

DDD Commission Meeting
July 14, 2020, 8:00 a.m.
River Center Library, 250 North Boulevard, 4th Floor

Attending: Scott Hensgens, Prescott Bailey, Maddie Brown, Eric Dexter, Jude Melville, Melanie Montanaro, Erin Monroe Wesley

Absent: N/A

Others in Attendance: James Avault, Timothy Boone, Gary Black, Rex Cabanis, Marie Constantin, Melanie Couvillon, Holly Duchmann, Mary Durseau, Joey Furr, Jay Gaudet, Rosehn Gipe, Stephen Long, Aaron Molkoe, Mikayla Moss, Whitney Hoffman Sayal, Officer T. C. Lamb, Lisa Nice, David Rhymes, Davis Rhorer, Frederick Sargent, Bernard Stolberg, Casey Tate, Edgardo Teneiro, Gabe Vicknair, Stephen Waguespack, Rawley Webber, Spencer Watts, Samaer Zaitoon

1. Mr. Scott Hensgens called the meeting to order.
2. Mr. Scott Hensgens declared a quorum.
3. Ms. Erin Monroe Wesley moved to approve the agenda Mrs. Melanie Montanaro seconded and the agenda was approved.
4. Mr. Eric Dexter moved to approve the June 9th, 2020 minutes, Mr. Jude Melville seconded and the minutes were approved.
5. **Board Action** – There was no board action.
6. **Governmental Issues – Current COVID Orders** – The Commission viewed via PowerPoint, a “Geaux Get Tested” flyer. Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome is currently encouraging citizens get tested for COVID-19 through the “Geaux Get Tested” campaign; multiple locations are available. The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of Phase Two updated guidelines. New COVID-19 guidelines 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.

House Bill 4 – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of downtown historic buildings. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the DDD updated the Federal and State Historic Commercial Historic Tax Credit program report to showcase the importance of the credits and continued revitalization efforts in Downtown Baton Rouge and across Louisiana. House Bill 4 has been approved and includes sustaining the 20% state historic tax credit until 2026 with an annual cap of \$125 million. Mr. Rhorer thanked all involved in supporting the renewal of the state historic tax credit.
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:

River Center Library – The Commission viewed a video of the River Center Library opening day. Mr. Rhorer recognized Rex Cabanis of WHLC Architecture for his work on the library. Mr. Spencer Watts and Ms. Mary Stein welcomed all to the River Center Library and highlighted the amenities available. They welcomed all to enjoy small group tours after the meeting.

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 will be prioritized. Most expenses/losses outside of profit loss are eligible for a grant up to \$15,000. Applications are being accepted beginning at the end of July.

Charles W. Lamar YMCA – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, an image of the YMCA exterior on Third Street. Mr. Rhorer indicated that the YMCA has extended its hours to Monday and Wednesdays from 6am – 2pm and 4pm – 7pm as well as Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 6am – 2pm.

Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, an aerial image and rendering of the new Arts Council headquarters. Mr. Rhorer indicated that the construction fencing has been installed and demolition has begun. The renovation and construction is expected to be a 10 month process.

Chase South Tower – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, plans and renderings of the Chase South Tower. Mr. Gary Black briefed the commission on the plans for the building including retail space, 144 residential units, exterior plazas, and pool. The plans will be reviewed by the Planning Commission in August.

861 Main Street – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, plans and renderings of a proposed office building at 861 Main Street. Mr. Rex Cabanis briefed the commission on the 3 story building proposed by the Louisiana Relator's Association. The organization is seeking tenants for the office space before beginning construction on the currently vacant lot.

LABI Offices – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, images of the office building on the corner of 5th Street and Main Street. Mr. Stephen Waguespack briefed the commission on the renovations that are 95% complete including the lobby, offices, conference room, and exterior plaza. A ribbon cutting will be planned soon.

Water Campus Update – Water Street – Mr. Rhorer reviewed the current photographs of the residential complex under construction at the Water Campus, 200 Water Street and the main square. Both are expected to be complete in the fall of 2020.

The completed office complex 1200 Brickyard Lane has the following tenants, LA Cyber Coordination Center, Stantec, and Lemoine Companies.

River Center Theatre – The Commission viewed via PowerPoint, photographs of the exterior of the theatre. Ms. Lisa Nice briefed the Commission on the proposed renovations including an 8,000 sq. ft. lobby area that will also function as a reception hall, interior theatre seating upgrades and reconfiguration, ADA accessibility improvements, guest drop-off lanes, and exterior plaza upgrades. The project is expected to be complete in the first quarter of 2021.

