

**Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
August 28, 2024**

Present

Michael Corbin
Drayden Dunn
Chelette Holden
Kathy Malone
Terry Moore

Absent

Mario Chavez
Kyle Southard

Staff

Janie Landry
Stacie Leng
Lauren Davidson
Lorenzo Lee
Peggy Hellyer

Others Present

Lt. David Heaser

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 pm by Chair Michael Corbin. A quorum was present.

11. ROLL CALL

Mario Chavez and Kyle Southard were absent.

III. AMEND AGENDA

The agenda was amended to add two items under new business: 1) Waiver of 180-day demolition delay for 161 Christian Street and 2) Formation of DDA Budget Committee

IV. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS

Gregory Kallenberg of PrizeFest introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the event. 25% of the Film Prize Jr. entries were from New Orleans this year. 1,000 kids participated. At the Startup prize, 23 different states were represented. PrizeFest will return to a full week of events this year.

October 16th: Food Prize and a local shaker competition.

October 17: Film Prize kick offs. A red-carpet event will be held on Texas Street. Comedy Prize opens at the Remington Garage. More comedians performing this year.

October 18: Film Prize continues, and Music Prize opens.

October 19: Film Prize University, Film Prize concludes, Battle of the Golden Fork and afterparty.

Mr. Kallenberg asked for DDA's financial support again this year; appreciates past support. It is a huge festival and draws visitors from all over the country. He believes it has great synergy with the Humor & Harmony Festival.

Ms. Landry thanked Mr. Kallenberg for his efforts on behalf of downtown and the event he has created over the years. Mr. Kallenberg said that he loves having the events in downtown.

Drayden Dunn asked about the logistics on street closures and asked that the information be shown on the web. Mr. Kallenberg agreed. Mr. Corbin said that the way PrizeFest is laid out, there will be more foot traffic than there was with Humor & Harmony.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items)

There were no public comments.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes

Mr. Corbin asked for approval of the July 24, 2024, meeting minutes. Ms. Landry reported that Mario

Chavez' name was inadvertently not included in the board members in attendance at the meeting.

A motion was made by Terry Moore to approve the minutes of the July 24, 2024, meeting as amended. Michael Corbin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

July 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement

Ms. Landry reviewed the July 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement. Nothing is out of the ordinary this month. A small amount of property tax revenue was received. The city is current with both Parking and Streetscape contracts through August. Downtown beautification will be ongoing, with Lighting, banners and more planters coming, and a few trees need to be replaced.

Michael Corbin asked if DDA needs a water container for one of the trucks. Ms. Landry said it definitely can be considered.

Expenses are in line as anticipated. Accounting - \$23k for the audit was paid in August. Marketing: making great strides in marketing, some of the expense shown in this line item was for 2023 and will be backed out. The Town Square Media contract was cancelled. Security grant: There is \$18k earmarked for security, but that amount may not be needed. Events sponsorship - \$5k is remaining in that line item. The recruiting expense for the Executive Director position is being paid from the line-item Emerging Opportunities.

Drayden Dunn inquired about the funds in the security line item and said that perhaps some of the money could be used to add additional cameras. Lt. Heiser said SPD is requesting access to cameras in businesses throughout downtown which will increase coverage and be tied into the Crime Center.

Kathy Malone asked the amount of sponsorship DDA gave Film Prize for last year. The amount sponsored last year was \$7500.

Terry Moore asked about the dividends that were received. Ms. Landry reported that Principal pays dividends from a previous retirement fund.

Michael Corbin asked about the expense in the Artspace line item. Ms. Landry said the expense was for the tile work at the doors which had to be repaired before Ono's could open.

A motion was made by Kathy Malone to approve the July 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. Drayden Dunn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VII. REPORTS

Michael Corbin briefly comment on the situation with Regions Tower's nonpayment of their Swepeco bill. He said the issues has been resolved, but added that the issue was not good news for downtown. He is hopeful it will not happen again.

Drayden Dunn asked who owns the property. Mr. Corbin reported the owner is a company located in California. He also said it appears that they bought declining properties in the past, on a gamble perhaps, which may be causing the current financial issues. He stated that the building ownership group has not communicated well concerning the problems, and he believes the building may be on the market soon.

Ms. Landry said that Regions does have positive cash flow, and the situation is similar to the Standard in that ownership is using profit from the building for other properties.

