

**Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
April 23, 2023**

Present	Absent	Staff	Others Present
Michael Corbin		Liz Swaine	
Drayden Dunn		Janie Landry	
Chelette Holden		Stacie Leng	
Tim Huck		Peggy Hellyer	
Kathy Malone			
Terry Moore (Arrived 4:28)			
Kyle Southard			

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 pm by Chairman Tim Huck.

B. ROLL CALL

Peggy Hellyer called the roll. Terry Moore was absent at roll call but arrived at 4:28 pm.

C. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

Tim Huck made a motion to accept the absence of Terry Moore. Kyle Southard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

D. AMEND AGENDA

The agenda was amended to include a sponsorship request from Shrevepride under New Business.

A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to amend the agenda to include a request by Shrevepride under New Business. The motion was seconded by Michael Corbin. Motion passed unanimously.

E. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS / PRESENTATIONS

There were no welcomes, introductions, or presentations.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

G. CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes

Ms. Swaine asked for a review of the March 22, 2023, regular meeting minutes and for any revisions.

A motion was made by Michael Corbin to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2023 meeting as presented. Drayden Dunn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

March 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement

Ms. Swaine reviewed the March 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement. Income is ahead of budget. Reassessment in 2024 may affect DDA revenue, but staff will work with the Tax Assessor and Legislative Auditor's offices to make any necessary adjustment to DDA's millage rate to maintain revenue at the current level. Payment from the City for the Streetscape contract is up-to-date, but the Parking contract is not. No problems are anticipated relative to Parking. The management agreement payment from DSDC has been paid for the year.

Nothing is out of the ordinary relative to expenses. The cost of utilities and insurance has increased.

DDA will be billed in June for the 2022 audit when the process is completed. DDA is the recipient of a small grant from the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development for a temporary installation entitled Art in Unexpected Places. The event will kick off on May 20th.

A Motion was made by Tim Huck to approve the March 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. Chelette Holden seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VIII. REPORTS

A. Director's Report

1. Pedestrian Safety / District 4

Several of the most dangerous intersections in the state are in downtown Shreveport including Crockett/Spring/Market. DOTD and the City are looking at options. A DOTD representative was at a recent City Council meeting and Ms. Swaine spoke with him about the issue. She also asked about the possibility of installing bollards near Blind Tiger. A group of officials visited downtown today collecting data and will report potential solutions. The state has some funds available for possible remediation.

2. Louisiana Historic Tax Credits

HB 483 by Rep. Tanner Magee has been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. The expiration deadline for the tax credit program is approaching. HB 483 would extend sunset to January 2029. Some changes have been made to the bill including the eligibility of rural areas. There are currently 400 buildings in the queue for the credit, which has a maximum aggregate total of \$125M annually. Companies that sell the credits initiated the change to include rural properties. Ms. Swaine was in Baton Rouge recently and toured a bank building which was rehabbed for luxury residential apartments and talked to HTC partners across the state.

3. Curtis Jackson/City of Shreveport

Millennium Studio & former Expo Hall conversations are still ongoing. Due diligence is under way.

4. SporTran City - 1253 Texas Ave.

Multimodal Facility. Includes food court, fitness facility for employees, meeting space.

5. Every Man A King. 700 Cotton St.

Additional work is underway. Still no update on completion.

6. City Center Flats, 429 Crockett St.

Getting Certificates of Occupancy this week. A tour will be part of Downtown Artwalk, May 3, 5-8 pm.

7. Shreve Memorial Library, 424 Texas St.

Small fire on fourth floor, big water mess! Uncertainty on location of downtown library

8. FUMC congregation votes to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church

Pastor says will continue to be a Methodist Church. LGBT issue with United Methodist denomination caused split. Unsure of how this will affect downtown.

9. Downtown Love the Boot Cleanup

Great partnership with Shreveport Aquarium. 75+ volunteers with a cookout afterward

10. Big Events Coming!

Taco Wars Saturday @ Municipal. Noon- 8 pm. Pay for each taco and drink. Entrance is free.

Artwalk Returns! May 3, 5-8. May 4th is the rain date!

11. Shreveport Casinos

The Shreveport casinos are not doing well financially. Sam's Town revenue is down 25%, and Bally's is also down. Councilmembers Taylor and Brooks met recently with Bally's to talk about the need for re-investment in the Shreveport property especially in light of the proposed new rehab at Bossier's Diamond Jacks. The purpose was to begin dialogue regarding the need to position the casinos to be more competitive in the market. The casinos have traditionally been important to Shreveport's economy. Taylor and Brooks believe Shreveport's smoking ban has hurt the casinos financially since Bossier does not have a ban. Ms. Swaine believes the conversation will likely come before the Council for an amendment to allow some smoking in the casinos. Tim Huck stated his belief that the Council must revise the smoking ban.

B. Parking Report

Lorenzo Lee reported that ticket revenue had its strongest month this year, coinage as well. Boot collection for the month totals \$3,550. Three vehicles were booted on the same day, two were owned by the same individual. A \$75 boot fee is charged in addition to the delinquent ticket amount. Drayden Dunn commented that he was in conversation on social media about downtown parking. He said that many people have reported issues with the app, and he wondered why smart meters are not installed. Ms. Swaine stated that multiple ways exist to accept parking payments. Individuals can call the office or pay by phone. Mr. Lee added that patrons can use text to pay if they do not want to use the app. Mr. Dunn asked if there was an update on a proposed parking garage. Ms. Swaine has discussed this with the Mayor who has said he will propose a bond issue in 2024. Ms. Swaine said that even if the bond issue were to pass it would be several years before the garage would be constructed.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Downtown Security and Homeless

Ms. Swaine said that some homeless individuals who previously have been downtown have returned and she said this may require the rehiring of off duty officers for downtown. Currently, the officers patrol on Saturday mornings to check alleys, doorways etc. The City has been very engaged since the recent shooting in the 200 block of Texas, and Ms. Swaine has had numerous conversations with SPD since then. Councilman Brooks mentioned that Blue Line has moveable high-resolution cameras that tilt, and Ms. Swaine would like one of these permanently at 200 Texas. She said conversations are ongoing about the cameras. Tim Huck stated that there have been a few more officers downtown on Saturday nights, but not as many as needed.