Baton Rouge General Medical Center – Mid City Campus – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the exterior of the medical center. Mr. Edgardo Teneiro briefed the

commission on the reopening of the facility. Services include emergency visits, post-acute care and skilled nursing rehabilitation, outpatient procedures, and limited inpatient services.

DDD Awards– The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images and videos of the Central Green and the Sing the River Rotary Sculpture. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Central Green received an award of excellence by the International Downtown Association and an award from the Boston Society of Landscape Architects. The Sing the River sculpture donated by the Rotary of Baton Rouge, was recognized by the International Downtown Association as a best practice model.

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.

Resilient Louisiana Commission – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a zoom meeting screen shot of the members of the Resilient Louisiana Commission. Mr. Scott Hengens updated the commission on the Resilient Louisiana Task Force activities. Several of the Task Force committees have issued white papers and presentations outlining recovery efforts and strategies in their prospective industries/interest groups. Mr. Hengens commended the Resilient Louisiana Commission and committee members on their work as they are nearing the end of their efforts. The long-term plan is expected to be approved in July. Mr. Rhorer commended Mr. Hengens and Ms. Monroe Wesley for their involvement and commitment to the effort.

Hospitality Recovery Task Force – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of night life on the corner of Third Street and Florida Street. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that a task force formed by Visit Baton Rouge continues to study recovery marketing initiatives that can assist the city’s hospitality industry.

Busking on Third – 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 be launched when safe and appropriate and is intended to promote local businesses and restaurants.

Town Square Programming – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photograph of the North Blvd. Town Square engaged in yoga exercise. Mr. Davis Rhorer informed the Commission that the DDD has been programming trivia contests, virtual concerts and movies on the beacon. The DDD is also coordinating with local instructors and trainers to provide exercise opportunities, with social distancing, when appropriate.

Recreational Trails Grant – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image indicating a bike and pedestrian trail from Hollywood Casino to continue River Road north to River Palms Apartments and Riverview Condominiums. Ms. Hoffman Sayal informed the Commission that the DDD submitted the project to the Recreational Trails Grant program for funding consideration and expected to hear if funding is awarded this fall.

Downtown Greenway – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the Downtown Greenway and the wayfinding signage plan. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that construction is near completion. Mr. Rhorer highlighted the green striping applied to the Government Street and East Blvd. /T.J. Jemison Blvd. intersection to increase bicycle and

pedestrian safety. Comprehensive wayfinding for the greenway that includes directional and attraction information has been finalized and will be installed soon.

- Mr. Rhorer also reviewed images 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.

EBR Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan – The Commission viewed, via Powerpoint, a map of the proposed pedestrian and bicycle trails in EBR Parish. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the BREC Commission and Metropolitan Council have adopted the plan.

New Business – The Vintage BR – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the interior space at 333 Laurel Street. Mr. Bernard Stolberg, owner of The Vintage, informed the Commission that the restaurant is open and encouraged everyone to patron the new restaurant.

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.

- B.R Arts Market
- Preserve Louisiana / Old Governor’s Mansion – Heritage Lecture: The Louisiana Flag
- Manship Theatre – Purple Rain
- LSU MOA – Living with Arts: Selections from Baton Rouge Collections
- Capitol Park Museum – Fonville Winans’ Exhibition Reception
- Old State Capitol – George Washington: The Myths and the Man
- River Center Events – Cody Johston rescheduled to January 8, 2021
- LASM – Frank Hayden: Lift Every Voice
- USS KIDD – Featured on Greyhound movie

10. Ongoing Projects - Mr. Davis Rhorer encouraged everyone to shop the Main Street Market and Redstick Farmers Market. The Farmers Market continues to operate from 8am-12pm on Saturdays.

11. Correspondence – There was no information to report

12. Public Comment – Mr. Frederick Sargent briefed the commission on his walking billboard business and encouraged anyone interested in utilizing the billboards for marketing purposes to contact him.

Marie Constantin, resident of Spanish Town, briefed the commission on the litter issues within and around the Capitol Lakes. She encouraged people to tie their garbage bags to decrease the amount of litter resulting from waste trucks loading loose waste. She also thanked the volunteers that have assisted cleaning up the link and encouraged anyone interested in volunteering to contact her.

- Mr. Rhorer thanked Ms. Constantin for her efforts and highlighted a recent meeting between many organizations and governmental entities regarding the clean-up efforts.

Mr. Jay Gaudet introduced himself to the commission and indicated he is a candidate for the District 10 council seat. He indicated his appreciation of downtown’s redevelopment and his wish to serve and continue the progress.

Meeting Adjourned – Ms. Brown moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Eric Dexter seconded and the meeting was adjourned.