

**Downtown Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
July 24, 2024**

**Present**

Michael Corbin  
Mario Chavez  
Tim Huck  
Kathy Malone  
Terry Moore - Arrived 3:39

**Absent**

Drayden Dunn  
Chelette Holden  
Kyle Southard

**Staff**

Janie Landry  
Stacie Leng  
Lauren Davidson  
Lorenzo Lee

**Others Present**

Lt. David Heaser  
Councilwoman Tabatha Taylor  
Councilman Gary Brooks  
Shelly Ragle  
Kevin Goodwin  
Tom Oster  
John Settle

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 pm by Chair Michael Corbin. A quorum was not present until Terry Moore arrived at 3:39 pm.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Drayden Dunn, Chelette Holden and Kyle Southard were absent.

**III. AMEND AGENDA**

The agenda was not amended.

**IV. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS**

Michael Corbin introduced the newest DDA board member, Mario Chavez.

Shelly Ragle, SPAR Director, made a presentation regarding the Humor and Harmony Festival. Ms. Ragle thanked all the individuals who helped her organize this festival. The event is similar to how the city would approach a bowl game or Mardi Gras. Significant emphasis will be put on cleaning up downtown in preparation for the festival. An area behind the casinos will be set aside for the ride sharing services. SporTran will run circulators through downtown, Bossier, and the casinos, and the buses will continue for an hour after the doors close at the events. There will also be a downtown shuttle. Commerce, Crockett and Milam Streets will be closed to traffic. Clyde Fant Parkway will remain open.

The casino hotels are sold out. The city has encouraged Sci-Port and the Aquarium to remain open for visitors. Kids events will take place at Festival Plaza. The temporary dome will hold 3,000 people, and the events at Municipal will be simulcast at the dome. The Convention Center will host a car show.

Ms. Ragle stated the city is prepared for the festival. She discussed the permitting process for the vendors; all vendors must be registered with the city and be on the approved vendor list. The vendors inside the festival site must also be approved by G-Unit. DDA approves all sidewalk vendors, but those vendors must still be licensed by the city.

Mr. Corbin thanked Ms. Ragle, and all involved in the planning process. He asked if the board could suspend the permitting process for the street vendors for the weekend and if doing so would make things easier. Ms. Ragle said not regulating vendors would cause interference with other businesses and restaurants downtown. She also said the city is learning from this event how to streamline the permitting and enforcement process going forward. There was so many different types of permits required for this festival.

Ms. Landry stated that the sidewalk permit ordinance requires vendors to have a cart, not a pop-up tent and meet certain other requirements.

Mario Chavez asked if there is a predetermined allocation for the number of possible spaces for vendors and whether there is a digital map with locations. He also inquired as to how the city would quantify how many licenses to give out of there is no predetermined amount of designated space.

Mrs. Landry stated that there is a map showing locations for sidewalk vendors. Currently, there are no permitted sidewalk vendors. The ordinance mandates certain requirements including the restrictions on how many feet vendors have to be from brick-and-mortar restaurants and from other vendors, etc.

Mr. Chavez asked if someone should be tasked with marking spaces on the street and pre-allocating spaces. Ms. Landry said the ordinance dictates how many vendors are allowed per block and the distance requirement to be between each. She added that she has only had a few calls relative to vendors and those individuals do not have the approved carts. She referenced other requirements of the ordinance.

Ms. Ragle also explained that the city is not deviating from any of the requirements necessary to get on the city's approved vendor list. The DDA only permits sidewalk vendors. The city permits food trucks. There will be several pop-up shops on Commerce Street.

John Settle asked about the event being held by the African American Chamber of Commerce in the 600 block of Texas Street. Michael Corbin said he would provide Chamber contact information to Mr. Settle.

Ms. Ragle described the security plans for the event and stated the emergency operations center will be tied into the Real Time Crime Center for monitoring and set up downtown beginning at 4:00 pm on Thursday and staffed until the event is over on Monday. The EOC will be staffed by police, fire, SPAR, and the city to ensure that decisions can be made immediately. The police department has engaged everything available to them including state police, drones, cameras, intelligence, social media. The Center will have over 100 cameras monitoring the festival.

