

DDD Commission Meeting

April 14, 2009, 8:00 a.m.

Kean Miller Conference Room, One American Place, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor

Attending: Cheri Morial Ausberry, Norman Chenevert, Derrell Cohoon, Van Mayhall, Chris Nichols

Absent: Mark Bensabat, Fran Gladden

Others in Attendance: Raymond Alexander, James Andermann, Rev. Chris Andrews, Joe Anthony, Jerry Arbour, Stephen Arceneaux, Renee Areng, Annabelle Armstrong, Paul Arrigo, Jo Landry Bagewell, Kyle Beall, Danny Belanger, Jeff Bell, Charles Bennett, Frances Bennett, Carolyn Bennett, Jennifer Berniard, Ricky Besson, Susannah Bing, Brad Bates, Gary Black, Mary Boston, Danny Breaux, Dave Briggs, Nancy Broussard, Jeremy Broussard, Christina Bourg, Mike Bruce, Jimmy Burland, Jason Burns, Lacy Burris, Rex Cabaniss, Patricia Calfee, Chad Calder, Gayle Carnahan, Eric Carnegie, Nancy Carter, Ashley Casey, Lindsey Cavalier, Nancy Chesson, Charles Coates, Tim Cockerham, Sonya Collins, Ronnie Comeaux, Todd Cooper, Whitney Cooper, Sara Courtney, Sandra Daire, Melissa Daly, Chad Danos, Pete Darling, Andi DeJohn, Lauren Dodds, Mark Drennen, Huey Dugas, Patricia Duncan, Jay Dykes, Paul Dykes, Lacey Dupre, Kendrick Ebanks, John Eblen, Kirk Edwards, Madeline Ellis, Jon Elvert, Matthew Emory, Eric Engeman, Jim Ferguson, Derek Fitch, Carley Fleming, Joey Furr, Gail Gaiennie, Ed Gaskin, Bryan Gerace, Carol Gikas, Debbie Gill, Brian Goad, Brace Godfrey, Krista Goodin, Jason Goodson, Mark Goodson, Derek Gordon, Francis Grayson, Jill Green, Melissa Guilbeau, Lauren Gutierrez, Jennifer Hall, Rebecca Hamilton, John Hart, Stewart Jones, John O. Hearin, Jerry Hebert, Kristin Hebert, John Helm, Vida Henderson, Walker Higgins, Kim Hodgeson, Robert Hodges, Ryan Holcomb, Tom Holden, Jake Holinga, Helen Holland, Eric Holley, Capt. Virginia Holmes, Lael Holton, Danielle Honeycutt, Kristi Howard, Alice Howe, Joe Hynes, David Jacobs, Lt. Stephenia M. Jackson, Staci Jamieson, Donnie Jarreau, Ingrid Payne Johnson, Ernest Junius, Jason Keller, Lanny Keller, Billy Kelley, Patte Keogh, Stafford Kendall, John Kett, Eddie King, Joe Labbe, Dana LaFonta, Mark Landry, Lori Lasseigne, Debbie Lapeyrouse, Justin Lemoine, Stacey Levert, Eric Lewis, Tom Livesay, Paul Lockett, Diane Losavio, Steven Lumpkin, David Madden, Katie Maloney, Nikki Essix, Manuel, Nicole Marshall, Jill Martinez, Katherine Mason, Kendall Matassa, Dee Mather, Al McDuff, Danny McGlynn, Jason Miller, BJ Militello, Marvin Mitchell, Todd Mitchell, Sonia Morales, Camm Morton, Penny Murray, Rose Mustain, Richard Neal, Dyke Nelson, Lisa Nice, Steven Noel, John Noland, Rod Nunez, Jennifer Ocken, Mike Odom, Mary Olinde, Chard Ortte, Theresa Overby, Betsy Paille, Johnny Palazzotto, Bill Palmer, Greg Palmer, Melissa Parmelee, Tom Parsons, Gary Perilloux, Lisa Perron, Joel Phillips, Ashley Pierce, Eric Poche, Sgt. Kenneth Pointer, Skipper Post, Mike Prejean, Vincent Price, Tina Rance, Bill Reich, Eric Relle, Daniel Rhodes, Davis Rhorer, Sage Roberts, George Robin, Emmett Robbins, Erin Rolfs, Darlene Rowland, Kerry Ruiz, Troy Russ, Samuel Sanders, Kristen Sanders, James Schafer, John Schneider, Katherine Scherer, Ben Schultz, Joe Sciortino, Larry Selders, Lonnie Seals, Terry Serio, Casey Sessums, Darlene Shingleur, Pam Sills, Lorraine Slade, John Smith, Mike Songy, Kathleen Spencer, Karen Stagg, Mary Stein, Jennifer Steinhouse, John Stewart, George Strain, Kelly Stutes, Cherry Talbert, Ben Taylor, Todd Teepel, Jeremy Tennant, Ted Terrell, Anna Thibodeaux, Christopher Toombs, Clark Vega, Gabe Vicknair, Barry Walls, Brad Way, Adam Werth, James West, Jay Westerfield, Emily Wharton, Tara Wicker, Matt Wilks, Bubba Willis, Michael Wilson, Kate Wilson, Beau Wolfe, Erin Wood

