

**Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Virtual Conference*
April 22, 2020**

| <u>Present</u> | <u>Absent</u> | <u>Staff</u> | <u>Others Present</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Candice Battiste | | Liz Swaine | |
| Lloyd Brown | | Janie Landry | |
| John Hubbard | | E.D. Stewart | |
| Tim Huck | | Stacie Leng | |
| Terry Moore | | | |
| Logan Schroeder | | | |
| Stanley Varner | | | |

***CERTIFICATION OF INABILITY TO OPERATE DUE TO LACK OF QUORUM**

In accordance with Executive Proclamations JBE 2020-30 and 2020-33, issued by Governor John Bel Edwards on March 16, 2020 and March 22, 2020, respectively, this notice shall serve as a certification of the Downtown Development Authority's inability to otherwise operate in accordance with the Louisiana Open Meetings Law due to a lack of a quorum as a result of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Pursuant to Section 4 of JBE 2020-30, the DDA of Shreveport will provide for attendance at its next meeting, which is an essential governmental meeting, on April 22, 2020, via video/telephone conference.

Considering the foregoing, and in accordance with Proclamation Numbers JBE 2020-30 and JBE 2020-33, the DDA will allow input by members of the public, as set forth in this Notice via email comments based on agenda items and other concerns received prior to noon on April 22.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tim Huck called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm; a quorum was present.

II. ROLL CALL

E.D. Stewart called the roll. Members present were Candice Battiste, Lloyd Brown, John Hubbard, Tim Huck, Terry Moore, Logan Schroeder, and Stanley Varner.

III. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

No absences.

IV. AMEND AGENDA

Mr. Huck asked if there was a need to amend the agenda. There was not.

V. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Huck welcomed the board members and staff. There were no members of the public present, and no presentations.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes

Mr. Huck asked for a review of the February 26, 2020 regular meeting minutes

and for any amendments or revisions. There were none. The March meeting was not held due to lack of a quorum.

John Hubbard made a motion to approve the February 26, 2020 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Tim Huck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement

Ms. Swaine asked the board to review the March 2020 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement. She noted that finances should be fine for the remainder of the year. Additionally, a small amount of remaining tax revenue collected may be received before the end of the year.

The 2020 Parking and Streetscape contracts have been signed by city officials. Both contracts have been received, and payments are current.

Ms. Swaine noted that funds were not transferred to the LAMP fund because of some additional questions, and to do so now would not be beneficial given the near zero returns at present. DDA's current financial position is secure at this time.

Expenses for the 416 Cotton St line item included the installation of a mail slot in the office lobby door to accommodate continued mail delivery during closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tim Huck made a motion to accept the March 2020 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. John Hubbard seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

VIII. REPORTS

A. Abbreviated Director's Report

1. 717 Crockett Street – Andress Arts & Entrepreneur Center
 - Construction started and ahead of schedule
 - Owner, Jim Malsch, reports that the ground floor and top floors are fully leased
 - Anticipated to open November 2020
 - One tenant is Downtown Art House - (DAH – owner, Cassie Stone) – a retail store that will feature local and regional art, gifts, etc. Also opening in November.
2. 90 Market Street
 - Purchased by city for \$466,000 (appraised value)
3. Auto Accident on Texas Street
 - Two-vehicle accident, involving a city bus, destroyed the arch at the entrance to the Red River District.
 - Blind Tiger was not damaged.

B. Abbreviated Parking Report

Parking employees will return next week on shorter shifts with smaller crew to install new meters and repair existing ones. The 2020 contract has been accepted by the City.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. LPSC/AEP SWEPCO – Downtown Lighting Grant

The possibility of expanding this grant has changed due to COVID-19. Ms. Landry

will put together a public bid package for retrofitting the poles.

B. Downtown Security - COVID Update on Mounted Patrol

Just prior to the COVID-19 impact, Ms. Swaine met with CTO Keith Hanson regarding installing security cameras along Texas Street. The project was ready to go but is currently on hold.

Downtown Mounted Patrol is in the crosshairs on the city budget. The city is considering covering downtown with a regular patrol instead of the designated mounted patrol, but the downtown unit is currently still in operation according to Sgt. Heaser. The mounted patrol could be pulled back into regular patrol, but officials are unsure at this time when this change will occur.

C. I Am Downtown Campaign/ Downtown Marketing COVID Update

The DDA marketing campaign has been changed from efforts to attract businesses to retaining downtown businesses and keeping downtown front and center overall. The campaign will advertise businesses that are still operational and feature stories about good deeds to keep downtown in the forefront.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Downtown Re-opening

Re-opening is contingent on the Governor's action, and currently many downtown businesses are operating blind in terms of dates and how re-opening will look. Limited occupancy standards will likely be based on square footage. PPE requirements could stall re-opening due to short supply of equipment. If the city determines that businesses will be required to check customers' temperatures for fever, then it will likely be up to the city and state to source the thermometers.

