

**Downtown Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
October 30, 2024**

**Present**

Michael Corbin  
Drayden Dunn  
Chelette Holden  
Kathy Malone  
Terry Moore  
Ed Taylor

**Absent**

Mario Chavez

**Staff**

Cedric Glover  
Janie Landry  
Stacie Leng  
Lauren Davidson  
Peggy Hellyer  
Lorenzo Lee

**Others Present**

Lt. David Heaser  
Councilman Gary Brooks  
Darita Grigsby  
Emily Trant, MPC  
Stephen Jean, MPC  
Alan Clarke, MPC  
Jeremy Taylor

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:27 pm by Chair Michael Corbin. A quorum was present.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Mario Chavez was absent.

**III. AMEND AGENDA**

The agenda was not amended.

**IV. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS**

Chairman Corbin welcomed new DDA Director Cedric Glover.

**MPC Presentation Regarding UDC Code Changes / Matrix**

Chairman Corbin welcomed three members of the MPC to the meeting: Alan Clarke, Emily Trant, and Stephen Jean.

Alan Clarke explained to the board that the UDC is currently too restrictive. To streamline it, the MPC reviewed all special use permits to determine which ones could be made "use by right" instead. This adjustment aims to assist with new development. He distributed a document detailing the proposed changes. There are six districts in the downtown area: Central Business District, Entertainment, Heavy Commercial, Mixed Use, Downtown Commercial Mixed Use, and Residential Mixed Use.

Drayden Dunn inquired about the restriction of liquor sales in the downtown area. Mr. Jean clarified that this restriction refers specifically to packaged sales. Mr. Dunn noted that this should be clarified for accuracy. Ms. Trant added that retail beer and wine sales are permitted in all downtown districts.

Ms. Landry asked if existing requirements, such as the minimum distance from churches for alcohol sales, would still apply. Mr. Clarke confirmed that these requirements would remain in place.

Terry Moore raised concern about payday and title loans now being listed as permitted uses, mentioning the negative perception surrounding such businesses and how they may not align with the vision for downtown. Mr. Dunn suggested reinstating payday loans as a special use, as it had traditionally been. Mr. Clarke agreed that this change could be made.

Kathy Malone expressed her appreciation for the MPC's efforts to simplify the process.

Mr. Corbin asked Councilman Brooks about the status of payday loans and liquor sales in the Caddo Common area. Mr. Brooks noted that while they are not banned, they are also not automatically permitted.

Mr. Glover raised a question related to homeless shelters being a use by right in the CBD.

Mr. Clarke stated his opinion that there is a significant issue with the homeless population downtown, noting that many individuals do not wish to be housed. He suggested that solutions might include hygiene stations, soup kitchens, and additional resources. Since downtown is central and easily accessible, it has become a hub for these individuals.

Mr. Corbin responded that, historically, both the DDA and the City Council have opposed homeless shelters and soup kitchens in the downtown area.

Ms. Landry stated that DDA has previously been told that the permit for the HUB facility identifies it as a real estate provider, though it primarily serves the homeless. Mr. Clarke stated he was unaware of this fact. Ms. Landry noted that the HUB's presence with people sleeping on the sidewalks waiting to be served has presented challenges for developers.

Mr. Glover shared that his wife is a social worker, providing him with some perspective on this issue. He emphasized that downtown is a neighborhood where employees and businesses coexist, and these stakeholders may not want such activities nearby.

Mr. Corbin concluded that discussions regarding the homeless population would likely continue for some time.

Mr. Moore added that this issue is not unique to Shreveport, and suggested examining how other cities have addressed similar challenges.

Mr. Glover said that Hope Connections serves the homeless population, but the challenge is the people who refuse to be housed.

Mr. Clarke thanked the board for meeting with the MPC and stated he would like to continue working together to refine the downtown area.

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

There were no public comments.

**VI. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Minutes**

Mr. Corbin asked for approval of the September 25, 2024 regular meeting minutes and the October 9, 2024 Special Call meeting minutes.

**A motion was made by Terry Moore to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2024, regular meeting and the October 9, 2024 Special Call Meeting as presented. Ed Taylor seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

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

Ms. Landry reviewed the September 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement. Property tax revenue for the month totaled \$65.75. Overall, more taxes were collected this year than initially budgeted. The interest from the rollover CD has generated approximately \$70,000 for the year. Contracts with the City for Streetscape and Parking are paid up to date.

