

**Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
July 28, 2021, 3:30 pm**

Present	Absent	Staff	Others Present
Candice Battiste	Tim Huck	Liz Swaine	
Lloyd Brown	Stanley Varner	Janie Landry	
John Hubbard		Stacie Leng	
Terry Moore		Lorenzo Lee	
Logan Schroeder		Peggy Hellyer	

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:38 pm by Secretary Candice Battiste in the Chair's absence.

II. ROLL CALL

Peggy Hellyer called the roll. Tim Huck and Stanley Varner were absent.

III. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

A motion was made by Lloyd Brown to approve the absences of Mr. Huck and Mr. Varner. The motion was seconded by John Hubbard and passed unanimously.

IV. AMEND AGENDA

The agenda was not amended.

V. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Swaine introduced Vickie Case, auditor with Cook & Morehart. Ms. Case reported that the auditors had no findings from the DDA 2020 annual audit. She reported the following:

- 2020 was a break-even year.
- Downtown property taxes have been decreasing for the past three years.
- Restoration tax abatements (RTA) reduced property tax revenue by \$62,000 during the year. Some of the abatements are for 10 years (RTA's that are approved for a second 5-year period).
- DDA debt will be paid off in 2024.
- The numbers look good overall; declining property taxes is a concern.
- The audit letter has no recommendations or findings.

Logan Schroeder asked which downtown buildings have used the RTA program. Ms. Swaine reported that The Standard, The Lofts at 624, and the Andress buildings have tax abatements. She also stated that the RTA and historic tax credits are two of the very few incentives the city has to offer. She stated that it is very reasonable to give a business a five-year abatement to help counter all the money they invested, but there should be some requirements of the building owner to get the second five-year abatement.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes

Ms. Swaine asked for a review of the June 28, 2021 regular meeting minutes and for any changes or revisions. There were no changes or revisions.

A motion was made by John Hubbard to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2021 meeting minutes. Candice Battiste seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

B. June 2021 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement

Ms. Swaine asked the board members to review the June 2021 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement. She reported that nothing is unusual in the financials at the six-month mark. She noted an increase in SRAC / Artspace Support due to the canopy repairs.

Terry Moore asked if any of the federal money the city receives will be allocated to the DDA. Ms. Swaine replied that she has not been advised of any. Additionally, she pointed out that money from the Riverfront Development Fund is still going into the general fund. She works to regularly bring this to the Administration's attention. DDA has never received any money from the Riverfront Fund.

Ms. Swaine said she recently met with Shanerika Fleming, advisor to Mayor Perkins and reviewed the newly revised downtown infrastructure report with her. The report outlines many of the infrastructure repairs that are needed in downtown. Ms. Fleming said she will keep Ms. Swaine posted on discussions with the Mayor.

Terry Moore reported that he has heard complaints about the appearance of downtown and many people believe it is the DDA's issue. Ms. Swaine reported that the DDA does not own the lights, streets, sidewalks, etc. The City of Shreveport owns this infrastructure and is responsible for service and repair. The DDA works through the Streetscape program to clean, but the crew cannot make repairs to the sidewalks, etc. because doing so would put the DDA in the liability chain.

Mr. Moore also commented that the MPC is coming under the city control and asked whether DDA should have a conversation with the MPC staff. Ms. Swaine reported that she speaks to MPC staff frequently. Mr. Moore also asked Ms. Swaine if she had a ballpark figure relative to the needed downtown infrastructure repairs. Ms. Swaine suggested that a potential place to start would be to replace all the trees that were lost in last year's snowstorm. She estimated the tree-replacement cost to be in the \$150,000 range.

A motion was made by Logan Schroeder and seconded by Terry Moore to accept the June 2021 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. REPORTS

A. Director's Report

1. 719 Edwards Street & 301 Crockett Street - Lee Hardware and United Jewelers Apartments
 - Construction underway
 - \$7.8M in improvements
 - Exterior facades, roofs, HVAC, kitchen & bath upgrades, new fitness center, new resident lounge, landscaping, pool repairs
2. 425 Edwards Street. - Petroleum Tower
 - Home funds, Historic Tax Credits, PILOT
 - Two small parking garages in 300 block Edwards under contract
3. 420 Texas - Former Dee's Photo Building
 - Complete removal of stucco covering
 - Repointing of bricks
4. 525 Milam - Centerpoint Building
 - Recent interest
 - \$2.4M asking price

