Commissioner received flyers on the events. Mr. Casey Tate briefed the Commission on the following events.

- Preserve Louisiana / Old Governor’s Mansion – Heritage Lecture & Opening Exhibit: J.K. Lawson
- Manship Theatre – Ferris Bueller’s Day Off
- LSU MOA – Virtual Museum Tours
- Capitol Park Museum – Capitol Park Walking Tour
- Old State Capitol – George Washington: The Myths and the Man
- River Center Events – Ice Skating Beginning after Thanksgiving
- LASM – Frank Hayden: Downtown Walking Tour
- USS KIDD – Open Daily

10. Ongoing Projects – Mr. Rhorer encouraged all attendees to attend the Red Stick Farmer’s market at Main Street Market on Saturdays from 8am-12pm.

11. Correspondence – There was no information to report

12. Public Comment – Councilwoman Tara Wicker briefed the commission on the Blight Brigade initiative she began just before the COVID pandemic. The initiative cleaned-up District 10 and included graffiti removal. She plans to begin that initiative again soon. She also mentioned the creative play space underway by Shiloh Baptist Church. The area has been cleared and will soon utilize repurposed tires to build a playground. She encouraged all attendees to exercise their right to vote.

Meeting Adjourned – Mrs. Melanie Montanaro moved to adjourn the meeting, Mrs. Erin Monroe Wesley seconded and the meeting was adjourned.