

DDD Commission Meeting
February 15, 2018, 8:00 a.m.
First United Methodist Church, 930 North Blvd.

Attending: Eric Dexter, Fran Gladden, Scott Hensgens, Ric Kearny, Gordon LeBlanc, Cheryl McCormick, Melanie Montanaro

Others in Attendance: Gary Anderson, Logan Anderson, Meredith Anderson, Joe Anthony, Timothy Boone, Kevin Broussard, Lt. Callihan, Gayle Carnahan, Renee Chatelain, Wendi Melanie Couvillion, William Cox, Suzette Crocker, Remy Curry, Shelby Daugherty, Heather Day, Kathryn DeVoursney, Sgt. Distefano, James Fox-Smith, Councilwoman Barbara Freiberg, Trevor Gauthreaux, Brian Goad, Blaine Grimes, Piia Hanson, Anita Hebert, Emily Jackson, Mary Johnson, Mary Joseph, Sam Karlin, John Kaufman, Jack Koban, Beverly LeBeau, Mary Jane Marcantel, Fr. Pat Mascarella, B. J. Miletello, Angela Miller, Aaron Molluro, Mary Olinde, Michael Petty, Lluvia Peveto, Casey Phillips, Ruth Phillips, Davis Rhorer, Robert Scott, Darlene Shingleur, Casey Tate, Norman Theriot, Lauren Tompkins, Jamie Turnage, Gabe Vicknair, Brad Watts, Councilwoman Tara Wicker

1. Mr. Ric Kearny called the meeting to order.

2. Mr. Ric Kearny declared a quorum.

3. Mrs. Fran Gladden moved to approve the agenda, Mrs. Melanie Counce seconded and the agenda was approved.

4. Mr. Scott Hensgens moved to approve the January 9, 2018 minutes, Mr. Gordon LeBlanc seconded and the minutes were approved.

Mr. Ric Kearny thanked First United Methodist for hosting the meeting.

5. Board Action – There was no board action.

6. Governmental Issues – An expansion of the Arts & Entertainment District Cultural District is planned to be introduced at the Metropolitan Council meeting next month. The Downtown Development District is working with Councilwoman Tara Wicker and the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge in preparing the application to the state.

7. Update from Previous Board Meeting – There was no information.

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 current construction photographs. Proposed completion by the end of 2018
- The Elias – reviewed current construction photographs of the 25 residential unit development proposed to be complete Spring 2018
- Lofts @ 6C – reviewed current construction photographs of the 142 residential unit development. First two floors are dedicated to parking for tenants and general lease.
- House on the Hill – reviewed the current construction photographs of the 15 residential unit development in Beauregard Town.

Mr. Brian Goad, Suzanne Turner Associates, informed the Commission that the parking lot is near completion, the project will include 4 single studio units and construction on the community kitchen will begin Spring 2018. Mr. Rhorer commended Suzanne Turner Associates on the infill development.

DDD 30th Anniversary – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs pertaining to the Art & Entertainment District Cultural District. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the creation of the Art & Entertainment District Cultural District in 2008 and recognized Derrell Cohoon for his role. The Arts & Entertainment District was intended to energizing the areas' restaurants and lounges.

Chase Tower Acquisition – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of Chase Towers. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Mr. Mike Wampold, Wampold Companies, purchased the Chase South Tower and plans are to renovate the building into multi-use property and redesign the plaza. Mr. Rhorer commended Mr. Wampold for his investment in downtown.

Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana (PAR) – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the logo. Mr. Robert T. Scott, President, informed the Commission that PAR has relocated to the Chase South Towers. PAR is a good government group that brings good government to Louisiana. Mr. Scott expressed his excitement to be downtown and part of the progress.

BR Rail Stations Stakeholder Meetings – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image proposed rail station. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the steering committee meet last week to discuss the proposed passenger rail station between downtown Baton Rouge and downtown New Orleans. A public meeting will be scheduled this spring.

Proposed KC Railroad Crossing Closures / Improvements – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an aerial image indicating proposed RxR Crossing Closures/Improvements. Each Commissioner received a copy of correspondence sent to DOTD. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that DOTD received a grant for railcrossing improvements. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the concerns of the proposed improvements / closures and read the correspondence that was sent to DOTD regarding the concerns.

Courtyard Marriot Topping Ceremony – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current construction and the topping out ceremony. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper articles. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the topping out ceremony was well attended and the hotel is on schedule to be complete summer 2018.

