

**Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
November 13, 2024**

Present

Michael Corbin
Chelette Holden
Kathy Malone
Ed Taylor

Absent

Drayden Dunn
Mario Chavez
Terry Moore

Staff

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

Others Present

Lt. David Heaser

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm by Chair Michael Corbin. A quorum was present.

II. ROLL CALL

Drayden Dunn, Mario Chavez and Terry Moore were absent.

III. AMEND AGENDA

The agenda was not amended.

IV. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS

There were no introductions or presentations.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items)

There were no public comments.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes

Mr. Corbin asked for approval of the October 30, 2024, regular meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Kathy Malone to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2024, regular meeting minutes. Chelette Holden seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

B. October 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement

Ms. Landry reviewed the October 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement.

No additional property taxes have been received. Streetscape and Parking contracts with the City of Shreveport are current. Interest income is as projected. Nothing is out of the ordinary relative to expenses. The Workers Compensation line item will be split out by the auditors. Legal expenses are up due to the ongoing Ebony Laborde lawsuit in which DDA was incorrectly named. DDA legal counsel, Jerry Jones, is having to spend some time on this lawsuit in addition to counsel appointed by DDA's insurance. Ms. Landry noted that the event sponsorship line item is over due to the \$10k sponsorship for PrizeFest.

A motion was made by Ed Taylor to approve the October 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. Chelette Holden seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Corbin reported that in addition to the minutes, he would like staff to send financials and director's report to the board ahead of the meetings in an attempt to expedite the meetings.

VII. Public Hearing: 2025 Budget and Program of Work

Mr. Corbin reported that the budget committee met earlier this date.

A motion was made by Kathy Malone to open the public hearing for the 2025 Budget and Program of Work. Michael Corbin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

There were no public comments.

A motion was made by Kathy Malone to close the public hearing for the 2025 Budget and Program of Work and reconvene into regular session. The motion was seconded by Michael Corbin and passed unanimously.

VIII. REPORTS

Ms. Landry gave a short report concerning ongoing projects and then Mr. Glover briefed the board on the activities he has undertaken since becoming Executive Director. The full Director's Report was in the board books.

A. Director's Report

1. Sending Surveys for Downtown Businesses
Surveys being sent to downtown businesses for feedback.
Asking how DDA can assist. (Marketing, social media, etc.). Ongoing.
2. \$25,000 in COS Parking Enterprise Fund - New Parking Meters
Approximately 50 meters can be purchased. Tom Dark said the same amount will be allotted for 2025. Funds will be used to upgrade existing meters for credit/debit card capability. Quotes received. DDA legal counsel reviewing.
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 soon to inventory remaining lights that are out and replace. Some poles that have been hit cannot 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/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, 2024 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.

Mr. Glover also reported that he and Ms. Landry had a good meeting with Ruth Ward of Mike Johnson's office. He said the state has signed off on bollards being installed at the intersection of Texas and Spring (Blind Tiger) if Blind Tiger indemnifies the state. Bollards have been installed

at the Convention Center previously. He also met with Father Dwayne Trombetta and heard his vision for Holy Trinity Catholic Church. The vision is promising. November Artwalk was extremely successful. December will be held at Remington. Ms. Landry and Mr. Glover had a successful call with the Petroleum Tower owners and will meet weekly going forward. Ms. Landry also reported that there was a good reception for Mr. Glover at Artspace last week by African American Chamber of Commerce. Michael Corbin suggested that updated items in the Directors reports be in bold to highlight changes.

B. Parking Report

Lorenzo Lee reported that revenue was \$20k in October, a decrease from the previous month. There was an increase in parking meter revenue, perhaps attributed to early voting. No vehicles have been booted recently. Warnings are being issued to attempt to get scofflaws to pay before the vehicles are booted.

Ms. Landry reported that Mr. Lee has gotten quotes from vendors for smart meters, and Jerry Jones is reviewing. Councilman Brooks will bring forth legislation before Council for an amnesty period late fees only.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

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

Lt. Heiser announced his retirement previously and he will be stepping down on January 15th. Mr. Corbin stated that Downtown was about to lose a great friend and thanked him for his help over the years. He has been downtown 18 years in total. The Downtown and Mounted Patrol have been moved under the Community Oriented Police division of SPD, and they will be in the Travis St. office. They are going to start sweeps next week of the homeless individuals. There will now be a downtown daytime patrol, and they will be utilizing foot, horses and the bicycles. Police visibility will skyrocket.

B. Vacant Property Ordinance

Ms. Landry reported that the mayor wants to continue dialogue with downtown property owners and host another meeting.

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 the legalities are still being finalized.

D. UDC Code Changes

Ms. Landry reported that MPC is withdrawing proposed legislation changing the UDC codes. She and Mr. Glover will meet with the MPC to refine the ordinance. Mr. Corbin stated that this will also be deferred to early next year due to the holidays.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2025 Budget and Program of Work

Mr. Corbin reported that the Program of Work needs to be shorten and refined for the next year.

There are no concerns from the Budget Committee relative to the proposed 2025 budget. It will be reviewed in the second quarter after revenue taxes are received at the first of the year. Kathy Malone asked which line items are used to balance the budget. Ms. Landry reported line item 30, marketing and publications and line item 42, long-term projects (emerging opportunities) are both used.

A motion was made by Ed Taylor to approve the 2025 Budget and Program of Work. The motion was seconded by Kathy Malone and passed unanimously.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Ms. Landry reported that there is good traction on the holiday window contest and also the number of businesses participating in the 12-day holiday giveaway. The December Artwalk has more artists participating than usual.

Mr. Glover reported that the Louisiana Legislature is in a special session. HTC is on the agenda. The good news is it appears that there is a compromise to allow the program to remain substantially in place. A similar compromise appears to be in the works for the film credits. Mr. Taylor stated that the house is voting this date, and then the legislation will go to the Senate. He is going to Baton Rouge 11/14/24 to lobby for the program.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

There were no public comments on non-agenda items.

XIII. ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Michael Corbin, Chair