Terry Moore said some tenants are already discussing relocation and that DDA needs to promote downtown and make sure people stay downtown. He has heard there is a local group that is interested in purchasing Regions.

Mr. Corbin said as things play out Swepeco will know if payment to vendors remains an issue.

A. Director's Report

1. **Sending Surveys for Downtown Businesses**
Surveys are being sent to downtown businesses to get feedback regarding the H&H festival & how their business was affected.
Street closures & more notice of events needed - frequent comments from surveys received.
2. **Box Planters Installed in Front of Artspace & FMC Property on Texas**
DDA purchased, installed and completed plantings for 4 box planters in front of Artspace, Ono's, and FMC property on Texas Street. Solved open tree grate problem that was preventing Ono's from being able to open. Can be used in other areas where trees have been removed leaving open grates.
3. **\$25,000 in Parking Enterprise Fund Dedicated by City for New Parking Meters**
Approximately 50 meters can be purchased. CAO Tom Dark has said the city will earmark the same amount for 2025. DDA will use those funds to upgrade existing meters for credit/debit card capability.
4. **New DDA website**
Up and running now. More user-friendly, updated look, more information. Getting good feedback/ increased visits.
5. **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 project now. JETT Business Systems – vendor. Cameras are installed. Need to resolve power issue for two locations. SPD - Real Time Crime Center - DDA cameras connected now.
6. **H&H Festival**
Assisted with clean up during event. Surveying businesses to gauge economic impact. Street closures and not enough lead time for notice of events were problems. Staff made personal visits to downtown businesses to determine impact on their businesses. Increase in visitors, especially in later night and early morning. Economic impact numbers still coming in. New G-unit business in Red River District has already increased visitors to area. Digital aspect: DDA saw a 103% increase in website visitors; viewing information on H&H, parking, and downtown information. Our research shows searches for downtown Shreveport, 50 cent in Shreveport – significant increase. Some increased by more than 300%. Staff made multiple on-camera interviews with all three stations. Appeared on KTBS - Rick Rowe's early morning show.
7. **Partnered with Visit Shreveport Bossier (Tourist Bureau) to Market Downtown Businesses during H&H festival.** Visit Shreveport will reimburse DDA for ½ of the cost. (\$2,657.12 - total \$4314.25). Good feedback from businesses; excellent exposure for downtown.

8. Artwalk 2024 - cancelled for August.
Will return in November in 700 block of Texas Street.
1st 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. August Artwalk - vendors / restaurants had good sales. Next Artwalk- September 4th, Agora Borealis, Vintage Design, others - Lake Street
9. DDA25-YearTax Renewal
Current authorization period expires 12/31/27
Will work with City Administration & DDA Legal Counsel to determine best date to be ballot. Property tax paid only by downtown property owners but voted on city-wide.
Will be a renewal; not new tax. Plans ongoing for development of plan of action to engage property owners/business owners. Getting good feedback.
10. Lunch On Us -August & September
Continues to be very successful program. Coupons usually given out within a few minutes.
8/27/24 - 40 people in line waiting when staff arrived. Continues through September.
11. Performed assessment of streetlights that are out downtown - 58 lights out
Texas-18; Milam-4; Travis- JO; 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.
12. Shop On Us - Mid-October, November & December
Event will be similar to Lunch On Us to promote downtown retail.
13. Artspace - 708 Texas
Repairs made at Artspace. Ono's Restaurant- getting good reviews.
14. Adopt-A-Pot
All planters are out. Two remaining for sponsors. Positive feedback. Requests for additional planters received. FMC. Entering our plantings in photo contest sponsored by Earth Planters.
15. Shreveport Common Banners Installed
DDA Streetscape Supervisor assisted.
16. Marketing - Being handled in-house.
New themes: Find It Downtown. Block By Block - Launching in September. Will make personal visits to businesses. Face to face with each block and prior to tax renewal.
Designed banners, marketing materials, website, and wayfinding signage to brand.
Several new programs in design stages. Upcoming meeting with Visit Shreveport to discuss partnerships for these ideas.
17. Wayfinding signage
Design completed. Inventory of signage completed. Kirk Black and Stacie Leng.
Getting quotes for production of signs. Have received 2 quotes.
18. G-Unit Film & Television -purchasing long-time vacant downtown properties. In discussion

to take the Dees parking lot with DSDC. 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 (purchase 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)

Wants to purchase DSDC's former Dees parking lot. Needs parking for properties acquired on Texas Street. Looking at additional properties.

