

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TAKEN AT A
REGULAR MEETING ON THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2018.

Those present: Pat Trahan, Bryant Poche, Lisa Thomas, Gus Rezende, Greg Walls, Miles Matt and Donald Broussard.

Those absent: None.

Staff present: Geoff Dyer, Jolene Harris, Hunter Hebert and Brett Mellington.

Others present: Carlee AlmLabar, Bruce Conque, Harry Weiss, Mike Delcambre and Brad Ridge/Precinct 5.

The meeting was called to order by Trahan.

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

Approvals

February Minutes – The February Minutes were presented for approval. Matt motioned to approve the February Minutes as presented, Poche seconded, all voted in favor.

January Financial Statements – The January Financials were presented for approval with Harris noting that the majority of the assessment funds had been received in January. Thomas motioned to approve the January Financial Statements as presented, Walls seconded, all voted in favor.

Cash Handling Policy – The “Cash Handling Policy” refers to the policies for all DDA expenses submitted by DDA employees for reimbursement through LCG, including cash and check reimbursements. Harris noted that she had been contacted by LCG’s accounting department regarding LCG’s “Cash Handling Policy” amended in October of 2017, and that DDA had never been informed of, or received such policy. It was noted that each agency could adopt their own policy, but absent that, was bound to the LCG policy. The issue arose when it was noted that some reimbursements that were sent to LCG for Dyer since October 2017 were not in conformity with their policy. The newly instated LCG reimbursement and petty cash policies affect small reimbursements such as meetings that the CEO or Director attend such as breakfast or lunch meetings. This does not fit into the practices which have been customary for DDA in the past. There were a few other instances noted which DDA practices were not consistent with LCG policies. Historically, DDA had not adopted its own policy. It was noted on the LCG policy which had been distributed with the DDA packet that various departments may need to have variations to the said policy. It was further noted that DDA was not bound to have the same policy as LCG. To remedy the situation, a DDA policy was developed by Dyer and Harris based on the LCG policy, but with amendments specifically to Section 3.9. The proposed amendments to the LCG policy were presented to the board for approval as the **DDA policy, and was** and included as part of the agenda packet. Walls motioned to approve the adoption of a DDA policy based on the LCG Cash Handling Policy but with the amendments to section 3.9 as submitted to the board, Poche seconded, all voted in favor.

Reports

DDA By-Laws – Thomas had completed the corrections as noted from the previous board meeting in a redlined version and one clean copy which had been emailed to all board members. Discussions followed. It was noted that Lafayette had been misspelled which was the only correction. Broussard motioned to approve the amended by-laws, Walls seconded, all voted in favor. It was noted that Harris would be contacting the City Council to see if an approval was needed on their end and report back to the board at the April meeting.

Financial Disclosure – Harris noted that the Financial Disclosures were due on May 15 and the link was in the agenda review. A reminder would be emailed closer to that timeframe for all board members.

Reports/Updates

Initiative Updates

Sidewalk Dining Ordinance – Dyer noted that there had been an information session where Alm-Labar came in and met with bar owners, restaurants, etc. to go over the new proposed dining ordinance which would allow for parklets to be built by restaurants and/or restaurant/bars instead of portable type parklets which businesses were currently required to bring everything in at night. The new proposed dining ordinance would also establish the sidewalk vendor committee which would be a downtown management committee to focus on sidewalk dining issues but was built into the ordinance to be able to deal with other issues outside of the dining ordinance and a tool to use in the future to manage downtown. Alm-Labar had collected feedback which was now in the hands of LCG attorney who was drafting up the next iteration based on the comments, etc.

Urban Retail Initiative – Bob Gibbs was scheduled for this month but he needed to move to another date. The Urban Retail Initiative was rescheduled for May 8-11 which would fall in line with LEDA's breakfast series with the Realtors. LEDA's breakfast event would focus on the component of training realtors to better sale the retail environment in downtowns and urban locations and would also be inviting folks outside of this group. LCG would be hosting a clinic where Gibbs would sit down with businesses/landowners downtown to learn how to have a more attractive retail environment. There would also be other meetings scheduled with more details to follow. Discussions followed.

Old Federal Courthouse – The RFQ for the old Federal Courthouse and the ULI report were both released by LCG, Dyer noted, and could be found on their website. The ULI Report backed up many of the downtown initiatives to include the old Federal Courthouse. Dyer further noted that there was a plan which was drawn up by Norris and Dyer previously which Dyer had emailed out to a few members in order to refresh the board on goals which were implemented in those plans that DDA had wanted to achieve with the original intent to be in the position to act as the master developer where DDA could potentially oversee that site be redeveloped and facilitate one or many builder investors to develop the site. Dyer noted that this was still the hope, but realistically might not be the case today. With DDA being in the position to be the master developer, there were potentially various connections of groups that were on the DDA Board that might be interested in going after that site and was unsure where that would position DDA. It also put DDA as an agency in a different spot in terms of being able to vet projects that do come forward. Dyer noted that there was no specific selection committee as far as he knew nor would DDA necessarily need to be on a selection committee but DDA would be looked upon as an advisor to the various proposals that would come in for the Federal Courthouse site. Discussions followed with the 2 options noted as 1) DDA could submit a proposal to be the developer and 2)