Mr. Corbin suggested that the DDA permit approvals close at Noon on the Friday before the festival. He asked if the DDA is permitting for Commerce Street also. Commerce Street is considered the festival site, and those permits will be handled by H&H and the city. DDA will be permitting all areas except the festival site.

Ms. Ragle stated G Unit is paying for everything, but the city is handling some things deemed to be its responsibility. All city departments and all involved, including DDA, have stepped up efforts to ensure the city and downtown looks as good as possible.

Mr. Chavez asked if the shuttle buses are city buses and whether they have cameras. Ms. Ragle stated the shuttles are city buses and do have on-board cameras. Routes have not been finalized, but it's anticipated the buses will run every 15 minutes from a centralized location. Maps and route colors will be used

Ms. Landry asked Ms. Ragle to speak briefly on proposed cleanup efforts during the festival. Ms. Ragle said that the festival will be cleaned up just like any other large event in the city. There are several teams assigned to each specific part of the festival. Clean up crews will come in early every morning. DDA's streetscape crew will assist as needed and provide their usual services. The parking lots and garages will also need to be maintained and cleaned but this responsibility will fall to the individual owners.

Profit from the festival will benefit Jackson's non-profit foundation - G Unity. Ms. Landry thanked Ms. Ragle for informing the board on all that has been done to ensure the success of this event.

V. **PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items).**

There were no public comments.

VI. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **Minutes**

Mr. Corbin asked for approval of the June 26, 2024, meeting minutes.

**A motion was made by Kathy Malone to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2024, meeting as presented. Terry Moore seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

B. **June 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement**

Ms. Landry reviewed the June 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement. Property tax revenue is more than the amount budgeted. Contracts are paid to date. Revenue is as expected for halfway through the year, and expenses are in line also. There were several event sponsorships from June that the board approved. Recruiting expense is reflected under the Emerging Opportunities line item. Terry Moore asked about the varied interest rate on the CD and noted that the interest rate would be lower on renewal. Stacie Leng commented that it was a 12-month CD that will pay out in September.

**A motion was made by Terry Moore to approve the June 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. Mario Chavez seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

V. **REPORTS**

A. **Director's Report**

Ms. Landry reported that tasks the board previously inquired about are being worked on and several are completed.

- Marketing Material: Drayden Dunn asked for a marketing plan to assist businesses downtown in conjunction with the H&H festival. The marketing plan has been finalized. (Copy in board books.)
- A request was made to reach out to the Convention & Tourist Bureau. Ms. Landry spoke with Stacy Brown, who agreed to do a match on ads. The Louisiana Municipal Association meeting is also the same weekend as H&H, and Ms. Brown has offered to allow DDA to display collateral material.
- Marketing efforts are under way. The Remington Garage has allowed DDA to display “welcome to downtown Shreveport” signage on the visible fence around the property. The next Artwalk will also be in that area.
- DDA is contacting downtown restaurants and businesses to inform them about event opportunities related to the H&H festival if they would like to tie into the events.
- Drayden Dunn had requested that a handout directory be created. Using the DDA’s *Find It All Downtown* brand, a handout has been created to include restaurants, shopping, parking information and more.
- Videos on how to use ParkMobile have also been created and will be posted on the DDA website.
- DDA has been included in the festival planning process. The downtown parking map has been updated. Some parking lots may open for the festival.
- It was requested that loading zone spaces be reviewed in an effort to create “to-go” spaces for restaurants. Some restaurants already have space. Mr. Lee presented a Google Earth map

indicating restaurants and loading zones locations, and where the zones need to be added. Mr. Corbin said he originally asked if there were loading zones still located in front of vacant building that are generating no revenue that perhaps could be changed to accommodate restaurants. He suggested staff encourage restaurants to put a link to the ParkMobile app on their websites and signage.

Terry Moore asked if there will be adequate handicap parking spaces for the H&H festival. Mr. Corbin said that Commerce is usually used for handicap parking during festivals but is not available for this festival.

Ms. Landry will visit with Ms. Ragle about the handicap parking issue to be sure it has been addressed and also with Councilman Brooks relative to the to-go spaces for restaurants.

