

DDD Commission Meeting  
April 12, 2016, 8:00 a.m.  
St. Joseph Cathedral, Parish Hall, 401 Main Street

Attending: Scott Hensgens, Cheryl McCormick, Melanie Montanaro

Absent: Fran Gladden, Ric Kearny, Gordon LeBlanc, Sevetri Wilson

Others in Attendance: Copper Alvarez, Gary Anderson, Joe Anthony, Carmen Austin, Brad Bates, Bradley Bates, Calvin Beal, Bliss Kelley Bernard, Gary Black, Timothy Boone, Maggie Bowles, Kevin Broussard, Ryan Broussard, Mandy Cazedessus, Casey Cashio, Janee Chanet, Albert Chao, Rev. Joe Connelly, Whitney Cooper, Fr. Paul Counce, Melanie Couvillon, Ron Crum, Alex Daniell, Michael Day, Kristin Diehl, Peter Dieterich, Rachel DiResto, Terri Dugas, Mary Durusau, Judy Foust, Joey Furr, Chef Celeste Gill, Brian Goad, Rannah Gray, Cyrus Greco, , Courtney Hunt, Stacy Jamieson, Mary Joseph, John Kaufman, Emily Kay, Chris Knight, Stephanie Landry, Michael Lang, Lori Lasseigne, Beverly LeBeau, Emily Lopez, Mary Jane Marcantel, Fr. Pat Mascarella, B. J. Militello, Mikeila Nagura, Chris Negulescu, Tim Nesmith, Shawn Nolan, Amy Norval, Mike O'Deoy, Mary Olinde, Enrique Pinerua, Skipper Post, Margaret Read, Davis Rhorer, Fredrick Sergeant, Jane Skerkoske, Dr. Kay Solar, Lisa Smith, Saskia Spanhoff, Craig Stevens, J. T. Sukits, Emily Sulzer, Casey Tate, Ben Taylor, Lauren Lambert-Thompkins, Chris Trahan, Veach Tucker, Tyelise Vavasseau, Clark Vega, Gabe Vicknair, Councilwoman Tara Wicker, Stafford Wood

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

Mr. Scott Hensgens thanked St. Joseph Cathedral for hosting the meeting and introduced Fr. Paul Counce. Fr. Counce shared a few words of wisdom.

**5. Board Action – There was no board action.**

**6a. Governmental Issues – Sidewalk Café Ordinance** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendering of a proposed sidewalk café. Each Commissioner received a copy of the draft sidewalk café ordinance. Ms. Whitney Cooper informed the Commission that the Maintenance Committee is in the process of finalizing a draft of the sidewalk café ordinance. The final draft will be sent to downtown property owners for review. Once the ordinance is finalized and approved by the DDD Commission it will be considered by the Metropolitan Council. Ms. Chris Nichols thanked Ms. Cooper for her leadership on this committee.

**Downtown Library Bids** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, renderings of the proposed development. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Mr. Bubba Cashio, DPW Interim Director, informed the Commission that four bids were received under budget as well as three alternates. The low bidder will go before the Metropolitan Council for approval. The Municipal Building demolition is scheduled to be completed by August 2016. Mr. Rex Cabaniss thanked everyone involved with the project.

### **6b. Development Initiatives – Downtown East Developments – Louisiana Avenue**

**Connection** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the development map and rendering of the proposed improvement. Mr. Gabe Vicknair informed the Commission that the DDD is proposing the Louisiana Avenue connection under the Interstate along Louisiana Ave. to Eddie Robinson to connect the Government Street bike lanes to the Downtown Greenway. The bike and pedestrian path would also connect Downtown East to the core of downtown. The project would cost between \$100,000 - \$200,000 and the DDD is exploring opportunities for grants to secure funding. Mr. Rhorer also mentioned the proposed lighting under the Interstate.

**Beauregard Quarters Update** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the proposed rendering and photograph of the current construction. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission that the 25 unit residential project is located on the corner of Napoleon and America and construction has commenced. Mrs. Melanie Montanaro informed the Commission that the developer has been involved with the Beauregard Town Civic Association to make sure the design fits the neighborhood character.

**Downtown Parking Strategy** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images of the parking strategy. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the city hired John Fregonese Associates to review the four different aspects of parking strategy downtown:

- Update to modern meters
- Management of the garages
- Parking Guidance
- Garage Expansion

Mr. Fregonese met with the parking committee, Friday, April 1, 2016 and the first focus was on the modern meters. The committee is looking at implementing the phone / computer applications that would assist with finding parking in garages and surface parking lots. Mr. Fregonese will return in May to meet with the committee.

**Commerce Building** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the interior of the residential units and the outdoor seating. Each Commissioner received a copy of the images of the outdoor seating. Mr. Michael Lang informed the Commission that tenants have begun moving in on the 2nd and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. Floors 4 – 8 will be released next month and everyone was encouraged to visit the web site to receive up to date information. Magpie Café has started the build out for their space and are expected to open summer 2016. Gaudet Bros are also expected to open summer 2016. Thursdays, tours of the residential units from 12noon- 1pm are still available and an announcement will be made soon regarding an Open House for the building. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that as part of the development of the Commerce building outdoor seating was constructed on Third Street in front of the building. The structure took up two parking spaces but 4 additional on street parking spaces were added as well as 15 public spaces available in the garage. Discussion ensued. Mr. Lang expressed that they have completed and adhered to the city's process and procedures on the project. Mr. Rhorer expressed that the nature of Third Street is changing with more residential and he is concerned about the noise on Third Street.