19. Louisiana Tower - Maintenance Issues

New chillers installed. Will replace chillers on roof soon. According to bldg. mgt. Issue with parking gate resolved. Phase 1 of elevator work - freight & 1 high rise. (Terry Moore commented that none of this has been done. Gates don't work. Lack of communication.)

Occupancy - 50%. Phase 2 - high rise elevator. Upgraded lights in garage. Made security enhancements. Garage gate - kinks worked out of high-tech system

20. Submitted Grant Request - Community Foundation "Making it Downtown".

Will know in October. In partnership with Shreveport common.

Requested \$100,000 for new business growth including facade grants, special equipment Purchases, and signage.

21. Ongoing project - assembling database of property owners' and businesses - emails/contact information. Will maintain/update.

22. Multiple On Camera Interviews

Good exposure during H&H festival.

KTBS - Rick Rowe. KSLA & KTAL

23. Will Hold Educational Workshops & Provide Access to Marketing Tools & Resources for Downtown Businesses

Preparing two programs designed to support downtown businesses by providing assistance with marketing education, resources, and services to help them grow and thrive downtown. Educational workshops - in-person and virtual workshops. One-on-one consultations Access to marketing tools and resources. Networking opportunities. Surveying businesses to determine if they favor re-activation of Retail Merchants in cooperation with DSU. It fell by the wayside, but the merchants are interested.

Ms. Landry has been asking property owners how DDA can assist. Panhandling, crime, etc.

Lauren Davidson gave a marketing update:

The business survey results for Humor & Harmony weekend showed positive results for downtown. She reported that the predicted 30,000 attendees is probably the correct figure. There was a 103% increase in visitors to the DDA website. The pages viewed were on the festival itself, parking, and general downtown information. Searches for downtown Shreveport, 50 Cent in Shreveport and hotels in Shreveport saw a significant increase leading up to the weekend.

Data from the business survey being sent out includes the following comments that could assist during the next H&H festival planning:

- Better knowledge of street closures
- Detailed itinerary of festival events well ahead of time so businesses can plan accordingly
- The cleaning initiative was well appreciated as was the security.
- Plan the next festival for the fall or spring so more people can explore downtown.

Chelette Holden reported that Ms. Landry's interview was posted on 50's personal page.

Michael Corbin asked for a list of businesses that have responded to the survey.

Drayden Dunn stated there needs to be a hub for parking information and street closures on the webpages because that information was difficult to obtain.

Ms. Holden said that lots of effort went into keeping downtown clean and safe. There was no violent crime reported downtown during the event. She is very pleased with the data that was obtained about the event and stated that the data should be publicized.

Mr. Dunn said that it is a great opportunity going forward to involve both chambers & marketing partnerships.

Ms. Landry said the data DDA is compiling will be shared. She complimented the Streetscape crew for the work done keeping downtown clean throughout the event.

Mr. Moore said the data might help persuade Bossier City to allow a trolley from Bossier next time.

Drayden Dunn suggested making a video and sharing it with the business owners and allowing them to post it. Ms. Davidson said that the Block-by-Block initiative currently underway will do that.

B. Parking Report

Lorenzo Lee reported that ticket revenue is up from June, but down from the last several years. He is trying to determine why the decrease and said the drop does not appear to be parking itself. There were two vehicles booted in July for a total of \$315.00.

Ms. Landry reported she was recently made aware that the State of Louisiana has a collection agency through the Department of Revenue. She contacted the City Attorney's office to confirm that ShrevePark, through DDA, can use a collection service to collect past due tickets before those tickets reach the 3-year Statute of Limitations date. She suggested that DDA could offer a one-time amnesty on late fees on those tickets before beginning the more aggressive collection efforts.

Mr. Lee displayed two maps related to downtown meters. The first map highlighted the 400 – 600 blocks of Texas & Travis Streets, from Edwards to Louisiana. This area contains new, smart meters, but the smart features are not currently turned on. It is more economical to turn these features on than to upgrade the meters. The vendor offers a module that can be added to the meters to enable this feature.

The second map highlighted areas where new meters with smart capabilities can be added. The map is based on traffic flow, higher ticket counts, and ParkMobile revenue for the past few months. Approximately 56 meters could be added to accommodate 100 spaces.

Mr. Moore asked if parking rates would need to be increased due to the costs of replacing and upgrading the meters.