**Expenses:** Ms. Landry reviewed expenses. She noted that the Workers' Compensation line item is not over budget. It will be adjusted by the auditors. She stated that the same applies to the accounting line

item. DDA purchased cameras for SPD and that amount is noted in the security grant line item. There has been additional discussion regarding the possibility of DDA purchasing additional cameras. No additional overtime will be allowed for tree watering. That duty will be handled during regular streetscape hours going forward. Funds from the "Emerging Opportunities" budget line were utilized for the executive director search. The budget committee will meet soon.

Mr. Moore inquired whether the state would reapply the restrictions that led to increased expenses last year for the annual audit.

Ms. Leng responded that no significant cost increases are expected this year. The DDA has completed the SAUPs (Statewide Agreed-Upon Procedures) for + five years now. The auditors are not in favor of the SAUP requirement and regularly advocate with the state for its removal.

Drayden Dunn asked if board members had comments for the budget committee before their meeting.

Ed Taylor requested that Ms. Landry read the balance sheet aloud for everyone's understanding. She read the balance sheet, noting that the DDA's financial position is sound and fiscally responsible.

Mr. Taylor requested copies of the September and October 2023 balance sheets, which Ms. Landry agreed to provide.

Mr. Dunn raised a question about the downtown supplement line and suggested increasing police presence in the Red River District. He reported that it took 20 minutes for police to respond to a recent call on Saturday evening. Lt. Heiser noted that there is a permanent police crew in the district during evenings. He added that officers were on horseback Saturday night, and bicycle patrols will be added soon.

Ms. Landry mentioned that the DDA has been funding two officers on Saturday mornings, but those hours will be adjusted at the suggestion of Lt. Heaser.

Michael Corbin shared that the Sheriff's Office will now contribute officers, which should reduce the need for DDA funding of additional officers.

Drayden Dunn inquired about the potential use of metal detectors and whether the DDA might collaborate on this initiative. Mr. Corbin explained that limited access points were in place at Humor & Harmony, which improved security.

Mr. Brooks asked if the mounted police patrol the area under the bridge. Lt. Heaser confirmed that they do; the mounted unit was certified two weeks ago, and patrols will increase. He also noted that officers are leaving their vehicles to patrol on foot under the bridge. He will look into the exact whereabouts of the officers over the past weekend.

Mr. Taylor requested that Lt. Heaser inform the DDA if any assistance is needed with the bicycle patrols.

Ms. Landry added that there is a support group for the mounted patrol.

Mr. Glover recalled that when the RRD was returned to city management, there was a police kiosk under the bridge. Lt. Heaser mentioned that the Real Time Crime Center now monitors all the cameras.

Mr. Moore asked if drones could be deployed in the RRD. Lt. Heaser confirmed that drones are

available, but their use is costly. The police office at SWEPCO is being converted into a community-oriented police office; therefore, another kiosk may be needed in the RRD.

**A motion was made by Kathy Malone to approve the September 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. Chelette Holden seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

## VII. REPORTS

### 1. **Interim Director & Director's Report**

#### Sending Surveys for Downtown Businesses

Surveys are being sent to downtown businesses to get feedback.

Asking how DDA can assist them, if they would be interested in Lunch & Learn technical assistance (Marketing, social media, etc.)

### 2. \$25,000 in COS Parking Enterprise Fund - New Parking Meters

Approximately 50 meters can be purchased.

Tom Dark has said it will allot the same amount for 2025. Will use those funds to upgrade existing meters for credit/debit card capability.

Quotes received. Will have DDA legal counsel review.

### 3. DDA 25-Year Tax Renewal

Current authorization period expires 12/31/27.

Will work with City Administration/DDA Legal Counsel to determine best date to be on 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 action plan to engage property owners/business owners.

### 4. Performed assessment of streetlights that are 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.

New bulbs were received by the City on 10/29/24. A crew will be out this weekend to inventory remaining lights that are out and will replace. Some of the poles that have been hit can't be re-installed. Traffic Engineering devising a plan to address re-installation.

