

DDD Commission Meeting
February 11, 2020, 8:00 a.m.
Jones Walker LLC, 445 North Blvd., Ste. 800

Attending: Prescott Bailey, Madeline Brown, Eric Dexter, Scott Hensgens, Jude Melville, Erin Monroe Wesley

Absent: Melanie Montanaro

Others in Attendance: Sarah Amacker, Duncan Armentor, James Avault, Brad Bates, Timothy Boone, Andre Boudreaux, Mary Boutwell, Kevin Broussard, Caitie Burkes, Bubba Cashio, Sonja Cotter, Melanie Couvillion, Les Crooks, J. Daniels, Angela DeGravelles, Frank Duke, Marty Enquist, Justin Gaudet, Dr. Fry, Rosehn Gipe, Brooke Goodrich, Blaine Grimes, Nathan Hall, Angela Harms, Sonita Hawkins, John O. Hearin, Michelle Hebert, Hank Henagan, Stacey Howel, Kyle Huffstickler, Taylor Jacobsen, Bryan Jones, Sam Karlin, John Kaufman, John Kelton, David Kors, Jason Langlois, Ron LeBouef, Justin Lemoine, Jeannie Magdefrau, Rob Malone Mary Jane Marcantel, Laura Martin, Laura McDavitt, B. J. Miletello, Donnie Miller, Aaron Mollura, Grant Murphy, Mary Olinde, Wendy Overton, Johnny Palazzotto, Melissa Parmelee, Kristina Pepelko, Michelle Phillips, Marlee Pittman, Rebekah Rainey, Davis Rhorer, Jim Rigot, Frederick Sargent, Darryl Smith, Lisa Smith, Daniel Stetson, Andy St. Romain, Katie Tasman, Casey Tate, Ann Vail, Clark Vega, Mitch Verma, Gabe Vicknair, Jacques Waguespack, Elizabeth Walker, Councilwoman Tara Wicker, Samaer Zaitoon

1. Mr. Scott Hensgens called the meeting to order.
2. Mr. Scott Hensgens declared a quorum.
3. Mrs. Maddie Brown moved to approve the agenda Mr. Eric Dexter seconded and the agenda was approved.
4. Mrs. Maddie Brown moved to approve the January 16, 2020 minutes, Mr. Eric Dexter seconded and the minutes were approved.

Mr. Scott Hensgens welcomed new commission member Ms. Erin Monroe Wesley. Mr. Hensgens thanked Jones Walker for hosting the DDD Commission Meeting. Mr. Andy St. Romain, partner with Jones Walker, expressed his excitement to be part of downtown and welcomed everyone to Jones Walker.

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:

The Vintage – Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Construction continues on the venue located on the corner of Third Street and Laurel Street.

Batch 13 – Located at 555 Lafayette Street and the soft opening is scheduled for Thursday, February 13, 2020.

Water Campus Update – Water Street – Mr. Rhorer reviewed the current construction photographs of the Water Campus. Construction continues on 200 Water Street and a traffic signal is being installed at Water Street and River Rd.

Terrace Street – Under construction and the street will take you to River Rd from Nicholson.

Spencer Calahan Law Offices – Construction continues on the law offices located at 827 St. Louis Street.

Army Corps Flood Wall – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the riverfront levee flood wall currently being constructed at North Street and River Road. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the project is being conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers to mitigate the risk of potential flooding in the area.

USS Kidd – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the USS Kidd. Ms. Rosehn Gipe, USS Kidd Executive Director, briefed the Commission on the plans to dry dock the ship to undergo maintenance. The time frame is 3 – 5 years from now as there will be extensive planning and fund raising before this can take place. Everyone was encouraged to visit the USS Kidd.

Riverboat Gaming – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an aerial photograph of the Belle of Baton Rouge and a map indicating the location of the Belle of Baton Rouge. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that he attended a recent Riverboat Gaming Commission meeting where concern was raised about the future of the Belle of Baton Rouge. Mr. Reed, El Dorado Resorts expressed that he would continue to update the Riverboat Gaming Commission on future plans for the Belle of Baton Rouge.