Ms. Swaine recently spoke with Dr. Martha Whyte, Public Health Director, who said that the state is having difficulty finding appropriate PPE.

Lafayette has developed a "safe shopping plan" involving both customers and businesses for re-opening.

It is likely that temperature checking will be implemented for public events and businesses but undetermined at this time. Sam's Town officials will be implementing this policy on their own and not allowing anyone with over 101° F temperature inside the premises. They could possibly be reopening May 1, at a scaled down level, but may have to wait until June. The hotel is still taking reservations, with a very slow reservation rate. No word on when state border crossing policies might be relaxed.

Ms. Battiste asked if there was any information on closures due to COVID-19. Ms. Swaine noted that the good news is that even currently closed businesses all intend to re-open. However, the small independent businesses can most likely only re-open once. Therefore, if another COVID wave hits and forces additional closures, those businesses may not be able to reopen again.

The process to gain approval to use sidewalk space for sidewalk cafes has been made easier for a temporary time period.

Single space, curbside, and 15-minute parking for restaurants will remain for now, and there will be at least a one week's notice before returning to paid parking.

B. Downtown Partner Status

1. The Strand Theatre is currently operating on ticket sales for future shows that have been postponed until the fall. If those shows are cancelled, however, the venue will be in a bind due to cancellation fees and refunded ticket sales. Though out of debt, the longer the shutdown goes on, the harder it will become for the Theatre to survive.
2. SRAC, RFC and The Strand have all received PPP.
3. SRAC – Christmas in the Sky could be cancelled, and as the organization's largest fundraiser, the cancellation would be very damaging for SRAC's income. SRAC also receives NGO funding from both the Parish and City. Given the city's current financial situation, there is a strong likelihood that NGO funding will be drastically reduced or eliminated.
4. RFC – Doing as well as can be expected. The theater legally cannot be open, currently, but staff is planning to use aggressive social distancing once they re-open (6 ft. radius for all guests in theaters and restaurant).
5. Sci-Port – Has managed to retain all employees. Rent and utilities are not needed since the building is city-owned, but the facility needs people through the door. New museum is ready to launch as soon as Sci-Port can re-open.
6. DSU – Cancelled Mudbug Madness. Mr. Huck, a board member for DSU, is unsure about financial standing in the future. However, as of January 2020, even with limited income DSU is financially stable for this year since the organization does not have a large payroll.
7. Red River Revel – Sent out artist applications this date. No other information is available at this time.
8. Every Man A King Distillery – No updates. Owners have raised money on current equity and turned to a bank loan route to fill gap. SBA loan is on hold. Still intend to open.

C. DDA Current Financial Status & 2021 Outlook, City Professional Services Contracts

Remainder of 2020 is solid. The challenge will be 2021 which is also a reassessment year. Ms. Swaine and Ms. Landry have spoken with Caddo and Bossier tax assessors to try to determine what DDA might anticipate relative to ad valorem income for next year. Neither could predict what to expect but stated that the Legislative Auditor's Office will monitor whether the millage will need to be increased to ensure the same revenue. Jo Ann Garrison, Legislative Auditor's Office, will notify both tax assessors after completing the review of DDA's millage rate. This will be done automatically for DDA.

An increase in millage will be necessary if reassessment determines lower property values which will likely occur because of closures due to the shutdown. Even with an adjustment, though, the issue will be whether or not property owners will be able to pay their tax bills. The better position that DDA is in to help downtown partners, the better off downtown will be overall. DDA will continue to be frugal with funds for the remainder of the year and into next year.

D. DDA Bond Payment Delay

The Governor's declaration is allowing political subdivisions to ask for bond payment delays. The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau has asked for a delay. Ms. Swaine suggested it would be wise for DDA to request a bond payment delay as well. This would mean no bond payment in 2021, keeping \$103K to help downtown partners. DDA would start back payment in 2022, tacking on an extra year. Fees are uncertain. Ms. Swaine noted she would bring this back to the board for an official vote when more information is received.

Mr. Moore suggested to investigate whether as a municipality, DDA is already covered under the CARES Act.

E. DDA/DSDC Business Assistance

The DSDC board met recently. There was discussion of monetary grants and loans to assist businesses, but the board decided to wait until businesses have gotten federal/state monies first and then determine the need.

Ms. Swaine has been holding weekly conference calls with downtown business partners, sourcing supplies, and giving information and updates.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Huck asked if there were any announcements. There were none.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

None.

XIII. ADJOURN

With no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 4:28 pm.

Candice Battiste, Secretary