DDA could be available to vet the proposals of other parties. Suggestions by the board were to first define what type of role DDA wanted to play and then to put out a statement along with getting press time on the project to parallel with the city; to suggest for a DDA representative to be given a seat at the table that would be approving the submissions received for the RFQ. Broussard noted that DDA may need to put together a package to be a developer for the project with Dyer making note that at one time, this was the type of project that he was ready to take on as the Director of Design but the equation had changed where now DDA was more operational focused and marketing focused, the timing was not ideal at this time. Discussions continued. Dyer further noted that the other possibility was to make DDA available as an operational component of putting the deal together. Rezende suggested to meet with ULI and get them to submit a recommendation letter to take to Robideaux for approval which would emphasize that whoever the developers were that submit a bid would know prior that if they were to get approved, they would have to work hand in hand with DDA throughout the process of completion. Board agreed on the suggestion as long as it was drafted to be clear of DDA's role. Discussions continued. It was noted that if DDA were asked for that voice at the table with the city, the board needed to be unified on the mandate of having a residential component and to go a step further to articulate what DDA wanted their involvement to be. It was agreed to organize a smaller meeting to include Harry Weiss, Blake Douet, Miles Matt, and Greg Walls to compose a letter to be given to the city. It was suggested that all members read the RFQ and ULI report.

1st Floor Parking Garage – Dyer continued to work on the potential for the first floor parking garage with Abell + Crozier Architects who had drawn up some schematic plans; Dyer currently had the plans. On the right side of the first floor garage would potentially be precinct five and Lowell was working on getting those numbers together for the budget. In the plans there was also a small component for a downtown store front to have a presence on the street and where the Ambassador program could work out of that space, but the bigger question was if a retail space were created, how would it be utilized? Dyer further noted that the new buzz was doing an Urban Food Court much like the Saint Roch Market hall concept in New Orleans and being seen in other cities as well. These food courts had become huge money makers and Dyer would be exploring further as a possibility of being a component of the garage or in the old Federal Courthouse site.

Downtown Playground – Dyer noted he had met with architect Michael Cullen on the playground which was moving forward and should have something from him soon. Dyer had also discussed with the library on doing a parking project with Iberia Bank to liberate many of the surface parking spaces currently used by Iberia. The location would be the surface parking lot next to the library and could be a 6 story garage which would give the library 150 spaces as well as a security guard that would oversee the space for Iberia employees as well as the library.

Downtown Alive! – DDA had sponsored DTA! for the fall season of 2017 and had sponsored DTA! both seasons every year up until 2013. Dyer noted that DLU had gone out on a sponsorship drive but had not quite obtained what was needed for the 2018 season and needed to ask that DDA sponsor for the spring season of 2018 in the amount of \$7,500. Discussions followed. Rezende noted having served on the DLU board, he was in favor of the \$7,500 but also wanted other DDA Board members to know that without DTA! there would not be a DLU which was an important component of the marketing for downtown and it was felt that DDA should play a role in supporting DTA! and the avenue where staff could come when funds were needed to meet other goals. Matt motioned that DDA fund up to \$7,500 to be a major sponsor each DTA! season and to make that a permanent item to be considered in the budget annually,

Thomas seconded, Wells amended the motion to state that DDA would pay \$7,500 per season, Poche seconded the amendment, all voted in favor of the amendment and all voted in favor of the original motion. It was further noted for DDA to use the opportunity to speak at the DTA!'s as well as on the various media outlets in order to keep the public up to date on the various projects in which DDA was involved with.

Ambassador Program – Dyer noted that Hebert had spent the last week going over details to propose to the DDA Board a 16 week pilot Ambassador Program. Hunter noted that the Ambassadors would be DDA's face in the street to be friendly and make people feel safe in the downtown area. In looking at some of the best practices, there was a group called Block by Block where many communities hired them to run their program. One of the main characteristics in hiring new ambassadors was a good personality. Hunter also looked into the type of phones that were used, with one having walkie talkie capabilities where they could radio in to each other as well as call precinct 5 if needed. As for scheduling, would schedule them on peak hours for restaurants and bars and would divide into two shifts with Monday and Tuesday off since those were the slowest days of the week. Two would be scheduled per shift for Wednesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the lunch crowd and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. for the dinner crowd; special events would stretch the hours as needed; Saturdays would be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for family activities and 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. for the evening shifts and Sunday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the breakfast and church crowd. Discussions followed. Hunter further noted that the pilot program would be a 16 week program at \$1k per week for personnel and \$350 per month for the phones. Dyer noted that LCVC had a grant program that could not pay for personnel but could fund the hard costs such as the uniform shirts, walkie talkies, etc. and would also be looking for other funding sources for the future but this needed to get off the ground before those things could be determined. It was further noted the type of people that would probably be a good fit were UL students from Lafayette, retired folks, and entrepreneurs that had flexible schedules. Discussions continued. Dyer noted that in addition to the \$57k which would be allocated to the police department, the 16 week pilot Ambassador Program needed an approval for up to \$25k subject to a complete operations manual which would answer the various questions and concerns brought up by the board. Discussions continued. Thomas motioned to approve up to a \$25k budget, subject to a complete operational manual to the satisfaction of the board, for a 16 week pilot Ambassador Program, Matt seconded, all voted in favor.

Other items noted by Dyer was that the Rock 'n Bowl continued to move forward with an anticipated opening date of sometime in April or May.

Operations Brief – Hunter noted that Captain Ridge was sending him crime reports for the downtown and he would be filling the board in on a monthly basis. Discussions followed.

Business Development – There were no reports at this time.

Other Business – Trahan congratulated Matt who was reappointed by the City Council to serve a 3 year term on the DDA Board; congrats to Broussard who was appointed Chairman of the Board for One Acadiana; and Central Pizza would be opening soon.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.