

DDD Commission Meeting
June 9, 2020, 8:00 a.m.
Video Conference

In accordance with Executive Proclamations JBE 2020-30 and 2020-33, issued by Governor John Bel Edwards on March 16, 2020 and March 22, 2020, respectively, the Downtown Development District held a video conference call due to a lack of a quorum as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. The meeting was available for viewing by the general public on Zoom using the information below. Public comments were submitted via email to ddd@brla.gov and/or the Zoom platform.

Meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82890397225>

Or iPhone one-tap : US: +16465588656,,82890397225# or +13017158592,,82890397225#

Or Telephone: US: +1 646 558 8656, Webinar ID: 828 9039 7225

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

Absent: Scott Hensgens

Others in Attendance: **Karron Alford, Brendon Barker, Wendy Barras, Ben Blackwell, Timothy Boone, Adam Davis, Mary Durusau, Rosehn Gipe, Rodnenya Hart, Lauren Hawkes, John Kelton, Lauren Lambert-Tompkins, Mary Jane Marcantel, Susan Miles, Scott Miles, Mary Olinde, Serena Pandos, Kristina Pepelko, Davis Rhorer, Darlene Rowland, Whitney Hoffman Sayal, Daniel Stetson, Casey Tate, Courtney Taylor, Gabe Lauren Lambert Tompkins, Ann Vail, Gabe Vicknair, Rawley Webber, Elizabeth Walker, Councilwoman Tara Wicker**

1. Mrs. Melanie Montanaro called the meeting to order.

2. Mrs. Melanie Montanaro declared a quorum.

3. Mr. Eric Dexter moved to approve the agenda Mrs. Maddie Brown seconded and the agenda was approved.

4. Ms. Erin Monroe Wesley moved to approve the May 12, 2020 minutes, Mrs. Maddie Brown 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, an image of Phase Two guidelines. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the DDD continues to promote and market downtown businesses and attractions. City Parish has returned to work and the state is currently at 25%. The economy of downtown employment base sustains the restaurants and most of the restaurants have opened. Everyone was encouraged to visit the DDD web page for updated COVID 19 information.

Mr. Jude Melville informed the Commission that Business First Bank continues to work on the Paycheck Protection Program loan and are focused as a bank on understanding and participating in the Main Street Lending program. Mrs. Monroe Wesley informed the Commission that she continues to work in partnership with the Mayor's office with the Restart BR efforts.

House Bill 4 – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of downtown historic buildings. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the DDD is updating the Federal Commercial Historic Tax Credit program report completed in 2017 to include the State Historic Tax Credit program impact. House Bill 4 has cleared the House of Representatives and is headed to a Senate committee for review. Mr. Rhorer emphasized how important it is that the bill passes so that the credits can continue to be used as an economic development tool across the state.

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 III – Building one on the corner of Canal and Spanish Town Rd. will include 12 residential units and the second building on the corner of 13th & North Street will include 30 residential units. The project is expected to be complete in 2021.

Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that there are 8 residential developments underway in the downtown area.

LABI Offices – Mr. Rhorer reviewed the current construction photographs of the LABI Offices on Fifth Street and Main Street. The renovations are expected to be completed 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. The main square is expected to begin construction this summer. 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.

Spencer Calahan Law Offices – Law offices located at 827 St. Louis Street is nearing completion.

7th Street Crossing/ Catholic Presbyterian Apartments – The Commission viewed via PowerPoint, a photograph of the location of the pedestrian crosswalk under construction. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the crosswalk is complete and will provide the residents a pedestrian friendly crossing across North Street.

River Center Theatre – The Commission viewed via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the theatre. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the proposed renovations on the interior of the theatre. The 8,000 sq. ft. lobby area will also function as a reception hall. The project is expected to be complete in 2021.

DDD COVID Response Initiative – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DDD's COVID-10 Business and Community Resources webpage. The DDD continues to update the website, including financial and community resources, as well as future programming.

Resilient Louisiana Commission – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a diagram of the members of the Resilient Louisiana Commission. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Ms. Monroe Wesley serves on the technology and communications task force. Ms. Wesley informed

the Commission that the task force will present their final report to the Resilient Louisiana Commission Friday, June 12. Ms. Wesley commended the Resilient Louisiana Commission on their work. Mr. Rhorer commended Ms. Wesley for her involvement and commitment to the program.

Hospitality Recovery Task Force – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of night life on the corner of Third Street and Florida Street. Ms. Karron Alford, Visit Baton Rouge, informed the Commission that a task force was formed to study recovery marketing initiatives that can assist the city’s hospitality industry. A recovery marketing plan determined that a 3 – 5 year recovery time period is expected for the capital city. Visit Baton Rouge (VBR) is looking at strategies to position downtown as a staycation for this summer and fall. Mr. Rhorer looks forward to working with them and thanked VBR for their work on the task force.

Downtown Attraction Re-opening’s – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of downtown museums. Ms. Mary Durusau, Old State Capitol, informed the Commission that the downtown museum directors have been in contact with each other and all of the downtown museums have been participating in promoting their reopenings. Everyone was encouraged to support the museums and they are looking forward to increased visitors. Ms. Mary Durusau thanked the DDD for spreading the word.

Ms. Fairleigh Jackson, Old Governor’s Mansion, informed the Commission that House Bill 4 is expecting to proceed to Revenue and Fiscal affairs. Ms. Jackson encouraged everyone to join the e-blast at www.preservelouisiana, and utilize the tool that allows constituents to email and voice their support.

Cultural Passport Program – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of Old Governor’s Mansion. Ms. Jackson, briefed the Commission on the Cultural Passport Program which supports cultural entities and brings business to community. The program encourages patrons to visit participating entities and receive a stamp on their passport. Once the passport is filled with the 6 stamps participants will receive a discount at participating downtown entities. Following are the participating museums:

- Old Governor’s Mansion
- Old State Capitol
- USS Kidd
- LASM
- LSU Museum of Art
- Capitol Park Museum

Mr. Rhorer commended all involved with the program and encouraged everyone to participate.

Outdoor Dining / Town Square Programming – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photograph of the beacon and North Blvd. Town Square. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that in efforts to encourage people to come downtown and support downtown entities the DDD will be programming trivia contests, virtual concerts and movies on the beacon as well as live music on street corners.

Recreational Trails Grant – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image indicating the bike lane on along 6th Street. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the DDD is applying for the following Recreational Trails Grants:

- 5th & 6th Street from North Blvd. to Spanish Town Rd on 5th Street and Spanish Town Rd. to North Blvd. on 6th Street. Linking the greenway to Capitol Park in Spanish Town neighborhood and into Beauregard Town neighborhood.
- Continue bike and pedestrian trail from Hollywood Casino to continue River Rd north to River Palms and River View Condominiums.

Downtown Greenway – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the Downtown Greenway. 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. The DDD is currently developing a comprehensive wayfinding plan for the greenway that includes information about historic locations along the greenway and directional signage.

Mr. Rhorer mentioned that BREC has committed to installing a bike station and signage in Expressway Park.

Mr. Dexter asked who is responsible for the maintenance of the greenway. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the City Parish assumes and private maintenance contracts are being considered.

New Business – Rio Tacos and Tequila – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the logo. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the restaurant is opening on the bottom level of City Bar in the 300 block of Third Street. City Bar is undergoing renovations and Rio Tacos and Tequila is scheduled to open July 2020.

The Vintage – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the interior space and food options at 333 Laurel Street. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the restaurant is open and encouraged everyone to support the restaurant.

Lemoine Company – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the building. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Lemoine Company is a tenant at Water Campus and welcomed them downtown.

9. Correspondence – There was no information to report

10. Public Comment – Ms. Darlene Rowland of BREADA, Main Street Market, and Redstick Farmer’s Market gave an update about the organization’s activities and open businesses in the Main Street Market. Ms. Rowland thanked the DDD for their support and encouraged everyone to continue to support the market. Main Street Market is open Monday - Saturday
The farmers market is open on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. – 12noon.

Councilwoman Tara Wicker briefed the Commission on the Parent Partner Program she will be hosting. The program will assist parents during the summer with errands, babysitting, kid’s activities and home schooling. Young adults ages 16 – 20 are encouraged to register or contact her office for more information.

Ms. Lauren Lambert-Tompkins, Downtown Business Association (DBA) announced that the DBA is offering free 1 year memberships to any black owned business in the downtown area. Anyone interested is encouraged to email Lauren at lauren@downtownbr.org or visit Downtownbr.org. Ms. Tompkins also mentioned that she is on the board of the Friends of the

Museum and mentioned that the Capitol Park Museum is open and looking at promoting a Fonville Winans exhibit in the near future.

Ms. Rodneya Hart, director of Capitol Park Museum, confirmed that the museum is open to the public Tuesday – Saturday from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and has PPE sanitizer and face masks available. Touchless ticketing and touchless experience is available. The facility is large and provides a safe environment for all to visit while social distancing. Ms. Hart mentioned that memberships are available and they continue to work on upcoming exhibits and programming. The Fonville Winans exhibit is expected to debut on July 14th.

Ms. Rosehn Gipe, USS Kidd, informed the commission that there will not be any July 4th festivities. The ship will be open for visitors Saturday, July 4 from 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

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