1. Mr. Van Mayhall called the meeting to order.
2. Mr. Van Mayhall declared a quorum.
3. Mr. Mayhall informed the Commission that the following items have been added to the agenda; Historic District Area, South Blvd Elementary and Hotel King. Mr. Derrell Cohoon moved to approve the agenda as supplemented, Mr. Norman Chenevert seconded and the agenda was approved as amended.
4. Mr. Norman Chenevert moved to approve the March 10, 2009 minutes, Mr. Derrell Cohoon seconded and the minutes were approved.

Mr. Rhorer thanked Kean Miller for hosting the board meeting.

Mr. Rhorer thanked the DDD Commission for attending the presentation to the Metropolitan Council about the Downtown Development District.

## **5. Board Action**

**6a. Governmental Issues – Appropriations Request for FY09 for Riverfront Transportation Improvements** – The Commission viewed, via power point, photographs of current conditions and proposed river road improvements. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that city-parish received \$950,000 in federal funds for riverfront transportation improvements. The funds will be used to implement the following projects:

- 1) Pedestrian and transportation improvements by providing access to the riverfront at Florida and River Rd.
- 2) Streetscape improvements in front of the LASM and Old State Capitol on River Rd.

Additional funding will be needed to implement the improvements in front of the LASM.

**Arts & Entertainment District certified as a Cultural District** – The Commission viewed, via power point, an aerial photograph of the cultural district boundaries. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Metropolitan Council approved the cultural district and thanked Ms. Gaye Hamilton on her work with this item. Mr. Jacob Holinga informed the Commission economic incentives associated with the Cultural District; the district provides a state historic tax credit up to 25% on owner occupied residential units and commercial units in the cultural district. It also provides an exemption for local and state sales tax on original works of art within the district. The Downtown Development District will schedule a meeting with downtown business owners and Ms. Gaye Hamilton, program director for Culture Recreation & Tourism.

**Historic District Area discussion** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, a map indicating the areas included in the proposed historic district. Mr. Ben Taylor encouraged the Commission to support the creation of a historic district area downtown. The designation would offer a federal tax credit of 25%, and currently there are approximately 30 buildings in the area that would qualify for the tax credit. Ms. Kristen Sanders informed the Commission that there are no restraints on the property by being listed on the national register unless federal funds are being used. Ms. Patricia Duncan, emphasized that this is a honorary designation that comes with no restriction as long as there is no federal involvement. The national register historic district will have boundaries and the buildings will have to meet the following qualifications:

50 years old or older  
Still look historic  
Contribute to the reason the district is created

Discussion ensued: **Mr. Norman Chenevert moved that the Downtown Development District support the Historic District designation application, Ms. Chris Nichols seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.**

**South Blvd. Elementary** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, a photograph of South Blvd. Elementary school. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Jerry Arbour, chairman of EBR School Board, informed the Commission that South Blvd. Elementary is a French and Spanish immersion school. The new tax plans has included the re-location of the students to Dufroq Elementary. The parents of the students at South Blvd. have requested that they remain at South Blvd. Elementary. The board has approved the tax plan, the closing of South Blvd. and to the re-location of students to Durfoq Elementary. The EBR School Board will meet in May and will vote on a short term solution for the students to remain at South Blvd. Elementary. Mr. Arbour is committed to finding a long term solution to keep the school downtown and is encouraging the DDD go on record in support of a downtown school. Councilwoman Tara Wicker also expressed her support of the South Blvd. Elementary school.

**Ms. Chris Nichols moved that the Downtown Development District Commission support a school in downtown Baton Rouge. Ms. Cheri Ausberry seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.**

**Mr. Derrell Cohoon moved that the Downtown Development District supports the maintenance of the South Blvd. Elementary immersion school in downtown Baton Rouge. Mr. Norman Chenevert seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.**

**Hotel King** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, a photograph of the Hotel King and a rendering of proposed renovations. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that on April 22, 2009, the Metropolitan Council will be voting on the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for the Hotel King. Mr. Camm Morton informed the Commission that legislation for the TIF for the Hotel King excludes the 3% CVB tax and the Metropolitan Council approval is required to allow the TIF.

Mr. Brace Godfrey requested that the Downtown Development District support the TIF for the Hotel King. Mr. Mayhall reviewed the proposed resolution that will be introduced to the Metropolitan Council.

**Mr. Derrell Cohoon moved that the Downtown Development District support the Tax Increment Financing for the Hotel King. Ms. Chris Nichols seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.**

**6b. Development Initiatives – Plan Baton Rouge Phase II Update** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, photographs of previous working meetings and proposed concepts. Mr. Cabaniss informed the Commission that the final public presentation was held at the Old State Capitol on Monday, March 30, 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. The final draft document will be completed in print form by June 2009. Mr. Mayhall asked Mr. Cabaniss to brief the Commission on the specific elements of the proposed PBR II associated with the Downtown Development District. Mr. Cabaniss informed the Commission that the amount of funding that the Baton Rouge Downtown Development District receives compared to other cities in the state is significantly less. PBR II proposes that the city review the current funding and the services the DDD provides compared to the other DDD's in the state.

**Downtown Improvements – I-110** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, photographs of current conditions under the Interstate and proposed improvements. Mr. Futrell, Chief Administrative Officer, requested that Mr. Rhorer spearhead a committee to look at beautification under the interstate I-110.

**St. Louis and St. Ferdinand Streets** – Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that PBR II recommends the following conversions:

- St. Louis and St. Ferdinand Streets to two streets tying in Nicholson Drive with St Louis and terminate at the town square. Highland Rd. which becomes St. Ferdinand then Fourth Street and will terminate at the State Capitol.

The DDD will be working towards implementing the conversions. Mr. Mayhall expressed the need for better southern access into downtown and the recommended conversions will address this issue.

**Repentance Park Lights** – Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that in 2008 the Metropolitan Council approved \$55,000 to improve the lighting at the River Center. Currently the city is working to restore the lights and will report back to the DDD upon completion.

**Downtown events Procedures and Guidelines Outline** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, the listing of items to be addressed in the outline. Mr. James Andermann informed the Commission that he and Gabe Vicknair continue to meet with appropriate officials regarding the process of holding events downtown. Mr. Andermann reviewed the topics addressed in the outline.

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Once the draft outline is complete it will be distributed to appropriate agencies for their review. The brochure is scheduled to be complete by May 2009. Mr. Mayhall requested that the brochure address security and Ms. Tina Rance recommended it also address trash.

**Welcome New Business – Regions Bank** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, photograph of the logo. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that on Friday, April 17, approximately 100 Regions Bank employees will be moving from the Essen Lane and Jefferson Hwy. locations to the II City Plaza on Convention Street.

**Stroube’s** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, photograph of the current construction of the buildings. Mr. Eric Carnegie, general manager, informed the Commission that Stroube’s Chop House is scheduled to open April 27, 2009.

**Events** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, the logos for the following events. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the following events.

**Live After Five** – April 17<sup>th</sup>

**Mayor’s Bike Day** – April 18<sup>th</sup>

**Providence Corporate Cup** – April 18<sup>th</sup>

**LSU Museum of Art “Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession”** thru April 19<sup>th</sup>

**Earth Day** – April 19<sup>th</sup>

**Sunday in the Park** – April 5 – May 17<sup>th</sup>

**Blues Week** – April 15<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>

**Red Stick Animation Festival** – April 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>

**Blues Festival** – April 25<sup>th</sup>

**Fest For All** – May 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

**2009 Spring Garden Tour in Beauregard Town** – April 26<sup>th</sup>

Derek Gordon, Arts Council and Terry Serio briefed the Commission on upcoming events.

7. **Ongoing –Center for Planning Excellence** – There was no information to report.

**BREADA** – The Commission viewed, via power point, the BREADA logo.

Ms. Darlene Rowland briefed the Commission on upcoming events:

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May – Garden Month  
May 30 – Butterfly Extravaganza

Restaurants that would like to participate in the Fresh from the Market cooking demonstrations on Saturday's are encouraged to contact the BREADA office.

8. **Correspondence** – No information to report.

9. **Public Comment**

**Announcement** – Mr. Godfrey requested that anyone with memorabilia from the Kress Welsh and Levy buildings to contact the Cyntreniks office.

Mr. Paul Arrigo invited everyone to attend the Convention & Visitor's Bureau stakeholders meeting on Thursday, May 14, 3pm at the Lyceum.

Mr. Arrigo informed the Commission that the Great American Clean Up on April 4 was a tremendous success and encouraged everyone to participate next year.

**Meeting adjourned.**