Councilman Brooks said there will be several spaces dedicated in front of the police substation for patrol cars. If the city gives a to-go space to one restaurant, all restaurants should have that opportunity also. He is uncertain if and how this idea would work.

Mr. Corbin said the original request came from the new restaurant at Artspace who requested enforceable short-term parking in front of the building. The request was unreasonable, and that is how the idea of identifying loading zones that are no longer needed came about. Ms. Landry also made Ono's aware of the available space in the reserved FMC lot.

1. Volunteered to send out Mayor's letter for downtown property owners meeting.  
Vacant property ordinance.  
Staff notified downtown property owners via emails and postcards.  
Currently assembling database of property owners' emails/contact information. Will maintain/update.
2. Solution for Tree Grate Issue  
Purchased 4 box planters and will plant (similar to Adopt A Pot).  
Ono's Hawaiian Grill – New restaurant at Artspace would not open until the issue relative to the 4 missing tree grates in front of the building was resolved. The box planters are a temporary solution until trees are planted. The box planters were approved by Public Works. This may be a reasonable solution for missing or broken tree grates where there are no trees in downtown.
3. Downtown Security Cameras and Real Time Crime Center  
DDA donation of 4 cameras (\$12,203) to SPD.  
City Council approved Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with SPD 2-27-24.  
Sgt. Mike Jones liaison for this project now.  
JETT Business Systems – vendor.  
Cameras are installed. Need to resolve power issue for two locations.  
SPD – Real Time Crime Center requested access to DDA external cameras and camera at parking window. SPD is asking downtown businesses to allow access to help with response times and investigations.
4. Compiling database of all downtown businesses.  
Will add to website when completed.

5. New website design completed.  
Staff reviewing information before launch.
6. Working with city planning committee on H&H Festival.  
Updated parking map and contact information.  
Coordinating parking and cleanup with city as requested.  
Serving as liaison between city and parking lot owners to inform of opportunities/challenges.
7. Discussing opportunities to partner with Visit Shreveport Bossier (Convention & Tourist Bureau) for marketing coop for downtown businesses for H&H festival and future events.  
Will inform downtown restaurants/retailers, etc. of festival opportunities.  
Marketing coop will help promote participating downtown businesses/restaurants/retailers/clubs.
8. Artwalk 2024  
1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday each month April – December (except October due to Revel)  
New concept becoming popular. Area – more compact.  
Showcasing office market through event now. More artists/vendors participating.  
New component – Trudeau Tells - very popular. Getting restaurants to remain open and participate. July Artwalk – vendors / restaurants had good sales.  
Next Artwalk – August 14<sup>th</sup>; Remington Hotel, Stray Cats, Remington Music Garage.
9. DDA 25-Year Tax Renewal  
Current authorization period expires 12/31/27  
Will work with City Administration/DDA Legal Counsel to determine best ballot date.  
Property tax paid only by downtown property owners but voted on city-wide. Will be renewal; not new tax.  
Plans ongoing for development of plan of action to engage property owners/business owners.
10. Performed assessment of streetlights out downtown – 58 lights out  
Texas – 18; Milam – 4; Travis – 10; Caddo – 4; Spring – 11; Fannin – 3; Marshall – 4; Edwards – 4  
41 lights have been replaced.  
Traffic Engineering will continue replacing lights. A few have power issues. Ongoing.
11. Lunch On Us – August & September  
Commitments from 14 restaurants as of this date. Kickoff – August 7th
12. Shop On Us – Mid-October, November & December  
Event will be similar to Lunch On Us to promote downtown retail.
13. Artspace – 708 Texas  
SRAC requesting needed repairs at 708 Texas. Greg Solomon, GC, repairing broken tile at entrance of new Ono's restaurant. Streetscape will help clean tile and bricks to prepare for opening. Sione Maumalanga, owner, pleased with support from DDA.  
Recent preview of food at Artspace reception. Excellent.  
Soft opening 1<sup>st</sup> of August.