Michael Corbin mentioned that there have been issues with homeless and panhandling at the Chase parking garage. The stairwells are being used as restrooms. Ms. Swaine said that SPD does have a mental health unit now, and officers are working directly with social services to gain extra training.

B. Trees

All the dead shrubs at entrances to downtown have been removed, and trees are being trimmed. Urban 3's report found that the highest grossing building in Shreveport was the Beck Building. Ms. Swaine noted that it has dead concrete planters around the building and a missing light pole. She spoke with the property manager, who was thrilled to help improve the property. Tim Hoover, horticulturist with the Aquarium, will assist with the beautification efforts and is willing to work with DDA to install plants in the planters if Beck Building management will commit to watering the plantings.

Ms. Swaine stated that Edwards Street was envisioned to be an entry point from the Convention Center to downtown. She met recently with Marla Mitchell, Convention Center Events Manager, to discuss potential ways to make Edwards Street a true entrance to the Convention Center and downtown. She reported that Ms. Mitchell was excited about the possibility and pledged to work to improve the look around the Center.

C. Vacant Property Ordinance

No update.

D. Downtown Lighting Grant

Two grants are complete and three are in the pipeline. Derek Simmons at C & C Mercantile & Lighting will compile information on different lighting options for people to reference. He has also agreed to meet with those receiving grants to discuss lighting needs as well.

E. Urban 3 Findings

Ms. Swaine reported that she inserts the Joe Minicozzi study into conversation every time she has an opportunity, and she requested that the board do the same. Urban 3 is willing to come back for future presentations. It was stated that Parish officials did not see the presentation. Tim Huck stated his opinion that having Mr. Minicozzi offer potential solutions next time would be helpful, and Drayden Dunn stated revenue solutions are also needed.

F. 2023 DDA Officers - Nominating Committee Report

Michael Corbin reviewed the nominating committee's report. Currently Tim Huck is Chairman, Terry Moore is Vice-Chairman and Kyle Southard is Secretary. Ms. Swaine thanked Tim Huck profusely for his time and efforts as Chairman. The committee recommended the 2023 officers as follows: Michael Corbin, Chairman, Drayden Dunn, Vice-chairman and Kyle Southard, Secretary.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of 2023 DDA Officers

A Motion was made by Terry Moore to appoint Michael Corbin as Chairman. Drayden Dunn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Michael Corbin to appoint Drayden Dunn as Vice chairman. Kyle Southard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Michael Corbin to reappoint Kyle Southard as Secretary. Tim Huck seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

B. Parish Funding Request

Michael Corbin reported that he has had conversations with officials regarding the Parish providing funding to the City. Mayor Arceneaux also plans to request some money from the Parish. Mr. Corbin stated that downtown lighting would be expensive and that even half a million dollars would not be adequate. Mr. Corbin believes that the entire system needs to be reconsidered. A bond issue or another funding source will likely be required. AEP/Swepco is already having conversations on how to fund, fix, and proceed.

Mr. Dunn stated his opinion that further discussions will be needed concerning additional items that could be added to a proposed lighting bond issue. Mr. Corbin stated that the challenge with a 2024 bond issue would be that any groundbreaking would not begin until 2026 most likely, which is a re-election year. He reported that the Citizens Advisory Committee will probably be reformed to recommend projects. It was the consensus of the board members that input from business owners and the general public would be necessary and that any proposed bond issue should be well thought-out. Ms. Swaine stated that a proposal should be a top three list, which could include lighting, a parking garage, and the sidewalk repairs. She stated the floating brick pavers are causing too many

trip and fall lawsuits. Janie Landry reported that there has been a sizeable increase in premium costs for the DDA liability insurance due to the lawsuits. DDA is not responsible for maintaining the integrity of the downtown sidewalks but has been named in numerous trip and fall lawsuits which cause legal expense to occur.

Mr. Corbin stated his belief that there is about \$9M in street repairs that need to be done, and the Council cannot agree on what to do. He added that in 2011, the bond issue had \$21M to spend on street repair. The money was divided evenly between the seven council districts, but it did not go far relative to the necessary repairs. Drayden Dunn agreed that a citizen's committee would give equity to all in the decision process. He also thinks marketing will be needed to publicize how a bond issue could benefit the city. Ms. Swaine reminded the board that city marketing for a bond issue has to be private funding.

C. ShrevePride Funding Request

Chris Lyon submitted a sponsorship request of DDA for ShrevePride's Q Prom event to be held at Artspace on June 25th. The rental cost is \$3,500, and the organization has requested \$2,500 from DDA. Ms. Swaine stated that she wants downtown to be an inclusive, diverse & safe place for all, but noted there is limited money for sponsorships. Tim Huck agreed that the DDA should be supportive, but he is not comfortable with the \$2,500 amount. The budget for sponsorships is \$30,000 and gets allocated to various events. Drayden Dunn asked if there was a sponsorship request that has to be completed for funding requests. His company uses one and they find it helpful when deciding on funding amounts.

A motion was made by Tim Huck to approve a \$1,000 donation to ShrevePride for Q Prom. The motion was seconded by Michael Corbin and carried unanimously.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

There were no public comments.

XIII. ADJOURN

With no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 5:11 pm

Kyle Southard, Secretary