### 5. Shop On Us (Twelve Day Holiday Giveaway) –November & December

Event will be similar to Lunch On Us to promote downtown retail.

Themed gift baskets will be available via drawings featuring Date Night, Family Outing, Self-Care Sunday, Shop Local, etc. Single Item Giveaways for Pop-Up Events will be held in key downtown locations during the holiday season offering single-item door prizes as instant giveaways such as gift cards, holiday treats, festive accessories.

### 6. Marketing – Being handled in house.

New themes: *Find It Downtown*

*Block By Block* – Getting good feedback about this effort. Personal visits being made.

Visits made to blocks of Milam, Texas, Crockett, and Lake Streets. Ongoing outreach.

Designed banners, marketing materials, website, and wayfinding signage to brand.

Several new programs in design stages.

### 7. Wayfinding signage

Design completed. Inventory of signage completed. Quotes received; vendor selected.

Installation to begin soon.

8. Ongoing project - assembling database of property owners' and businesses - emails/contact information.  
Will maintain and update.
9. Planning Educational Workshops for Downtown Businesses  
Preparing two programs designed to support downtown businesses by providing assistance with marketing education, resources, & services to assist downtown businesses.  
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 Association  
Favorable response received.  
Performed website audit for Ashley's Tiers of Love; assisted with social media, marketing, and future planning.
10. Tour of Downtown Homes / Residential  
Planned for March 30, 2025 to compliment Garden Club of America Event  
Will feature downtown apartments, living options.
11. Meetings with City Administration  
Mayor – various downtown topics; Traffic Engineering – Curb Painting, wayfinding signage.
12. Louisiana State Historic Tax Credit Coalition  
Participating in coalition to advocate for continued legislative support of the state Historic Tax Credit.
13. State Building Project Team  
Meeting with state building project team for update on project and to explore greenspace and public art opportunities.
14. Meeting with State Legislators  
Meeting with legislators to discuss Concurrent Resolution that would seek DOTD review if potential bollard installation at Spring & Texas Streets.
15. Meeting with Federal Delegation  
Meeting with Speaker Mike Johnson's office and other members of federal delegation to discuss federal legislation that would create a federal tax credit for office to residential conversion and other opportunities for downtown.

## **B. Parking Report**

Lorenzo Lee reported that revenue was comparable to the previous month. Traffic has not been as heavy as it was in previous years. Terry Moore asked about the cost of a handicap parking ticket. Mr. Lee reported that it is \$525. Mr. Moore reported that a client from out of town was parked in a handicap space, and his credentials were visible, but he got a ticket. Mr. Lee asked him to get the parking ticket number, and he will research it for Mr. Moore.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

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

Previously discussed.

**B. Vacant Property Ordinance**

Ms. Landry reported that this is still delayed at Council while the Mayor is reviewing and gathering information. He wants to have another meeting with downtown property owners. Michael Corbin said the legislation has been edited substantially from the original proposed legislation suggested by DDA.

**C. Contract with La. Department of Revenue Office of Debt Recovery & Amnesty Period for Late Fees Associated with Delinquent Tickets Prior to 5-Year Statute of Limitations**

Ms. Landry reported that she has received approval from City Attorney Marcus Edwards. Councilman Brooks will bring the two-read ordinance to the Council. There is currently \$600k in delinquent tickets.

**A motion was made by Kathy Malone to move forward with contracting with the La. Department of Revenue Office of Debt Recovery, create an amnesty period for late fees associated with delinquent tickets prior to the 5-year statute of limitations, have DDA counsel Jerry Jones review the contract, and Councilman Brooks introduce the ordinance to Council. Drayden Dunn seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.**

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. UDC Code Changes**

There was no further discussion on the UDC code changes.

**X. ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

Drayden Dunn reported that both Chambers are working on Mr. Glover’s reception, which will be held at Artspace on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Details are being finalized.

Darita Grigsby gave her opinion that the board made a great choice in hiring Mr. Glover. She would like to see gas stations, more restaurants and a grocery store downtown. She would like downtown to be brought back to its old vibrancy. She agreed that pay day loans downtown would be a bad idea. She is running for NAACP president. Mr. Corbin thanked her for her attendance and comments.

**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 5:15 pm.

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Michael Corbin, Chair