Raising Cane's River Center Feasibility Study – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the River Center and the interior of the ballroom, theatre and arena. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the River Center Advisory Committee has recommended that the City Parish issue a request for proposals to address the following in order to improve the performance of the Raising Cane's River Center:

- Infrastructure needed to attract events
- Meeting rooms / large assembly areas
- Headquarter hotel
- Infrastructure improvements around the campus for cars, pedestrians and bikes
- Implement items in the parking feasibility study

Discussion ensued. Mr. Les Crooks, Raising Cane's River Center General Manager, expressed that the River Center is the 4th largest facility in the state and briefed the Commission on the number of events held at the River Center in 2019. Mr. Crooks expressed that artists are also business people and are looking for venues where there are more seats and can charge more per ticket.

Baton Rouge City Dock – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of city dock. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that additional improvements at Riverfront Plaza will include a shade structure and 2nd phase of landscaping. With an increase of riverboats there is a need for a better connection to the exhibition hall for pedestrians. Following are the number of boats visiting the city dock:

2020 – 142 boats docking

2021 – 179 boats docking

2022 – Viking arriving

Expansion of the dock is needed with the increase in riverboat cruises and the potential for daily excursions by Shamrock Marines. There is also potential usage of the Belle of Baton Rouge and Hollywood Casino docks if the casino moves landside.

River Center Library – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the library. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Bubba Cashio, DPW, informed the Commission that construction continues on the library. Currently, furniture is being delivered and installed. They are in the punch out phase of the project and plans are to open early spring. Mr. Rhorer commended everyone involved with the project.

Electric Depot Festival – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the flyers. Ms. Marlee Pittman, Mid City Redevelopment, briefed the Commission on the 4 day event “Mid City West Fest” that will take place at the Circa 1857 & Electric Depot and include the following:

April 1 – Food Truck Roundup

April 2 – Champarty

April 3 – Sip & Shop

April 4 – Music in the depot

EBR Housing Authority – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a presentation of the Housing Authority's projects. Mr. J. Daniels, CEO, informed the commission that it's the season of transformation at the housing authority. The Housing Authority is in the process of de-concentration of poverty and coming in with more intentional development that provide linkages to community and access to transportation and resources. Mr. Daniels stated that the end game is to decommission our existing public housing community and come back with improved community products. Mr. Daniels briefed the Commission on a few of the affordable housing projects underway and completed, including a project underway near the Water Campus on Oklahoma Street. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the state is building a ramp in that area that will exit at Oklahoma Street and also resurfacing Nicholson drive from downtown to LSU with sidewalks on both sides. Mr. Rhorer expressed that he will also request that accommodations for bicycles be included.

Beauregard Town Historic District – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of Beauregard Town signage and an image of the Beauregard Town Historic District map. Mr. Rhorer recognized Mr. Frank Duke, Director of Planning Commission. Mrs. Whitney Sayal informed the Commission that the Planning Commission acquired a grant to update the building survey for Beauregard Town. The DDD will work closely with the Planning Commission, EBR Historic Preservation Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, and the Metropolitan Council to assure any proposed local historic district and/or design guidelines meet the needs and desires of the community. Mr. Duke informed the Commission that they are kicking off the photographic portion of the survey this week.

Heart Trail Walking Tour – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images of the walking trail route and wayfinding signage. Each Commissioner received a copy of flyer. Mr. Taylor Jacobsen, Urban Canvas Studio, informed the Commission that his firm utilizes art installations to revitalize urban spaces. Mr. Jacobsen briefed the Commission on his upcoming installation “Heart Trail”, a 5k walking trail downtown in the shape of a heart. The trail is funded by Baton Rouge General & Blue Cross and marked with 700 unique pieces of heart art. Everyone was encouraged to participate in one of the community walks below:

- February 14, 12 noon
- February 15, 10:00 a.m.

There is funding to implement 2 more trails in the community.

RiverWorks Discovery – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a presentation on the mission of the RiverWorks Discovery. Ms. Laura Tabor-Martin, RiverWorks Discovery (RWD), informed the Commission that the initiative of RWD is to educate the community about the great water shed of the Mississippi River and the marine industry. RWD is providing information to the schools through the initiative “Who Works the River”. The initiative provides educational information about commerce, culture conservation and careers on the river. The program is expanding into new cities in 2020 and will include Baton Rouge.

Ball Moss Treatment Program – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of ball moss. Mr. Kyle Huffstickler, Director of Department of Maintenance, informed the Commission that ball moss is becoming an issue in downtown and across the city. Mr. Huffstickler has been in contact with LSU in regards to the treatment plan and will keep the public updated on the city parish website. Mr. James Avault, City Parish Landscape Manager, distributed samples of the Ball Moss and informed the Commission that the trees flagged with yellow ribbon have been treated. Mr. Andrew Boudreaux, Horticulturist, informed the Commission that Ball Moss is related to Spanish Moss and we have the perfect environment for the moss to thrive. The main tree affected is the crape myrtle. Mr. Boudreaux briefed the Commission on the treatment plan which is a mixture of baking soda and water.

Memorial Stadium Park, Expressway Park Concept Plan – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images of the proposed renderings of the park. Ms. Angela Harms, BREC, briefed the Commission on the Memorial Stadium park project. Ms. Harms informed the Commission that the Sports Academy will relocate to Memorial Stadium and BREC is working with the City of Baton Rouge and FEMA for funding of the project.

The 49,530 sq. ft. multi-use emergency personnel safe room will also be utilized as a safe house during natural disasters. Proposed improvements include the following:

- Meeting rooms
- 3 basketball courts
- Boxing facility
- Indoor track

The improvements allow opportunities for various sports to be played in the facility. Ms. Harms expressed that the project is in the schematic design phase.

Expressway Park Concept Plan – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images of the proposed renderings of the park. Ms. Angela Harms, BREC, briefed the Commission on the Expressway Park Concept Plan that was produced with input obtained from the 2 public meetings held in the summer of 2019.

Shiloh Area Park – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of proposed location of the park and proposed playground equipment for Shiloh Park. Councilwoman Tara Wicker briefed the Commission on the initiative “Creative Play Spaces” that was implemented as part of the Metropolitan Council Blight Committee. The committee identified property behind Shiloh Baptist Church for creative play spaces. Tires will be used to create playground equipment. Mrs. Wicker briefed the Commission on the “Love Our City Campaign” which is a day of service dedicated to graffiti removal. Everyone was encouraged to participate in the event scheduled for Saturday, February 15, 10:30 a.m. at Sacred Heart.

Downtown Greenway – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current construction. Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission that construction continues on the greenway with the installation of the lighting, brick work, installation of trees and road way striping. The project is expected to be complete by March 2020.

Downtown Maintenance – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of Public Services / Safety booklet. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that a meeting will be scheduled next week with downtown stakeholders to discuss safety, maintenance and cleanliness downtown.

Urban Gallery – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the proposed mural for the North Street underpass. Mrs. Maddie Brown, informed the Commission that Spanish Town Civic Association is working with Urban Canvas Studio to transform the underpass at North Street with the installation of a mural. Anyone interested in donating to the project was encouraged to contact Mrs. Brown.

New Business – Partner’s Title – Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer welcomed Partner’s Title downtown located at 402 4th Street.

Geaux Ride Bicycle Tours – Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Geaux Ride is located in LaSalle Garage @ Main Street and Third Street.

Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Geaux Ride has located in the LaSalle Garage. Bicycle tours are held every Thursday. Everyone was encouraged to visit the web site at <https://www.geauxridebikes.com>

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.

- Heart Trail Walking Tour – February 14 & 15
- Mardi Gras Parades
- Mayor’s Fitness Stroll – February 15
- Mardi Gras Festival – February 22
- Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure – February 29
- Spanish Town Neighborhood Yard Sale – March 7
- OLOL Half Marathon / B. R. Arts Market – March 7
- 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 informed the Commission that strawberries will be available at the market this Saturday.

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 – Dr. Lucas Fry, WLFT, briefed the Commission on the recent broadcasts and encouraged everyone to participate in “Thursdays Live”.

Ms. Mary Boutwell, St. James Episcopal Church, briefed the Commission on the St. James Jumbo Gumbo fundraiser scheduled for Friday, March 6, 2020. Lunch and dinner will be available for dine-in or take out.

Mr. Les Crooks commended the DDD for their support of the Raising Cane’s River Center and briefed the Commission on the upcoming events.

Meeting Adjourned: