

DDD Commission Meeting  
December 12, 2017, 8:00 a.m.  
Hilton Capitol Center Baton Rouge – Heidelberg Ballroom, 201 Lafayette Street

Attending: Eric Dexter, Fran Gladden, Scott Hensgens, Cheryl McCormick,

Absent: Ric Kearny, Gordon LeBlanc, Melanie Montanaro

Others in Attendance: Logan Anderson, Joe Anthony, Paul Arrigo, James Avault, David Beard, Bliss Bernard, Gary Black, Ben Blackwell, Timothy Boone, Kevin Broussard, Spencer Calahan, Gina Calahan, Gayle Carnahan, Bubba Cashio, Wendi Coates, David Cobb, Melanie Couvillion, Suzette Crocker, Shelby Daugherty, Michael Day, Stephanie Day, Sgt. Distefano, Mary Durusau, Barbara Freiberg, Joey Furr, Rannah Gray, Adrienne Kors Horn, Kyle Huffstickler, Pat Hughes, Mary Johnson, Sam Karlin, John Kaufman, Adam Knapp, Jack Koban, Melissa Landry, Jason Langlois, Laurie Larouche, Beverly LeBeau, Mary Jane Marcantel, Fr. Pat Mascarella, Yolandra McClain, B. J. Miletello, Aaron Molluro, Mikela Morgan, Chris Nichols, Shawn Nolan, Mary Olinde, Lluvia Peveto, Michael Petty, Andy Pino, Fred Raiford, Tina Rance, Davis Rhorer, Chad Rigby, Gabrielle Roussel, Fredrick Sargent, Whitney Sayal, Jarek Smith, Lisa Smith, Molly Smith, Emily Sulzer, Ebru Sumer, Casey Tate, Gabe Vicknair, Matt Vondenstein, Brad Watts, Haley Westphal, Councilwoman Tara Wicker, Samear Zaitoon

1. Mr. Scott Hensgens called the meeting to order.
2. Mr. Scott Hensgens declared a quorum.
3. Mrs. Fran Gladden moved to approve the agenda, Mr. Eric Dexter seconded and the agenda was approved.
4. Mr. Eric Dexter moved to approve the November 14, 2017 minutes, Mrs. Fran Gladden seconded and the minutes were approved.

Mr. Davis Rhorer thanked the Hilton for hosting the Commission meeting.

**5. Board Action – Nominating Committee** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DDD logo. Each Commissioner received a copy of the proposed Nominating Committee. Mr. Rhorer requested that the nominating committee for the recommendation of 2018 DDD officers consist of Mr. Scott Hensgens, Mrs. Melanie Montanaro and Mr. Ric Kearny. **Mrs. Fran Gladden moved to approve the Nominating Committee as presented, Mr. Eric Dexter seconded and the Nominating Committee was approved as presented.** The recommendation of officers will be presented at the January 9, 2018 board meeting.

**6. Governmental Issues** – There was no information to report.

**7. Update from Previous Board Meeting – Federal Historic Tax Credits** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Kress building. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article.

Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that due to the assistance of Senator Cassidy the US Senate approved the legislation to preserve the credit and it is now in the House and Senate Conference Committee. Everyone was encouraged to visit [www.preserve-louisiana.org](http://www.preserve-louisiana.org) for updated information and to voice their concerns.

**8. Development Initiatives – Developments Underway** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current projects. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the following projects:

- Downtown Library – reviewed the current construction photographs. Proposed completion by the end of 2018
- Lofts @ 6C – reviewed the current construction photographs of the 142 residential unit development
- Courtyard Marriott – reviewed the current construction photographs and a rendering of the proposed signage. The development will include a Starbucks. Planning Commission approved the signage.

**DDD 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of Spanish Town and Beauregard Town. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the stabilization of the two historic neighborhoods and initiatives such as:

- Lighting & Security
- Signage & Parking
- Façade grants
- Restoration Renaissance

**BRAC Center for Economic Development** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs and video of the proposed renderings and current construction. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Adam Knapp, CEO and President, briefed the Commission on the proposed renovation and expansion of their 9,000 sq. ft. downtown office. The renovation includes the following:

- Additional 2,000 sq. ft.
- Conference rooms
- Open floor plan / Collaborative work stations

Mr. Knapp thanked the sponsors and informed the Commission that naming rights are still available. Mr. Knapp also commended the DDD on the downtown progress. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of summer 2018.

**Water Campus** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Center for Coastal and Deltaic Solutions and a map of the campus. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mrs. Tina Rance invited everyone to the ribbon cutting for the Center for Coastal and Deltaic Solutions, scheduled this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. The 34,000 sq. ft. building will be home to The Water Institute of the Gulf, offer shared co-working space with memberships available and an event venue. The building will take you to the water and will be open to the public.

Mr. Paul Arrigo, Visit Baton Rouge, informed the Commission that the hotel occupancy tax increase tax passed by 61% of the vote. Mr. Arrigo commended Ms. Rannah Gray for her assistance with the marketing for support of the tax. The tax will go in to effect April 1, 2018. Mr. Michael Day, Raising Cane's River Center General Manager, expressed the importance of the tax as it will allow for improvements to the ballroom and theater.

**Spencer Calahan Offices** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the proposed rendering of the building. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Spencer Calahan, attorney, informed the Commission that Stuart and Company Construction is the contractor for the project. The ground breaking is scheduled for Thursday, December 14, 2018 with a 12 month construction period. Mr. Rhorer commended Mr. Calahan for his commitment to downtown Baton Rouge.

**River Center Update** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the new exterior signage. Mr. Michael Day, Raising Cane's River Center General Manager, express his appreciation of partnership with Raising Cane's and the upgrades made to the facility.

**City Hall Plaza** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendering of the proposed improvements and photographs of current construction. Mr. Gabe Vicknair updated the Commission on the construction of the plaza. DPW and the design construction team are working on the final punch list for the parking garage. The project is proposed to be complete the first quarter of 2018.

**North Blvd. Lighting Upgrades** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an aerial photograph indicating area for lighting upgrades. Mr. Fred Raiford, DPW, commended Mr. Rhorer for his commitment to the community and downtown. Mr. Raiford expressed the City-Parish's intent to address lighting and security along North Blvd. between 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Street. All street lights in the area will be changed to LED and lighting for underneath the overpass has been ordered. Installation of LED street lights along the bridge will begin today and installation of lighting underneath the structure will begin next week with completion projected by end of 2017. DPW is also working on ways to address the issue with the homeless in the area. Proposed fencing under the North Blvd overpass to secure the area will be presented to the Metropolitan Council, Wednesday, January 10, 2018. Upon Metropolitan Council approval of the agreement for the fencing, the installation will begin. Mr. Rhorer commended Ms. Chris Nichols, Ms. Mary Jane Marcantel and Sgt. Distefano for their work with the Road Home Program.

**BREC** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of BREC Park. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that BREC has included in their 2018 budget improvements to the BREC Park located on S. 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Improvements will include interior and exterior renovations to the building as well as restoring the basketball court and installing a fence around the property.

**DeSoto Park** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an aerial photograph of the park, located west of the State buildings and bordering the Mississippi River. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that a meeting with BREC was re-scheduled due to the inclement weather. Mr. Rhorer reviewed the proposed improvements for the area. Mr. Rhorer commended everyone involved with the project.

Mr. Dexter asked if this project needed any additional support from the business community? Mr. Rhorer will keep the commission informed of the project and request support when needed. He thanked Mr. Dexter for his interest and support of the project.

**Town Square Phase II** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendered image of the proposed improvements. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the project will be rebid the first quarter of 2018. The landscape architects are working on adjustments to the project scope

**Riverfront Wayfinding Signage** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendered image of the proposed signage. Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission the wayfinding signs and kiosks will be installed the end of December.

**Downtown Maintenance Committee** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of Matt Vondenstein with Driftwood Cask & Barrel and photographs of maintenance issues. Mrs. Whitney Hoffman Sayal informed the Commission that the winner of the November Downtown Distinction Award is Driftwood Cask & Barrel in the Bar/Lounge category. Mr. Vondenstein thanked the previous recipient for the nomination. The winners are promoted on social media outlets and the category for December is Tourist Destinations. The final award will be chosen February 2018. The Metropolitan Council approved the updated downtown overlay district ordinance which was updated to reflect the UDC updates and current dynamic of downtown. The committee continues to work on updating the utility paint and waste ordinance and will continue to work with the affected stakeholders prior to introducing them to the Metropolitan Council for approval.

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 12, 2018. Mr. Rhorer commended everyone involved with the Maintenance committee.

**New Business** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of 421 Third Street. Mr. Brad Watts, River Room, updated the Commission on the following:

- River Room, 222 Laure Street, second floor has space that accommodates 50 – 60 people for corporate events.
- The Bengal Tap Room, formerly known as The Draft House, is currently undergoing renovations into a sports bar concept with 18 TV's, food menu and updated patio. Projected opening is end of December 2017.
- Cecilia will locate in formerly known Restaurant IPO space and will offer authentic creole menu. Restaurant is scheduled to open end of January 2018 / February 2018.
- The Loft at Cecilia formerly known as The Office is being renovated into an upscale / high end space for corporate events, wedding receptions etc. The space is scheduled to open end of January 2018 / February 2018

Mr. Rhorer thanked Mr. Watts for his investment in downtown.

Mr. Rhorer thanked the Arts Council for their gift of Art Work by AKM Jabel Rashel.

**9. 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.

- Prayer During Advent at FUMC – December 12,19
- Cocktail Class at Magpie Downtown – December 13
- Kid's Orchestra Winter 2017 – December 14
- B. R. Arts Market – December 16
- First Presbyterian Live Nativity / FUMC Christmas Concert – December 17
- Red Stick Revelry – December 31
- [Geaux Downtown BR's Holiday Giveaway– Through December 31](#)
- Manship Theatre / LSU MOA
- River Center Events
- LASM
- USS Kidd

Ms. Rannah Gray briefed the Commission on the following events:

- Red Stick Rising at North Blvd., Sunday, December 31, 2017 from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Red Stick Revelry, Sunday, December 31, 2017 from 9:00 p.m. – 12 midnight

**10. 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.

**11. Ongoing Projects – CPEX** – The Commission viewed, via Power Point, an image of the CPEX logo. There was no information to report.

**BREADA** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the BREADA logo.

Ms. Emily Sulzer thanked everyone for their support of the market.

**Downtown Business Association (DBA)** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DBA logo. There was no information to report.

**12. Correspondence** – Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that he received correspondence requesting him to appear before the Louisiana Gaming Control board Tuesday, December 19, 2017. Mr. Rhorer is to testify regarding adjustments or changes to Riverboat Gambling in Louisiana.

**13. Public Comment** – Mr. Michael Day informed the Commission that the Nutcracker is scheduled for Saturday, December 16 and Sunday, December 17 and Ice Skating at the River Center begins Wednesday, December 20, 2017.

Councilwoman Tara Wicker informed the Commission that the names of the Community Police Ambassadors will be announced at the Metropolitan Council meeting Wednesday, December 13, 2017. Councilwoman commended Ms. Mary Jane Marcantel for her involvement in the program.

**Meeting Adjourned:**