Mr. Lee responded that the rates would not need to be increased initially. He said that when the old meters break, they are no longer supported so they will need to be updated anyway.

Mr. Moore suggested changing the hours of enforcement to capture more income. New Orleans charges different rates during different hours.

Michael Corbin said if Wi-Fi is needed to make the meters smart, there would be another expense involved.

Ms. Landry stated that when the DDA took over parking management in 2000, the goal was to make on-street parking more accessible and convenient rather than being a revenue generator for the city. She said that prior to that, employees of downtown businesses fed the meters throughout the day, and visitors could not find convenient on-street parking. Ms. Landry reported that approximately \$500k in past due ticket revenue was written off recently because those violations were beyond the 3-year statute of limitations mandate. Those past-due tickets represent money that goes directly into the city's Parking Revenue Fund. Proceeds from that fund can be used to enhance downtown parking infrastructure such as a municipal parking garage, etc.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Search Committee – Executive Directors Position

Mr. Corbin stated a Special Call meeting is set for 8/30/24 at 9:00 am at the SWEPCO Business Center.

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

Lt. Heaser gave the board members his city cell phone number: 318-525-5608. He has started occupying the office on Travis Street for a few hours daily, and patrols will begin soon. The downtown unit has a new horse and expects another one soon. Nighttime patrolling is being increased from four to eight officers. Homeless individuals are sleeping on benches and sidewalks. More officers will be back on bicycles beginning in September. He asked the board to let him know of any specific issues. H&H was not a problem from a security standpoint. Street closures were problematic. Lt. Heaser said the event under the bridge was well secured without problems.

Mr. Moore asked what kind of training the bicycle patrol officers need. Lt. Heaser said training is a 40-hour class for bicycles and horses also.

C. Vacant Property Ordinance

Ms. Landry reported that the proposed ordinance is still on the agenda but postponed. She said the Mayor has indicated he will hold a second property owners meeting soon.

D. Humor and Harmony Festival

Previously discussed.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution Number 2 of 2024: DDA Millage

Ms. Landry reminded the board that they indicated via email the desire to maintain the DDA millage at the current rate. City Council has approved maintaining the millage for 2025 as the same for 2024 (9.04 mills) according to DDA's directions. Ms. Landry asked the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's office to review the language in the proposed resolution. The Auditor's office reviewed / approved.

A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to approve Resolution Number 2 of 2024, allowing for the DDA millage rate to remain at 9.04 mills. Chelette Holden seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

B. UDC: Use Matrix Changes for Downtown

Ms. Landry said the proposed ordinance was presented at City Council this week. The public hearing held by MPC on the proposed changes was poorly attended; only one person attended to give comments - Wendy Benscoter of Shreveport Common. The change is intended to make it easier for certain businesses to be downtown. A permit must be received for alcohol sales even if a business can already sell alcohol in the district. Michael Corbin asked if MPC could discuss this at the next DDA board meeting. Ms. Landry will invite MPC for next month. MPC staff was unavailable for this meeting.

C. Funding Request – Film Prize (PrizeFest)

Ms. Landry reported that PrizeFest is requesting \$10,000 in sponsorship this year. DDA funded the event at \$7500 in 2023. Kathy Malone stated that she must abstain from the discussion and vote.

Drayden Dunn said that a Shreveport is in the spotlight right now and that PrizeFest is a substantial event.

Mr. Corbin said that he had no issue with a \$10,000 donation.

A motion was made by Michael Corbin to give a \$10,000 grant to PrizeFest for 2024. Drayden Dunn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Kathy Malone abstained.

D. Waiver of 180 Day Demolition Delay – 161 Christian Street

Ms. Landry reported that there was a request for a waiver of the 180-day demolition delay for 161 Christian St, which is owned by the Housing Authority of Shreveport. It is in the path of the next phase of the Bayou Grande development. The property was incorrectly adjudicated. Ms. Landry discovered the error and worked with the Assessor’s office to correct. The title issue has been resolved, and ownership is now correctly with the Housing Authority.

A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to waive the 180-day demolition delay for the property at 161 Christian St. The motion was seconded by Michael Corbin and passed unanimously.

E. Appointment of the 2025 Budget Committee

Drayden Dunn, Chelette Holden, and Michael Corbin were appointed to the budget committee.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

There were no public comments on non-agenda items.

X. ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:23.

Michael Corbin, Chair