13. Adopt A Pot  
All planters installed.  
Two need sponsors.  
Feedback very positive.
14. Shreveport Common banners installed.  
DDA Streetscape Supervisor assisted.
15. Marketing – Being handled in house.  
New themes: *Find It Downtown*  
*Block By Block* – Will launch when business database is completed.  
Designed banners, marketing materials, website, and wayfinding signage to brand.
16. Wayfinding signage  
Potential design.  
Verifying locations/anchors/attractions, etc. for signs.  
Pricing metal signs. City may provide few needed sign poles.
17. G-Unit Film & Television  
Purchasing long-time vacant downtown properties. Jackson has spent \$2,020,000 to date to acquire several long-time downtown vacant properties/parcels.
  - 218 Texas Street (purchased 5/31/24 for \$275,000)
  - 205 Texas Street (purchased 5/31/24 for \$345,000)
  - Lots 1-13 & ½ of abandoned alley – 301 Spring (purchased 6/13/24 for \$1,020,000);
  - 115 Texas, 119 Texas, 125 Texas, and 129 Texas (purchased 6/13/24 for \$281,250);
  - 611 Texas (purchased 6/28/24 for \$250,000);
  - 401 Spring (purchased 6/15/24 for \$150,000)
  - 308-310 Commerce (purchased 6/14/24 for \$76,872)Looking at additional properties.

## **B. Parking Report**

Lorenzo Lee reported that overall numbers were down for the month; about 25% from last month. There were five boots for the month; average boot fee was \$183.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Search Committee – Executive Directors Position**

Mr. Corbin stated that timeline for applicants to express interest has closed. The search committee will meet Friday, 7/16, at 10:00 am to hear a presentation from the search firm on the number of applicants, the quality of the applicant pool, and next steps. Once the committee has direction on the next steps and determines which candidates they want to hear about, each of those candidates will be asked to submit answers to a questionnaire and a video. He hopes to have a short list of candidates to bring to the board by the end of August.

### **B. Downtown Security and Homeless: Lt. David Heaser (SPD Downtown)**

Mr. Heaser was in attendance but had to leave the meeting early. There was brief discussion regarding the homeless issue and the H&H festival. Mr. Corbin referenced a man who has made a homestead just a block from the Strand. He said that on his way to Rhino Coffee, he was stopped by someone asking for money, and while he was at the meeting, a person came in and went table to table asking for money. Walking back to his office, a third person approached him requesting money. He hopes that the substation downtown will help with these problems. It has to be a priority of the board to continue to

have conversations with the city and SPD about the homeless issue.

Ms. Landry reported recent news accounts that near The Grove on Spring Street, a woman was backing out of a parking space, and a homeless person attempted to hijack her car. She started honking her horn and calling for help and was stabbed in the arm. This creates fear for people visiting downtown.

### **C. Vacant Property Ordinance**

Mr. Corbin does applaud the Mayor and council for doing the outreach and hearing from constituents and he hopes they can amend or pass the ordinance in the near future. Ms. Landry said that she has heard from about a dozen real estate agents or property owners regarding the ordinance. The main concern is the 90-day time frame and the belief that it may not be long enough.

Kathy Malone stated that she hopes there is some negotiation relative to the time frame and gave the example that the property owner she works for has spent three years trying to get his building improved. She said the renovation has been hampered by the cost of construction and delay in receiving historic tax credits. She agrees with the point of the ordinance, but wondered if it would be possible to have art painted/installed on the boarded-up areas while waiting for renovation. She commented that it is not always feasible to install glass immediately.

Mr. Corbin commented that even if plywood was refreshed or painted it would make a huge difference. The meeting to discuss the ordinance will be held 7/25 at Government Plaza.

### **D. Security Cameras**

No discussion.

### **E. Wayfinding Signage**

Previously discussed.

### **F. Lunchtime Free Parking Concept**

No discussion.

### **G. Humor and Harmony Event – Security, Parking, Cleaning, Marketing**

Previously discussed.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. DDA Millage Adjustment**

Mr. Corbin said DDA has received the assessment estimate for the DDA property tax for collections for this year which is a reassessment year. As expected, the assessed value has decreased due to vacant buildings and decreased occupancy rates. The board can request that the millage be adjusted to flatten the difference. City Council has to approve DDA's proposed millage rate.

