

DDD Commission Meeting

March 12, 2015, 8:00 a.m.

First United Methodist Church, Conference Center, 930 North Blvd.

Attending: Scott Hensgens, Fran Gladden, Gordon LeBlanc,
Cheryl McCormick, Melanie Montanaro

Absent: Ric Kearny, Sevetri Wilson

Others in Attendance: Sam Allgood, Gary Anderson, Joseph Anthony, Paul Arrigo, Alicia Baron, Dave Baron, Tom Bergman, Greg Bivin, Gary Black, Virginia Black, Ben Blackwell, Shannon Blakeman, Timothy Boone, Chelsea Brasted, Chris Brooks, Kevin Broussard, Jimmy Burland, Neva Butkas, Tracy Carpenter, Johnathan Cary, Norman Chenevert, Suzette Crocker, Whitney Cooper, Rebecca Croner, Tom Dawson, Heather Day, Michael Day, Angela deGravelles, Eric Dexter, Kristen Diehl, Peter Dieterich, Rachel DiResto, Monica Dugas, Mary Durusau, Liz Eure, Heather Fatzinger, Christine Forsman, Lisa Freeman, Brian Goad, Gaye Hamilton, Daniel Hernandez, Edwin Hightower, Ryan Holcomb, Tom Holden, Courtney Hunt, Rebecca Jacobs, Melody Joachim, Mary Johnson, Sadie Roberts-Joseph, Alex Juan, John Kaufman, Emily Kay, Douglas Kennedy, Nicole Kennelly, Tara Kistler, Erin Kruppner, Ashley LaBorde, James Lachney, Lori Lasseigne, Beverly LeBeau, Ron LeBouef, Justin Lemoine, Jason Lockhart, Sam Losavio, Lisa Lymuel, Staci Manning, Lauralyn Maranto, Mary Jane Marcantel, Fr. Pat Mascarella, Jennifer Mayer, Al McDuff, Rev. David Melville, Cheryl Michelet, BJ Militello, Debbie Mire, Brandon Morgan, Jennifer Myer, Mikeila Nagura, Tim NesSmith, Amy Norval, Mary Olinde, Melissa Parmelee, Michael Petty, Duane Pierce, Andy Pino, Eric Poche, Skipper Post, Tina Rance, Margaret Read, Bill Reich, Eric Relle, Leif Remo, Davis Rhorer, Stephanie Riegel, Lakeisha Robichaux, Sam Sanders, Fredrick Sargent, Ray Scriber, Larry Selders, Casey Sessums, Jamie Setze, Darlene Shingleur, Lisa Smith, Karen Stagg, Ben Stalter, Jan Sumrall, Casey Tate, Ben Taylor, Jeremy Theriot, Larry Tingle, Jude Trahan, Mark Trahan, Veach Tucker, Clark Vega, Gabe Vicknair, Dr. Graysen Walles, Quinn Welsch

1. Mrs. Fran Gladden called the meeting to order.

2. Mrs. Fran Gladden declared a quorum.

3. Mr. Scott Hensgens moved to approve the agenda, Mrs. Melanie Montanaro seconded and the agenda was approved.

4. Mrs. Melanie Montanaro moved to approve the February 10, 2015 minutes, Mr. Scott Hensgens seconded and the minutes were approved.

Rev. David Melville began the meeting with a prayer.

Mr. Davis Rhorer thanked First United Methodist Church for hosting the meeting. Mr. Rhorer recognized Ms. Debbie Mire for her involvement with downtown activities.

5. Board Action – There was no board action.

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6a. Governmental Issues – Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of current conditions along River Rd. and renderings of the proposed improvements. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the TAP grant was presented to the Metropolitan Council Wednesday, March 11, 2015. The \$156,230 grant will allow for improvements along River Rd. The improvements will include sidewalks and streetscape on River Rd. from Florida north to Hollywood Casino. Mr. Rhorer commended the DDD staff for their work on the grant.

6b. Development Initiatives – St. Louis / St. Ferdinand Two-Way Project – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the map indicating the two-waying. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that St. Ferdinand Street will convert to two-way this weekend. St. Louis Street will become two-ways next weekend. Mr. Rhorer reviewed the changes to the flow of traffic.

Marketing Campaign – The DDD will be marketing the two-waying via emails to inform the public of the changes.

Rotary Centennial Project Update – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the project site, Rotary logo and photographs of examples of art pieces. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Mr. Rhorer reviewed the timeline for the project which begins with accepting applications April 1, 2015 and ends with artist team selection October 15, 2015. Mr. Rhorer commended Mr. Skipper Post for his assistance with this project. Mr. Post reviewed some examples of art pieces with the Commission that Rotary will begin accepting entries for an international design competition to design a piece of art for the riverfront. Rotary has contracted with CODAworx to assist with the entries. Rotary has raised \$350,000 for the project which will begin art solicitation in the spring of 2015.

Old State Capitol – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Old State Capitol. Mrs. Mary Durusau expressed that the Old State Capitol is the center piece of downtown and is under threat due to state budget cuts. The state is proposing to cut the operation of the Capitol to three days a week. Ms. Durusau expressed that this is a critical situation and encouraged everyone to contact their representatives. Mr. Rhorer encouraged everyone to support the Old State Capitol.

Nicholson Streetcar Project – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the proposed route and a photograph of a tram. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that last year the city received a \$1.8 million planning grant to plan for the tram that will connect downtown to LSU. Mr. Rhorer will be sitting on the steering committee that has been appointed to oversee the project. The city is currently working on the Request for Proposal to hire a team to begin the process.

Water Campus Groundbreaking – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the ground breaking ceremony. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the ground breaking ceremony for the first building on the Water Campus took place February 11, 2015.

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Mrs. Tina Rance, Commercial Properties, informed the Commission that the \$16 million building will house the Center for the River Studies. Projected to start in April 2015 is the construction of a building to house the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, a multi-tenant office building and a new education and research center on the old Baton Rouge dock. **IBM / 525** – Mrs. Rance also informed the Commission that anyone signing a lease for the 525 Lafayette units by June will get one month free parking. 525 Lafayette is projected to open fall 2015. IBM is scheduled to move into their new offices in May 2015.

City Hall Plaza Update – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendering of the conceptual design for City Hall Plaza and before and after images. Mr. Gabe Vicknair briefed the Commission on the project designed by Reed Hilderbrand. The project allows the opportunity to expand the capacity of the proposed lawn to approximately 3 times that of Galvez Plaza and create a dual sided stage from both the north and south. Reed Hilderbrand is also proposing ways to improve ADA accessibility to surrounding areas.

LASM North Courtyard Renovations – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendering of the conceptual design for City Hall. Mr. Goad informed the Commission that the project is underway and is expected to be complete by the end of summer 2015.

Riverfront Gateways / River Road Improvements – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the current construction on River Road in front of LASM and Repentance Park. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the current improvements that have been made to the riverfront gateways and River Road to create a new image for River Rd. The seating and umbrellas will be installed on the riverfront this summer.

Parking Lot Screening – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images of the proposed parking lot screening. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that as part of streetscape improvements the Downtown Development District (DDD) is looking at ways to screen surface parking lots on Florida St. and River Rd. and Florida and Lafayette St. The DDD is working with WHLC and Walls Project to select the screening that will be installed by the end of 2015. Mr. Taylor encouraged property and surface parking lot owners to maintain and enhance their properties.

Downtown Maintenance Committee – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the previous meeting. Ms. Whitney Cooper informed the Commission that she has been working with the utility companies to inform them of the existing ordinance. The committee received an update on the improvements to the 311 system. Individual subcommittees will be meeting within the next two months. The next Maintenance Committee is scheduled for Thursday, May 28, 2015.

Downtown Greenway Update – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, renderings of proposed improvements. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the consultants are designing improvements beginning at North Blvd. and 5th Street to City Brooks Park. Mr. Rhorer reviewed the proposed improvements that include:

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- Garden promenade with Garden Rooms
- Path to experience the trees and gardens
- Night component
- Safe crossings for bicycle and pedestrian with midblock crossings

The design process is 6 months with a 9 month to 1 year construction process.

River Center – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the River Center. Mr. Paul Arrigo, Visit Baton Rouge, introduced the new general manager of the River Center, Mr. Michael Day. Mr. Day expressed his excitement to be a part of the downtown growth and looks forward to working with downtown stakeholders.

New Businesses – Watermark – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the interior. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the reception hall is located above the old Latil's building at 326 Third Street. The facility is scheduled to open within four weeks.

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

- Uncorked – March 19
- Providence Corporate Cup – March 21
- Third Street Grub Crawl – March 26
- Fest For All – March 28 & 29
- Sunday in the Park – March 29
- Live After Five – April 3
- B. R. Arts Market / Color Run – April 4
- Blues Fest – April 11
- Foundation for Historical Louisiana/Old Governor's Mansion
- Manship Theatre Events / LSU MOA
- Capitol Park Museum
- Old State Capitol
- River Center Events
- BRSO
- LASM
- USS Kidd

7. Strategic Plan – Plan Baton Rouge II – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, a photograph of the PBR II cover. The DDD continues to implement the plan with the two-waying of St. Ferdinand and St. Louis.

8. Ongoing Projects – CPEX – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, an image of the CPEX logo. Mrs. Rachel DiResto informed the Commission that the Metropolitan Council will be voting on a resolution to form the Complete Streets Advisory Committee. Anyone interested on being on the committee were encouraged to contact her.

BREADA – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the BREADA logo. Ms. Melody Joachim briefed the Commission on the following events:

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- Strawberry Jam – Saturday, April 18, 2015
- Red Stick Sprouts – Special activity – Saturday, April 28, 2015

Downtown Business Association (DBA) – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DBA logo. Mr. Gary Anderson informed the Commission that the DBA will be expanding their board and anyone interested to contact him. Mrs. Alicia Baron briefed the Commission on the following events:

- Friday, April 3 – Live After Five Spring season begins
- April 2, DBA Member Meeting at Old State Capitol

8. **Correspondence** – There was no correspondence.

9. **Public Comment** –

Mr. Chris Brooks briefed the Commission on the upcoming events:

- March 20 – 7:30 p.m. – Creative Block Grand Opening
- March 20 – 10th Anniversary of Launch Media. In celebration Launch Media is working with LANO to give-a-way \$10,000 video production service to a non-profit organization.
- March 27 – Baton Rouge Blues Festival Listening Party – Lagniappe Records
- April 6 – Blues Fest Lagniappe – Hartley/Vey Theatre
- April 10 – Rent Party – Prince Hall Masonic Temple
- April 11 – Blues Festival – For more information visit www.batonrougebluesfestival.org

Ms. Alex Juan, director of USS Kidd, informed the Commission that the USS Kidd has hired Ms. Heather Day to assist with events. Ms. Day expressed her excitement to be a part of the USS Kidd and encouraged everyone to participate in the upcoming events at the USS Kidd.

Mr. Fred Sargent, Emediagc.com, informed the Commission that he is a member of the Downtown Business Association and briefed everyone on his electronic and physical distribution service to promote businesses and events.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.