**Downtown Maintenance Committee** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the previous meeting. Ms. Whitney Cooper informed the Commission the next full maintenance committee meeting is July 21, 2016. As mentioned above under item 6a the ordinance sub-committee has been focusing on the draft sidewalk café ordinance.

**Downtown Greenway** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, renderings of the proposed improvements. Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission that the Metropolitan Council accepted the low bid from Rotollo construction for the North Blvd. portion and the pre-con meeting will be scheduled later this week. East Blvd. portion is still under review. A ground breaking ceremony will take place for the North Blvd. portion within the next few weeks.

**Florida and Lafayette Streetscape** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image indicating the location of the proposed improvements and photographs of the current construction. Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission that work has begun on the improvements and they are ahead of schedule. The improvements will include replacing trees along Lafayette and Florida Streets and adding seating areas along Florida Street. The project is expected to be complete in sixty days.

**Coke Sign Re-Lighting Ceremony** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the sign. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that on Friday, April 15, 2016, following the Live After Five concert, the Mayor will lead a Second Line down Third Street for the re lighting of the Coca Cola sign. The celebration commemorates ownership of the sign which is now under Baton Rouge Area Foundation

**Chef Celeste Bistro** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of Chef Celeste. Each Commissioner received a copy of the press release and newspaper articles. Chef Celeste informed the Commission that she will be opening a bistro in the Main Street Market. The bistro will include culinary products, space for meetings and private cooking classes.

**Donation** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the correspondence and donation check. Each Commissioner received a copy of the correspondence. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Downtown Development District (DDD) received a donation from the Marcia Kaplan Kantrow Community Lecture Series Fund of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation for \$5,000. The grant is to be used as DDD sees fit. Mr. Rhorer thanked everyone involved with the donation.

**New Business – Cocha** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the building, images of the food offered, and interior design of the restaurant. Mr. Vicknair introduced owners of the new downtown restaurant, Cocha, Mr. Enrique Pinerua and Mrs. Saskia Spanhoff. Mr. Pinerua informed the Commission that the restaurant will be fine dining style with casual atmosphere and served with fresh ingredients from the Farmer's Market; the menu will changing seasonally. The restaurant is located at 455 N. Sixth and is scheduled to open July 2016.

**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.

- Live After Five – April 15,22,29, May 6,13,20
- 3rd Street Songwriter’s Festival – April 15-17
- Sunday in the Park – April 17,24, May 1,8
- Earth Day – April 17
- Walk for Humanity / Happy’s 5000 – April 23
- March for Babies / MS Walk – April 30
- Red Wig Walk – May 7
- Foundation for Historical Louisiana/Old Governor's Mansion
- Manship Theatre / LSU MOA
- Capitol Park Museum
- Old State Capitol
- River Center Events
- 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 proposed Beauregard Quarters and greenspace.

**8. Ongoing Projects – CPEX** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, an image of the CPEX logo. Mrs. Rachel DiResto informed the Commission that the Better Block BR demonstration on Perkins Road will take place on April 23 – April 24

**BREADA** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the BREADA logo. Ms. Emily Sulzer thanked everyone who has contributed to the Louisiana Small Farm Fund.

**Downtown Business Association (DBA)** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DBA logo. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Vicknair introduced the new managing director of the DBA, Ms. Lauren Thompkins. Ms. Thompkins expressed her excitement to get started and to continue to grow the DBA.

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

**9. Public Comment** – Mr. Michael Day, manager of River Center, briefed the Commission on the upcoming events at the River Center.

Councilwoman Tara Wicker thanked everyone involved with the development in downtown Baton Rouge and expressed that the downtown growth improvements spills over to other areas of the city. Councilwoman Wicker encouraged everyone to participate in the Great American Clean Up scheduled for Saturday, April 16, 2016. Councilwoman Wicker also informed the Commission that Baton Rouge FLAIM School is expanding the foreign language immersion program to Polk Elementary.

Ms. Rannah Gray informed the Commission that 2017 is Baton Rouge’s Bicentennial and the Mayor has appointed a bicentennial committee to assist with planning the yearlong event. As part of a fund raiser for Red Stick Revelry there will be a Christmas in July Sip’ n Shop Friday, July 29, 2016 in addition to the Holiday Hop Shop, Thursday, December 8, 2016. Ms. Maggie Bowles, Visit Baton Rouge, briefed the Commission on the events and encouraged everyone to attend.

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Mr. Rhorer congratulated Ms. Gray and Ms. Mary Jane Marcantel as recipients of 2016 Independent Publisher Book Award for their book "Familiar Evil".

Mr. Frederick Sargent with Electronic Media encouraged businesses or anyone wanting to promote an event to check out his walking billboards.

Pastor Joe Connelly, Wesley United Methodist Church, (WUMC) informed the Commission that Wesley United Methodist Church located at 544 Government Street is celebrating their 150 year anniversary of the church on Sunday, May 21, 2015. Everyone was encouraged to attend the event as well as purchase a ticket for dinner at Boudreaux's. Pastor Connelly expressed that WUMC wants to a part of downtown Baton Rouge and briefed the Commission on the following:

- Streetscape improvement on the church
- Offer prayer/ blessing of new business
- Beauregard Town Civic Association meeting is now having their meetings at Wesley United Methodist Church

Dr. Kay Solar briefed the Commission on the Third Street Songwriter's Festival scheduled for April 15 – 17, 2016.

Mr. Melanie Couvillion briefed the Commission on the 1<sup>st</sup> production since 2006 "World Goes Round" to be held at the Hartley Vey Theatre, May 19 & May 20, 2016.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.**