Ms. Landry has spoken with both the Caddo and Bossier Assessors regarding the expected revenue. Charlie Henington believes the decrease is approximately 3% and is related to a reduction in personal property. A large firm is moving out of Louisiana Tower due to the ongoing issues with the building. To keep the 2025 revenue the same as 2024, the millage rate would need to be increased from 9.04 to 9.37 mils.

DDA will need to notify the Administration on whether to keep the millage rate at the current rate or to increase. Mr. Chavez asked if an increase would have to be voted on by the public. Ms. Landry responded that the increase in the millage rate would only require Council approval, not a public vote.

Mr. Corbin explained that once the assessments come out for the year, the council can adjust the millage rates to normalize collections no matter the assessment value. This is a standard procedure, and is a two-read vote. The DDA millage increase would only impact property owners in the Downtown Development District.

Mr. Chavez said that the increased rate would increase property taxes for those in the district. He would like to know what the average rate is in other local markets of the same size as Shreveport. Ms. Landry stated that the rates are close to the same. Mr. Chavez would like to see the number for Baton Rouge and Longview.

Mr. Corbin asked the board members if they wanted to take the hit in revenue, make cuts and live within our means and send a message to downtown property owners that DDA is not raising taxes. Mr. Chavez said he would second that if it was a motion. Mr. Corbin said there was more discussion needed.

Ms. Landry asked Councilman Brooks about the timeframe for approval from council. Councilman Brooks indicated he would have to find out.

Mr. Corbin asked Ms. Landry to get the information requested and postpone the vote, perhaps have a quick special meeting if necessary.

Mr. Moore brought up the problems at Louisiana Tower and the maintenance problems at the building. He said wait time for an elevator is about 15 minutes, and the escalators do not work. This is why businesses are moving out of that building. The parking garage gates do not work, and people cannot get out of the garage at times. The city or DDA needs to have a conversation with the owners.

Kathy Malone asked if the 3% decrease was on the property taxes. Ms. Landry said the 3% decrease is due to a decrease in the personal property value. Ms. Malone said the board is looking at a \$21,000 reduction in revenue if the proposed millage rate is not endorsed. Mr. Chavez said that at his small building, a tax increase would not make that much difference, but the increase at larger buildings, that are already struggling, would cause even more problems.

Mr. Corbin asked Ms. Landry to gather the requested information and email the board and appropriate action can be discussed.

#### **B. Resolution #1 of 2024: Vacant Property Ordinance**

Mr. Corbin said the resolution was in support of the vacant property ordinance. Ms. Landry said the resolution is in support of an ordinance, not necessarily the draft as currently written. In 2020, the board approved a resolution in support of the ordinance, and she thought it would be appropriate to have a more current version. Mr. Corbin agreed that it was a good idea to let Council, and the Mayor know that DDA is on board with the ordinance. Ms. Malone pointed out that it does say “the proposed” in the wording of the resolution. The board decided to reword the ordinance to say “a proposed” ordinance.

**Terry Moore made a motion to approve Resolution Number 1 of 2024 in supporting the vacant property ordinance with the wording change. Kathy Malone seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Terry Moore said that the Humor & Harmony Festival has the city buzzing like never before. Groups are now volunteering to clean downtown. The city really has a chance to deliver. He thanked everyone for their help.



Mr. Chavez gave his opinion that someone from the parking team should be assigned to go out and measure to predetermine the number of possible vendors for the festival. Ms. Landry said staff can determine how many vendors can be accommodated based on the stipulations in the ordinance.

Mr. Chavez would like a map with space numbers and for a number to be applied to each vendor that applies for a permit. Mr. Corbin said that DDA may need to revisit some of the rules perhaps to allow food trucks to be positioned closer to one another. Ms. Landry responded that the City permits the food trucks; DDA is only in charge of sidewalk vendors. Mr. Corbin said the debrief after the festival is over will be a good time to see if ordinances need to be adjusted.

**X. ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

There were no announcements.

**XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)**

There were no public comments on non-agenda items.

**XII. ADJOURN**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:46 pm.

---

Michael Corbin, Chair