

DDD Commission Meeting
February 12, 2019, 8:00 a.m.
Baton Rouge Area Chamber, 564 Laurel Street

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

Others in Attendance: Adam Alford , Taylor Anderson, Jenny Aucoin, James Avault, Robyn Belle, Gary Black, Timothy Boone, Dawn Braud, Chris Brooks, Shelly Bullion, Kevin Broussard, Shelby Bullion, Travis Campbell, Gayle Carnahan, Eric Carnegie, Bubba Cashio, Derrell Cohoon, Jude Comeaux, Melanie Couvillion, Laikyn Crappell, Suzette Crocker, Les Crooks, Lauren Crump, Rhea D'Aliesio, Holly Duchmann, Daniel Espinoza, Dr. Fry, Carol Gikas Rannah Gray, Kelli Gueho, Angela Harms, Hank Henagan, Tyler Herrmann, Victoria Herrmann, Jamie Hernandez, Wade Himmel, Sam Karlin, Emily Jackson, John Kaufman, John Kelton, Theresa Langlois, Jeannie Magdefrau, Michelle Mahaffey, B. J. Miletello, Aaron Mollura, Mikeila Morgan, Grant Murphy, Chris Nichols, Mary Olinde, Serena Pandos, Katie Pryor, Davis Rhorer, Reed Richard, Jim Rigot, Whitney Sayal, Daniel Stetson, Shervisa Sullivan, Casey Tate, Alex Thibadeaux, Clark Vega, Gabe Vicknair, Councilwoman Tara Wicker, Wes Wilkerson, Cindy Wonderful, Samaer Zaitoon

1. Mr. Scott Hensgens called the meeting to order.
2. Mr. Scott Hensgens declared a quorum.
3. Ms. Cheryl McCormick moved to approve the agenda, Mrs. Melanie Montanaro seconded and the agenda was approved.
4. Mrs. Fran Gladden moved to approve the January 8, 2019 minutes, Mr. Gordon LeBlanc seconded and the minutes were approved.
5. **Board Action** – There was no board action.

Mr. Ric Kearny welcomed everyone to the Baton Rouge Area Chamber conference room and briefed the Commission on the renovations to the building. Mr. Rhorer commended Mr. Ric Kearny on his leadership and commitment to downtown and presented him with a token of appreciation for his service as Chairman.

6. **Governmental Issues** – There was no information to report.
7. **Update from Previous Board Meeting** – There was no information to report.
8. **Development Initiatives – Developments Underway** – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current projects. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the following projects:
 - **Elysian II** – Reviewed the current construction photographs of the 100 residential unit development on Spanish Town Rd. 60% market rate / 40% affordable units.
 - **Licensing Board of Contractors** – Reviewed the current construction photographs of the development under construction on the corner of 6th & North Streets.
 - **Associated General Contractors** – The building at the corner of 7th and Main Streets is also undergoing a major renovation as part of the block redevelopment.

- **Spencer Calahan** – Reviewed the current construction photographs of the development under construction on the corner of St. Louis and South Blvd.

6th & 7th Street Corridor Developments – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an aerial indicating the development along 6th and 7th Streets. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the following development along 6th and 7th Streets:

- Elias
- 7th Street Park
- The Heron
- BRAC
- Cocha
- LCLB
- AGC

Ribbon Cuttings – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of 2019 downtown ribbon cuttings. The DDD celebrated the following 3 ribbon cuttings in the past 2 weeks:

- Courtyard Marriott
- The Heron Downtown
- The Elias

New Leadership Introductions – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the LASM and Ms. Serena Pandos. Mrs. Carol Gikas, retired director of the LASM introduced Ms. Serena Pandos, recently hired new LASM Director. Ms. Pandos expressed her excitement to follow in the footsteps of Mrs. Gikas and to be in Baton Rouge.

Belle of Baton Rouge – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Belle of Baton Rouge. Mr. Jim Rigot, Belle of Baton Rouge General Manager, expressed his excitement to see the changes that have taken place in downtown Baton Rouge and in the legislation that has passed to allow for the floating casino to operate land side. Eldorado Resorts, new owners of the Belle of Baton Rouge will send a team to visit the Belle of Baton Rouge this month to look at the possibilities of improvements for the Belle of Baton Rouge casino and property.

Assistant CAO Public Works – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Mr. Kelvin J. Hill, Assistant CAO, Public Works. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Mr. Hill has been appointed as Public Works Assistant CAO.

Raising Cane's River Center – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of an event at the River Center. Mr. Les Crooks, River Center General Manager informed the Commission that he is impressed with the downtown improvements since departing Baton Rouge in 2001. Mr. Crooks looks forward to working with everyone.

Downtown Connectivity – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an aerial photograph indicating the pedestrian circulation between the River Center and Third Street and photographs from recent downtown events. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the importance of connectivity between the River Center and Arts & Entertainment District.

Downtown East Update – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the 14th Street Park Boxing & Training Center. **14th Street Park** – Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Reed Richard, BREC Planning and Engineering, informed the Commission that the 14th Street Park is one of the many projects that BREC is currently working on. The facility has a rich history as a boxing facility that has produced a number of good boxers and was once the Dr. Pepper bottling plant. The building has been in disrepair and efforts to improve it will make it an appealing destination.

Ms. Angela Harms, BREC Project Manager, briefed the Commission on the proposed improvements to the 14th Street Park that includes: new windows and doors, install exterior lighting, new boxing ring, fence and an alarm as well as a painted mural on the exterior. Improvements are scheduled to be completed by September 2019. Mr. Rhorer commended everyone involved with the project.

Bus Rapid Transit Open House – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the map indicating the proposed route. Ms. Rannah Gray thanked everyone that attended the Baton Rouge Bus Rapid Transit Public Open House Tuesday, January 29, 2019. The feasibility study is expected to be complete in February 2019. Mr. Rhorer commended CATS and RDA for their assistance with the project.

Gotcha Bike Share – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Gotcha bicycle and an aerial indicating the proposed bike station locations. The DDD is working with downtown neighborhoods on possible locations for the bike stations. Mr. Rhorer thanked the neighborhoods for their participation in this program. Bike Share is scheduled to launch at locations in downtown, LSU and Southern University beginning April 2019. Mr. Eric Dexter informed the Commission that Civil Solutions is assisting with the bike locations which are currently in the planning stages. In regards to the location of the bike stations, they are verifying suggested locations are ADA accessible and compliant.

Ebb & Flow Festival – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, Ebb & Flow presentation. Each Commissioner received a copy of the newspaper article. Ms. Rhea D’Aliesio, Arts Council, briefed the Commission on the following events:

- Ebb & Flow Festival that is scheduled for April 6-7, 2019
- Ebb & Flow Festival Season which is a broader promotion festival season during March 1, 2019 – April 14, 2019.
- Art Flow - Art competition with a national jury and an app that allows the public to vote on the art.

Ms. D’Aliesio informed the Commission that during the Ebb & Flow Festival the Arts Council will display, on the Triangle building, a crocheted mural by artist Olek and Love Across the USA team. For more information everyone was encouraged to contact Rhea or visit the web site at www.ebbandflowbr.org.

Banditos Festival – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the festival logo. Mr. Eric Carnegie, producer of Banditos Festival briefed the Commission on the debut of the food and music festival that is scheduled for June 22, 2019 and will be held at Galvez Plaza.

The Baton Rouge Oyster Festival is scheduled for May 19, 2019. Mr. Chris Brooks expressed that the goal of producing events is to provide more cultural for Baton Rouge. Sponsorships are available for the Banditos Festival more information can be obtained by contacting Mr. Carnegie or Mr. Brooks or visiting the web site at www.banditofestival.com.

Riverfront Improvements – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, images of proposed improvements to the pedestrian staircase, retaining wall and a photograph of kiosk. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the DDD continues to obtain estimates on artwork and other improvements to the pedestrian staircase connecting the River Center to Riverfront Park over River Road. The DDD also continues to work with DPW on improvements to the visitor kiosk on the riverfront that will include additional lighting, paint, and illuminated display cases. Mr. Rhorer commended Department of Public Works for their assistance with the project. The DDD has also met with The Walls Project to identify a mural artist to enhance the 395' retaining wall on the riverfront between Laurel & Main Streets.

Demonstration Project – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the Third and Florida Street intersection. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the DDD is working with Department of Public Works to implement the following improvements to the intersection of Third and Florida Streets as part of a pilot program:

- Re-stripe the streets
- Repair broken curbs
- Install a visitor map
- Improve store front of the convenience store
- Improve the cross walk experience by painting piano keys at the intersection of Third and Florida Street

Riverfront Plaza – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current construction. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that construction continues on riverfront plaza with meadow planting and landscape planting. Improvements will also include ADA accessibility for the stage, lighting, sound system and lighting the red stick. A 3 year maintenance contract for the plants is also included. The improvements are expected to be complete by the end of March 2019. Mr. Rhorer commended everyone involved with the project.

Town Square Phase II – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of current construction. Each Commission received a copy of the newspaper article. Mr. Rhorer briefed the Commission on the improvements that include installing seating in the plaza, a visitor's kiosk, and transforming St. Phillip into a pedestrian friendly promenade.

Downtown Greenway – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the rendering for East Boulevard improvements. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the City of Baton Rouge has accepted the low bid from T. L. Hawk, LLC for \$1,470,961. Construction will begin when the contract is executed and approved by City-Parish.

Rotary Centennial Project – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, photographs of the sculpture. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that the high water level in the Mississippi River has postponed the installation of the sculpture.

Downtown Maintenance – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the flyer for Operation Fresh Start and a photograph of the February Distinction Award Recipient. Each Commissioner received a copy of the flyer. Mrs. Whitney Sayal informed the Commission that the February 2019 winner of the Downtown Distinction award in the restaurant category is Capitol City Grill. Everyone was encouraged to participate in the Operation Fresh Start campaign to clean and beautify the city. The first event is scheduled for Saturday, February 16, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., anyone interested in participating in the downtown cleanup is encouraged to meet at Repentance Park or in Spanish Town by the southern end of the Capitol Lakes.

The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of Ms. Mary Johnson and Fr. Pat Mascarella. Mr. Rhorer informed the Commission that Ms. Mary Johnson and Fr. Pat Mascarella passed away. Mr. Rhorer recognized both of them for their contribution and support of downtown.

9. New Business – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, the logo for Power Engineers, Inc. **Power Engineers, Inc.** – Mr. Jude Comeaux, Senior Environmental Project Manager for Power Engineers, briefed the Commission on the services of the multinational firm and expressed his excitement to be downtown located in One American Place.

Kinetic Physical Therapy – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, the logo for Kinetic Physical Therapy. Ms. Kelli Gueho, Physical Therapist, informed the Commission that Kinetic Physical Therapy (KPT) is located above Matherne's in 4Forty Fitness. KPT provides one on one therapy, aquatic and land based and office ergonomic evaluations.

Spanish Town Market – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, a photograph of the exterior of the market. Mr. Travis Campbell informed the Commission that he recently purchased the business and is currently considering possible new store offerings, as well as continuing existing ones. He encouraged everyone to come by the store and stated that he is looking forward to the Spanish Town Mardi Gras parade.

10. 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.

- 4Forty Fitness Boot Camp
- Operation Fresh Start – February 16
- Mardi Gras Mambo – February 16
- Mardi Gras Parades
- IBM Open House – February 20
- Movie Night – February 28
- Mardi Gras Fest – March 2
- Christ in the City Ash Wednesday – March 6
- OLOL Half Marathon – March 9-10
- Preserve Louisiana/Old Governor's Mansion
- Manship Theatre
- LSU MOA
- Capitol Park Museum
- Old State Capitol
- River Center Events
- LASM
- USS Kidd

11. Ongoing Projects – BREADA – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the logo. Ms. Theresa Langlois informed the Commission that the market will be closed March 2, 2019 due to the Spanish Town Mardi Gras parade. BREADA is planning a gala for September 19, 2019. More information will be distributed shortly.

DBA – The Commission viewed, via PowerPoint, an image of the DBA logo. There was no information to report

12. Correspondence – There was no information to report.

13. Public Comment – Nicholas BeJeaux, LASM Audience Engagement & Public Relations Manager, briefed the Commission on the upcoming events at the LASM.

Mr. Daniel Stetson, LSU Museum of Art Executive Director, briefed the Commission on the exhibit “Across the Atlantic: American Impressionism through the French Lens.” The exhibit will be on display from March 7 – June 9, 2019. Everyone was encouraged to attend the museum and Mr. Stetson announced that the museum is now open on Friday evenings.

Ms. Cheryl McCormick expressed her concern with the number of Airbnb’s in Spanish Town and requested Metropolitan Councilwoman Wicker research the issue and possibly draft an ordinance that addresses the residents’ concerns. Councilwoman Wicker commented that she will look into the issue.

Mr. David Beard, USS Kidd, briefed the Commission on the upcoming events at the USS Kidd and encouraged everyone to visit the USS Kidd.

Meeting Adjourned: