

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TAKEN AT A
REGULAR MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2019

Those present: Miles Matt, Mike Delcambre, Jim Keaty, Gus Rezende, and Greg Walls

Those absent: Ross Fontenot and Lisa Thomas

Staff present: Anita Begnaud and Hunter Hebert

Others present: EJ Krampe, Corey Jack, Eric Crozier, Ryan Pecot, Andre Breaux, Carlee Alm-Labar, Danielle Breaux, Pat Lewis, Bruce Conque, Todd Green, and Dewitt Sheridan

The meeting was called to order by Matt.

Public comment cards were available on table in the back of room for anyone who wished to speak in regards to items on the agenda.

Administrative Approvals/Reports

May Minutes – The May Minutes were presented for approval. Matt exercised authority to defer to July board meeting.

April Financial Statements – The April Financials were presented for approval. No comments or questions, Walls motioned to approve the April Financial Statements as presented, Keaty seconded, all voted in favor.

Old Federal Courthouse Update

Krampe shared renderings of what development will look like with board members and audience members. Krampe noted during upcoming LCG Council meeting, Council members would be voting on a 3-month extension to begin construction. Krampe noted that during due-diligence, there were several items that were significantly more expensive than originally anticipated. The developer was approved for a brownfield grant in excess of \$1 million to remediate and would like to fully secure funds before beginning demolition and construction. Matt commented that Krampe was present to answer any questions the board may have because Matt would like for board to endorse 3-month extension in the form of a resolution.

Matt asked if additional time requested was due to additional environmental issues that were encountered and further inquired if additional issues found were not and could not have been encountered given the due-diligence that was originally provided by the City to all developers interested in project. Krampe noted that only due-diligence provided to interested developers was a 1-day walk-through of property.

Krampe noted it is critical to get this project done. In the context of economic development and recruiting tech companies, they look at UL Lafayette's proximity to Downtown, excellent programming like Festival International and Downtown Alive, but note very few people live downtown. Krampe further noted that completion of this project will begin a domino effect of other projects happening downtown.

Matt inquired if environmental issues uncovered during due-diligence are primarily caused by failure to maintain and/or occupy the building. Krampe confirmed.

Begnaud inquired about 90-day timeframe. Krampe noted that 90-day timeframe would allow for securing grant monies. Begnaud asked if developers intended to complete project within original timeframe (by December 31, 2020). Krampe noted developers felt strongly they would be able to complete the project on-time. Begnaud inquired if Krampe had spoken to Council members about this issue and what the DDA board could offer from an advocacy perspective. Krampe confirmed he's spoken to downtown Councilman Pat Lewis and intends to speak to all Council members prior to meeting.

Delcambre inquired about construction documents' approval. Krampe noted that they are still awaiting approval, but that the project is approved for demolition and to begin remediation. Further, Krampe noted they intend to have commercial on the first floor of the courthouse building, as well as the former "AOC" building and the rest would be residential.

Matt urged a motion for the DDA board to approve a resolution to support the developer's request for the 90-day extension of time. Keaty made a motion to approve the resolution of support for the 90-day extension request, Walls seconded, all voted in favor.

Economic Development Opportunities Committee

Matt noted committee was formed to look into various economic development opportunities downtown, including tax advantages. Committee members include: Miles Matt, Jim Keaty, Eric Crozier, Ryan Pecot, and Anita Begnaud. First formation meeting was held.

CEO Update

Begnaud noted the following:

Buchanan Redevelopment Site –RFP responses were due on Friday, June 14. Three development groups have confirmed they will submit a proposal. Begnaud called upon Breaux (LCG Development and Planning Director) to add. Breaux noted she looked forward to seeing what would be presented.

Master Plan – Expectation of delivery of part 1 of Geoff Dyer's master plan in the near future. Begnaud will discuss opportunities to use the plan moving forward, including developing large sites downtown and how development will impact Festival International.

Evangeline Hotel – Visit in May with LNEEDC board and various downtown stakeholders, included hearing LNEEDC board's vision for property moving forward, questions from stakeholders, and tour of facility. LNEEDC board has formed a real estate committee to advise on creation of an RFQ/RFP for property. Begnaud noted she represents DDA on that committee.

Flooding – Begnaud noted that following recent flooding event downtown, she started discussion with Mader Engineering to determine scope and costs of engineering report to determine solutions to flooding issues. Begnaud noted she anticipated a proposal coming to the board the following month. Discussions continued.

Fall Elections – Dates are held for downtown-centric forums for LCG Mayor-President and Council candidates. Begnaud noted that DLU intends to form a committee to create a platform for downtown priorities and to vet questions for forums.