Government Street Road Diet – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a street map indicating proposed changes. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer reviewed the proposed changes on Government Street. In a related matter the Metropolitan Council approved sidewalks on Eddie Robinson south to Washington Street. The Louisiana Connector, a bicycle/pedestrian project envisioned to connect the Government Street bike lanes to the Downtown Greenway, has received funds from the LADOTD Transportation Alternatives Grant Program.

City Hall Plaza – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendering of the proposed improvements and photographs of current construction. Mr. Michael Petty, Reich & Associates, briefed the Commission on the project and expressed that the project is starting to take shape and will be completed by the end of March 2018.

Riverfront Plaza – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendering of the proposed improvements. Mr. Vicknair working on design plans for the plaza improvements that includes refurbishing landscape, add lighting to the plaza and lawn, pathways, sound system and kiosks. 100% construction drawings will be submitted to Architectural Services, Public Works on February 16, 2018.

River Center Theatre Plaza – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a rendering of the proposed improvements. Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission that the theater design is being completed by Post Architects and Reed Hilderbrand has been hired for the design of the surrounding plaza area. A site survey will be completed soon.

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 submitted to DOTD February 20, 2018 and the bids will open in April 2018.

Riverfront Wayfinding Signage – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the signage. Mr. Vicknair informed the Commission the directional and pedestrian wayfinding signage has been installed with the exception of the proposed signage along the River Road bike path. Once the path is completed the signs will be installed.

Downtown Maintenance Committee – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of Iberia Bank and their employees. Mr. Gabe Vicknair informed the Commission that the winner of the January Downtown Distinction Award is Iberia Bank in the Corporations/Companies category. Mr. Theriot, branch manager, thanked the previous recipient for the nomination. The winners are promoted on social media outlets and the category for February is entertainment venue. The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 12, 2018.

New Business – Bengal Tap Room – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Bengal Tap Room interior and courtyard and interior of Cecilia. Mr. Brad Watts briefed the Commission on the following:

- The Bengal Tap Room, formerly known as The Draft House, has been renovated into a sports bar concept with 18 TV's, food menu and updated patio. The project is now open.
- Cecilia will locate in formerly known Restaurant IPO space and will offer authentic creole menu. The restaurant is scheduled to open in a few weeks.
- 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 in a few weeks.

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.

- St. James Gumbo – February 16 – March 23
- Peter Klubek Recent Works Reception – February 16
- Mardi Gras Mambo – February 17
- Veterans' 5K – February 24
- Red Stick Roux Rally – February 24
- Susan G. Komen – March 3
- OLOL Half Marathon – March 10 - 11
- Craft Changes Lives – March 11
- Preserve Louisiana/Old Governor's Mansion
- Manship Theatre / LSU MOA
- Capitol Park Museum
- Old State Capitol
- River Center Events
- LASM
- USS Kidd

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. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Ms. Boo Thomas announced her retirement in June 2018 and CPEX will be having a fundraiser May 2018.

BREADA – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the BREADA logo. Ms. Emily Jackson encouraged everyone to continue to support the Main Street Market.

Downtown Business Association (DBA) – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DBA logo. Mrs. Lauren Tompkins, Managing Director, briefed the Commission on the following:

- Annual Member Conference – June 28, 2018
- LAF Line Up Reveal Party – February 27, 2018
- LAF 20th Anniversary
- Live After Five commences Friday, March 30, 2018

12. Correspondence – There was no information to report.

13. Public Comment – Mr. Rhorer thanked Councilwoman Tara Wicker on her support. Councilwoman Wicker commended Ms. Boo Thomas on her accomplishments. Ms. Wicker also expressed that downtown is now the preferred place to be and commended everyone involved with the Homeless alliance. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the Metropolitan Council approved offering temporary employment for the homeless.

Mr. James Fox-Smith, Country Roads Magazine, briefed the Commission on the free online ticket portal “BonTemps Tix”. The portal is exclusively for events in Louisiana and Mississippi.

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Anyone interested in utilizing the site was encouraged to contact Mr. Fox-Smith or visit the web site at www.bontempstix.com

Ms. Renee Chatelain, Arts Council CEO, briefed the Commission on the following:

- BR Arts Market is celebrating 20 years in 2018
- The Connections Program - curate art of local artists rotate every 6 months

Ms. Angela Miller briefed the Commission on the Race For the Cure scheduled for Saturday, March 3, 2018.

Mr. Rhorer recognized Mr. Casey Phillips as the recipient of the Acie J. Belton Life Achievement Award. Mr. Phillips thanked the DDD for their support.

Meeting Adjourned: