

DDD Commission Meeting
May 12, 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, Scott Hensgens, Jude Melville, Melanie Montanaro, Erin Monroe Wesley

Absent: N/A

Others in Attendance: **Sarah Amacker, Paul Arrigo**, James Avault, **Ben Blackwell, Timothy Boone, Mary Boutwell**, Kevin Broussard, Caitie Burkes, Gayle Carnahan, Shane Chalmers, Leanne Clement, Oren Conner, Sonja Cotter, J. Daniels, Marty Enquist, Justin Gaudet, Brooke Goodrich, **Blaine Grimes, Jonathan Grimes, Nathan Hall**, Sonita Hawkins, Michelle Hebert, Hank Henagan, Stacey Howel, Sam Karlin, John Kaufman, **John Kelton**, Reverend Michael Kuhn, Officer T. C. Lamb, **Lauren Lambert-Tompkins, Jason Langlois**, Ron LeBouef, Adelina Lepine, Jeannie Magdefrau, Rob Malone **Mary Jane Marcantel**, Laura Martin, Laura McDavitt, B. J. Miletello, **Donnie Miller**, Aaron Mollura, Grant Murphy, Mary Olinde, Wendy Overton, Serena Pandos, Melissa Parmelee, **Kristina Pepelko**, Michelle Phillips, Marlee Pittman, Jen Racca, Rebekah Rainey, **Kelly Reed, Davis Rhorer**, David Rhymes, Frederick Sargent, **Whitney Hoffman Sayal**, Darryl Smith, **Lisa Smith**, Dr. Kay Solar, **Daniel Stetson**, Andy St. Romain, Katie Tasman, **Casey Tate, Ann Vail**, Clark Vega, Mitch Verma, **Gabe Vicknair**, Jacques Waguespack, **Elizabeth Walker**, Jennifer Whittington, Jeff Wittenbrink, Samaer Zaitoon, **Darlene Rowland, Courtney Taylor, Erica Sweeney Glory, Ben Balser, Cathy LeBouef, Emily Slich, Fritz Embaugh, Gary Anderson, Jay Gaudet, Johnny Palazzotto, Jonathan Grimes, Lauren Marschall, Mary Durusau, Rodnenya Hart, Rosehn Gipe, Samantha Morgan, Tina Rance, Anita Begnad, Linda Thompson, Rannah Gray**

1. Mr. Scott Hensgens called the meeting to order.

2. Mr. Scott Hensgens declared a quorum.

3. Mr. Eric Dexter moved to approve the agenda Mrs. Melanie Montanaro seconded and the agenda was approved.

4. Mr. Prescott Bailey moved to approve the March 10, 2020 minutes, Mr. Eric Dexter seconded and the minutes were approved.

5. Board Action – There was no board action.

6. Governmental Issues – Nuisance Ordinance Amendment – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the proposed ordinances. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Mayor's office had submitted 2 items for introduction at the Metro Council meeting Wednesday, March 25, 2020. However, due to the pandemic safety protocols the Metro Council has

conducted virtual meetings and has not been handling non-essential matters. Therefore, the nuisance ordinance listed below have been deferred until further notice:

- 5. 20-00336 Amending Title 12 (Nuisances), Chapter 3 (Trespass), Part I (General) so as to add Section 12:153 (Aggressive Solicitation and Harassment) and Section 12:154 (False or Misleading Representation).
- 6. 20-00337 Amending Title 12 (Nuisances), Chapter 3 (Trespass), Part I (General) so as to add Section 12:155 (Obstruction of Sidewalk).

Current COVID Orders – Mr. Hensgens and Ms. Monroe Wesley briefed the commission about their role in Governor Edward’s Resilient Commission and related task forces. Mr. Scott Hensgens is serving on the commission as well as the related Rural Development Task Force and Energy Task Force. Ms. Monroe Wesley is serving on one of the 15 related task forces for Telecommunications and Infrastructure. The commission was developed to aid Louisiana during the COVID-19 pandemic and the oil industry recovery process. Each task force submits reports and recommendations to the commission. Mr. Rhorer thanked them for their participation on the task force and discussed the Phase One guidelines to reopening and the pandemic’s impact on the downtown economy. Phase One would allow restaurants to implement outdoor dining strategies and 25% indoor capacity. Non-essential businesses would also be allowed to reopen with 25% capacity and strict safe distancing and sanitary protocols. He indicated that the DDD is, and will continue to help promote and market downtown businesses and attractions throughout the recovery process.

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:

LABI Offices – Mr. Rhorer reviewed the current construction photographs of the LABI Offices on 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 now has the following tenants, LA Cyber Coordination Center, Stantec, and Lemoine Companies.

Spencer Calahan Law Offices – Construction continues on the law offices located at 827 St. Louis Street. It is expected to be completed within a few months.

Army Corps Flood Wall – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the completed riverfront levee flood wall at North Street and River Road. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the DDD is exploring beautification options at this location.

7th Street Crossing/ Catholic Presbyterian Apartments – The Commission viewed via PowerPoint, a photograph of the location of the pedestrian crosswalk under construction. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the proposed crosswalk with a caution light on North Street at 7th Street and highlighted the pole foundations and crosswalk striping. This will provide the residents a pedestrian friendly crossing into the Central Business District.

River Center Library – The Commission viewed via PowerPoint, images of the library exterior and roof top garden. In addition, Mr. Rhorer shared a parking, loading, and drop-off zone diagram that has been shared with the city-parish to increase public access to the library and mitigate traffic congestion. Mr. Rhorer indicated that the library should be opening soon, following pandemic recovery guidance. The DDD plans to have a commission meeting in one of the library's large meeting rooms once in-person public meetings can be safely reconvened.

Valley House Hotel – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the Valley House Hotel located at Government Street and S. 14th Street. Davis informed the commission that Mr. Anthony Kimble has acquired the Downtown East property and is developing plans for the site.

DDD COVID Response Initiative – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DDD's COVID-10 Business and Community Resources webpage. The website includes financial and community resources, as well as future programming. In addition, the page lists the restaurants operating and the DDD performs weekly inventories of restaurant activities.

Resilient Louisiana Commission – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a diagram of the members of the Resilient Louisiana Commission. Mr. Rhorer informed the commission that the DDD commission chair, Scott Hensgens serves on the commission and Ms. Monroe Wesley serves on the telecommunications committee.

Hospitality Recovery Task Force – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of Third Street and Florida Street. Mr. Paul Arrigo, Erica Sweeney Glory, and Courtney Taylor of Visit Baton Rouge briefed the commission on the Hospitality Recovery Task Force formed to aid the recovery process of the hospitality industry. Ms. Sweeney Glory indicated that the task force had its first meeting and plans are to promote in-state travel/vacations during Phase One and Two. The recovery marketing plan is on the Visit Baton Rouge website. Ms. Taylor informed the commission that Baton Rouge has missed 57 planned riverboat dockings during the pandemic. Plans are to resume riverboat activity at the end of June with more sanitation protocols and with less passengers and crew personnel.

Outdoor Dining / Town Square Programming – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the new parklet at Cocha Restaurant, sidewalk tables at Little Village Restaurant, and tables and chairs at Town Square. Mr. Rhorer indicated that many downtown restaurants are utilizing outdoor dining opportunities to continue operation. In addition, the DDD has placed tables and chairs in Town Square with their placement adhering to safe distancing protocols that restaurant patrons can utilize.

Fall Event Rescheduling – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of an event in Town Square/City Hall Plaza. Mr. Casey Tate informed the commission that 23 outdoor events have been cancelled since the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. Most events are planning to reschedule in the fall pending recommendations and approvals from government administration.

AARP Livable Communities Grant - The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the completed crosswalk at the Florida Street / Third Street intersection. Ms. Hoffman Sayal informed the commission that the DDD has submitted a grant application to the AARP Livable Communities Grant to install additional crosswalks along Third Street at the intersections of Convention Street, Laurel Street, Main Street, and North Street.

Downtown Greenway – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the Downtown Greenway at North Blvd., T.J. Jemison Blvd., and East Blvd. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that construction is near complete with the installation of the bicycle/pedestrian improvements, lighting, signage, and plantings. Mr. Rhorer highlighted the green striping applied to the Government Street intersection to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety. He thanked the city-parish officials involved. The path has been well-used during the pandemic, with many people enjoying the weather and the new recreational opportunity. A ribbon cutting will be scheduled at a later date.

- Mrs. Counce Montanaro asked a question about when the lighting would be functioning. Mr. Rhorer indicated that the lighting should be on at the end of the week.

Downtown Maintenance / Curb Initiative – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an online database maintenance issues in the Central Business District. Ms. Hoffman Sayal informed the Commission that the DDD and the City-Parish GIS department had developed an app to document the locations and corresponding pictures of maintenance issues. Broken and paint chipping curbs have been input in the database and have been shared with the city-parish.

DDD Personnel – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of Mrs. Mary Olinde, Administrative Assistant for the DDD. Mr. Rhorer informed the commission that Mrs. Olinde has served the DDD for over 30 years and has retired. Mr. Scott Hensgens thanked Mrs. Olinde for her dedicated service.

New Business – Life Storage – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the building located at 2151 North Third Street.

New Business - The Vintage – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the interior space and food options at 333 Laurel Street. Mr. Rhorer briefed the commission on the restaurant's soft opening in March just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans are to reopen the restaurant soon.

9. Correspondence – There was no information to report

10. Public Comment – Lauren Lambert-Tompkins, Downtown Business Association, indicated that the organization is in the process of determining how to conduct Live After Five events in 2020. She mentioned that they are considering virtual/in-person options. In addition, she indicated that the organization is currently waiving annual dues to those unable to pay.

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. The market has remained open with Our Daily Bread, Chef Celeste, and Goyaya's. The farmers market has also remained open on Saturdays. They have operated with a drive-in set-up for a few weeks but recently returned to walk-up service. Patrons are asked to get their goods and not congregate longer than necessary.

Daniel Stetson, LSU MOA, informed the Commission that nine local museums have been meeting to discuss plans to expedite opening the museum in Phase One.

Rosehn Gipe, USS Kidd, informed the commission that the museum will be opening Monday, May 18th pending board approval.

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