Upcoming events – Lunch & Learns scheduled, Meet-Up in July scheduled.

Audit – July board meeting will include a presentation from Kolder, Slaven, LLC.

Upcoming Council Meeting Agenda Items – Main St. introductory ordinance for matching funds and final adoption of Old Federal Courthouse extension.

Reports/Updates

P.D Security Downtown – Sergeant Todd Green and Captain Dewitt Sheridan introduced themselves. Green noted that downtown district will be called the “entertainment district”, manned day-to-day by Green and Sgt. Brabham, and ideally in the future supported by 3-4 man squads per sergeant. Long-term goal is to extend day units to also include a night squad to cover bars on weekends and peak hours during the week. Green noted the addition of a 3rd officer during the work day from 4-8 p.m. on foot patrol around the courthouse. He further noted LPD met about lighting in the area between the courthouse and Vermilion parking garage. Additionally, he shared an update about updating a security camera in the Vermilion corridor. Matt inquired about security camera and suggested Green and Begnaud further discuss next steps to move the camera to a better position. Discussions continued.

Rezende inquired about plans to patrol the parcs. Green noted that an officer arrives downtown at 7:00 a.m. each morning to sweep parc. He furthered noted that increased patrols help to maintain a safe environment during the day. Rezende also noted increase in volume during dinnertime (between hours of 5-10 p.m.). Rezende additionally inquired about LPD officers being trained to enter the force. Green noted 8 individuals recently graduated from academy and there is potential some of these officers will likely work downtown (building Green and Brabham’s squads). Discussions continued.

Rezende inquired about update on precinct location. Begnaud noted that precinct location previously decided upon was no longer going to be the site of the precinct and outlined the needs of LPD. Rezende suggested DDA look for space downtown to house precinct. Begnaud inquired about budget to work within, and Capt. Sheridan noted discussions continue about an annual line item in budget for precinct space. Matt requested that Begnaud discuss current status and next steps with Deputy Chief Thomas. Discussions continued.

Begnaud further noted close communication with both sergeants, including discussions about lighting, parc ordinance, designated spots for Uber and Lyft, updates to nightlife patrol methods, and how the growth of residential downtown will perhaps change patrolling needs. She further noted speaking to other cities to learn how they manage nightlife.

Operations – Hebert gave an update on status of garnering quotes for projects that fall within categories of \$55k maintenance and operations budget for 2019 previously approved by board.

He further noted a quote for repainting entirety of streetscape elements. Begnaud stressed this is a project outside the scope of the \$55k line item and is a catalyst project. Matt requested that Hebert provide the entire process involved in a project of this scope to understand if this type of project can be handled by maintenance staff or is more specialized. Discussions continued.

Hebert provided an update on purchase of light pole hanging basket planters. Matt noted need for clarity of ownership vs. adoption and maintenance of planters when business owners contribute funding toward planters. Additionally, Hebert noted that estimates for pressuring washing streetscape as well as parcs and gum removal is in excess of \$32k. Being that designated line item for pressure washing is \$10k, Hebert suggested we create a 3-year rotation of pressure washing items to ensure all elements are regularly maintained. Discussions continued.

Matt inquired about pressure washing Jefferson St. underpass. Begnaud noted the conversation has stalled because the railroad is actually who needs to be communicated with on this issue. Discussions continued.

Keaty noted costs of larger maintenance and operations items are equal to that of hiring full-time maintenance employees. Rezende further added question remains of having full-time maintenance staff directly working for DDA. Hebert noted this continues to be a top-of-mind need, and Matt noted striking balance of DDA assisting LCG with maintenance without undertaking larger projects that LCG should be responsible for. Discussions continued.

Pecot inquired about DDA paying for PW staff. Begnaud responded that DDA pays the salary and benefits for a full-time PW staff member. Pecot noted developments use “self-help arrangement” and will further discuss with DDA staff.

Delcambre suggested DDA focuses on honing in on what the District’s tax base is contributing to LCG’s general fund to understand who is responsible for maintenance and are we contributing enough dollars to control our own maintenance. He further mentioned the difference between being a maintenance vs. development organization and noted that he expects DDA to advocate for Main St. development more than manage painting of poles. Discussions continued.

Walls noted the DDA board should take a deeper dive through a board retreat into structure of organization and appropriate budget allocation for staffing. Rezende concurred. Matt suggested plans for fall board retreat. Discussions continued.

Business Development – There were no business developments at this time.

Councilman Update – Conque noted ordinance up for final adoption to ban electric scooters from City until guidelines can be outlined. Discussions continued.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.