- All Centerpoint employees rumored to be moving to Levy St. facility
5. 616-620-624 Texas Street - Lofts Buildings
 - Under contract
 - New owner from Houston
 - Potentially interested in other properties
 6. 700 Texas - Former Tipitina's Building
 - Sold
 - New name – Cooper's Corner
 - William O'Brien and investors - purchased
 7. 619/631 Milam Street (with parking lots) For Sale
 - 49,242 total SF
 - \$2.35M asking price
 8. Various Addresses- Several Interested Developers
 9. 700 Cotton- Every Man a King Distillery
 - Owner says work to resume 'very soon'
 10. Bayou Grande Apartments- Caddo @ Common Street
 - December 2021
 - 790 to 1100 SF. Prices range from \$671 to \$1190.
 - Pool, dog park, fitness center, cyber café.
 - Pre-application taken now (voucher units)
 11. DSDC EV Charging Station Grant
 - Three downtown charging stations for EVs
 12. Louisiana Prize Fest to be LIVE and online
 - Extending to two weekends- Fri.-Sat. Sept 24/25: Fashion and Music Prize.
Fri.-Sat. Oct. 1-2: Food, Film and Comedy prize.
 13. Red River Revel & Strand Theatre
 - Awarded money through Shuttered Venue Grant/SBA
 14. Downtown Infrastructure Update

B. Parking Report

Mr. Lee reported that ticket revenue has been consistent, although still down from 2019. Meter revenue is averaging \$600 to \$700 a week. Boot revenue is up substantially; 9 boots in both May and June due to the efforts of the new patroller, Taylor Hodges.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Downtown Security

Ms. Swaine said the city continues to tell her that security cameras are coming soon.

B. Artspace Building Update

The cost of the repair to the canopy will be \$53,000. On August 9th the engineer for the insurance company will be on site to review the building.

C. Update on Downtown Homeless

Ms. Swaine reported that last week was a particularly bad week with people being harassed, threatened, and witnessing bad situations. Many e-mails have been received with photos, quotes, etc. The Mayor recently convened a meeting concerning the issue, but no decisions were made. A follow-up meeting is also planned. There appears to be a consensus that the homeless situation is a real problem negatively affecting the city as a whole.

X. Downtown Covid Latest

Ms. Swaine briefed the board members on a meeting she had recently with an ER doctor friend. The doctor's prognosis for the next 6 weeks is grim. She says the Delta variant is 'burning through' the unvaccinated. It is extremely contagious with a greater virus load (easier to catch) than the original Covid. Mask mandates are likely to return. Healthcare providers are tired and frustrated. Downtown businesses are still struggling, and this latest variant surge will only make things worse.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Acceptance of DDA 202 Audit

A motion was made by Logan Schroeder to accept the findings of the DDA 2020 Audit. The motion was seconded by Terry Moore. Motion was unanimously approved.

B. Demolition Delay Resolutions

Ms. Swaine asked if the DDA board would be interested in a resolution opposing the proposed Demolition Delay Ordinance that is now before City Council. She reported that the DSDC board has voted to oppose the ordinance. Candice Battiste asked for a review of the proposed ordinance. Ms. Swaine explained that Councilwoman Levette Fuller is proposing the ordinance which will place the burden on the DDA to prove why a building must be saved rather than on the owner who wants to demolish the property. When someone applies for a demolition permit from the MPC for a downtown building, the current ordinance triggers a 180-day delay to allow the DDA time to pursue other options for the building. These options can include finding a buyer to rehab the property or having the property donated, as was the case with the Dees and Rubenstein's/Lanford buildings. The proposed ordinance would reduce the 180-day notification to 30 days, with a 10-day allowance for notification from the city officials to the director of the DDA. Twenty days is not sufficient time to begin the meaningful conversations required to save a building from destruction.

A motion was made by Logan Schroeder to support a resolution opposing the proposed City of Shreveport ordinance amending Chapter 22 of the of the City Code of Ordinances relative to demolition delay in the Downtown Development District. The motion was seconded by Terry Moore. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Robinson Film Center Sponsorship Request

The Robinson Film Center is planning an outdoor event for Labor Day weekend called the Texas Street Truffle Shuffle. The Robinson Executive Director sent a request to DDA asking to offset the cost of the event. The total cost is \$7,150.

A motion was made by Lloyd Brown to provide a grant of \$2,500 to Robinson Film Center for the Texas Street Truffle Shuffle. The motion was seconded by Terry Moore and unanimously approved.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

There were no public comments.

XII. ADJOURN

With no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm

Candice Battiste, Secretary