

**Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
October 25, 2023**

Present

Michael Corbin
Drayden Dunn
Chelette Holden
Tim Huck
Kathy Malone
Terry Moore

Absent

Kyle Southard

Staff

Liz Swaine
Janie Landry
Stacie Leng
Peggy Hellyer

Others Present

Brittany Dunn
Craig Lee

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:40 pm by Chair Michael Corbin.

II. ROLL CALL

Peggy Hellyer called roll. Kyle Southard was absent.

III. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

There was no action taken on the approval of absences.

IV. AMEND AGENDA

The agenda was not amended.

V. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS

There were no introductions or presentations.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Swaine welcomed Brittany Dunn, Chairperson of the Shreveport Bossier African American Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Dunn stated that she was “attending the meeting to speak on the recent incidents of harassment directed toward Haze.” She stated that SBAACC is working with the mayor’s office to rectify the proposed noise ordinance. A letter from SBAAC was forwarded to each member of the board.

Ms. Dunn further stated that:

“Haze is being targeted, saying they have trash on their parking lot and other businesses are not being targeted like that. We have board members that are on the Haze board that are specifically targeting Haze, calling police, the ABO and all types of organizations on this business and we are trying to work through this with the city. The DDA board should be able to tame this and keep this under control, so you don’t have two board members fighting in public. That’s embarrassing to the community, and it’s bad that so many organizations have to be involved and you sit here around the table every meeting and can’t even work through this properly and it has to be exposed and one person has to deal with the fact that she is fighting for her business We are here today in support of Haze; that the bullying must stop and we need to wait until the ordinance is in place but until then all the phone calls, all of the things that are going on behind the scenes, we need it to cease.”

Mr. Corbin thanked her for her comments.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes

Ms. Swaine asked for a review of the October 25, 2023, regular meeting minutes and for any revisions.

A motion was made by Tim Huck to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2023, meeting. Terry Moore seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

B. September 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement

Ms. Swaine reviewed the September 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement and all expenses and payments are in line with estimates. The Streetscape and Parking payments from the city are current.

C. Ms. Swaine noted that nothing is out of the ordinary relative to expenses. She said the Artspace support line item will be over at the end of year because needed repairs were made to the building, which DDA owns. She also said that some expenditure will be made on downtown beautification projects before year-end.

Kathy Malone asked if the Once in a Millennium Moon mural will be receiving a UV coating. Ms. Swaine reported that she is working with SRAC on that project.

A motion was made by Kathy Malone to approve the August 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. Chelette Holden seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING - 2024 Budget and Program of Work

A motion was made by Terry Moore to call the public hearing to order. The motion was seconded by Drayden Dunn and approved unanimously.

Michael Corbin asked if visitors had any comments. Drayden Dunn stated that he wants all DDA staff members to earn a living wage. Ms. Swaine said this topic would be discussed under the budget item in New Business. Brittany Dunn asked if there was a public record of the DDA salaries. Ms. Swaine reported that DDA salaries are a matter of public record, and that the information could be provided.

A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Chelette Holden and approved unanimously.

IX. REPORTS

A. Director's Report

NW Louisiana State Building - 500 Fannin St.

Official Groundbreaking Monday, Oct. 30, 10:30 am

Phase I:

- The asbestos abatement of all asbestos containing materials on site.
- Complete exterior and interior demolition of the main building. Only floor slabs and steel structure will remain.
- Demolition of the existing parking garage.
- Gill Industries in Shreveport will oversee Phase 1 and will be using Lloyd Nabors Demolition for the major demolition.
- *This portion of the project is scheduled to take 300 days, with estimated completion July 14, 2024.*

- **Total Building Completion** expected late 2025/early 2026

Cooper's Corner - 700 Texas Street

- Hopeful Opening Dec 1 or 2 2023
- 101st Anniversary of the Building

Uneeda Biscuit Lofts - 711 Milam Street

- 32 Units – 50% artist/50% market rate
- 8 units are available | 5 affordable|3 market rate

PPG Building - 525 Cotton Street

- Zoning change approved from D-1CBD to D-1HC
- Owner states he will hold 3,000-5,000SF for mixed uses

Opposition to proposed Alternate Route 3A

- Comments can be emailed to info@i49.com

Columbus LunchBucks Program

- Downtown Shreveport 'Lunch on Us'
- Tuesdays and Wednesdays, beginning Nov. 7- Dec. 20

Downtown Artwalk

- Wednesday, Nov. 1, 5-8 pm

Pink Weekend!

- Friday and Saturday, Nov. 17 & 18

B. Parking Report

Lorenzo Lee reported information on August parking revenue. He anticipated this month to be down, but it was better than expected. In August 12 vehicles were booted (\$495 was the highest amount owed). Four vehicles were booted in September.

X. OLD BUSINESS

A. Downtown Amenity Fund / Downtown Lighting Grants

There have been two sponsors to date for pots: Riverside Roofing and Shreveport Green. Sponsorships are \$300. Sponsors will get a plaque in the pot. Eventually there will be groupings of pots at each location consisting of one large and two small pots, but initially each location will have a single large pot. DSDC received a grant for three EV chargers. Tim Huck asked about the time it will take to charge a vehicle. Michael Corbin stated that the chargers will charge all types of vehicles and will take about an hour for approximately 64 miles. Every electric vehicle has a different rate of charge. Most newer vehicles can accept electrons better. Ms. Swaine said technology continues to change but the grant made it possible to secure a few chargers. DDA can apply for another grant in the future. Downtown Shreveport will be included on the national map of chargers.

B. City-wide Bond Issue

Ms. Swaine reported that the Bond Committee is still reviewing proposals, and no public hearings have been announced. Terry Moore, who is a committee member, said that no decisions have been made yet, and a date has not been set to present to council.

C. Noise Ordinance Update

Ms. Swaine reported that the mayor vetoed the ordinance that was approved by city council. There is an updated ordinance being proposed that sets the decibel level at 80 as opposed to the previous 85. The remainder of the ordinance mirrors the previous ordinance. The proposed ordinance will require two readings.

D. DDA Bylaws and Attendance Policy

Ms. Swaine said that state rules and regulations override the DDA bylaws, and the bylaws do not match existing state legislation. Staff will work with DDA counsel Jerry Jones regarding the issue.

Drayden Dunn stated he would like a board committee to be formed to review the bylaws.

Michael Corbin said that it will take board approval to approve the bylaws once DDA receives the revisions from Mr. Jones.

Chelette Holden asked why a board member is unable to resign from the board. Ms. Swaine responded that a board member can ask to resign, but the process requires recommendations from the appointing organization being sent to the Mayor who then selects a nominee and submits that name to City Council for action.

Janie Landry pointed out that a previous board member, John Hubbard, had resigned when he retired and asked for a replacement to be named. It was months before Mr. Hubbard's replacement was named, and he had to continue to serve on the board, attending occasionally for quorum purposes. Ms. Landry reminded the members that even upon their resignation until their replacement is named, they also have to abide by the state ethics laws regarding training and filing of Financial Disclosure forms.

Ms. Holden asked if the board must be notified of a member's resignation. She stated her opinion that knowing about a resignation would have mattered before votes were taken to excuse absences at previous meetings.

Michael Corbin reiterated that the issue was reviewed and discussed in the teleconference call with Mr. Jones and re-stated in the September minutes and that until such time as a nomination is approved the person who resigned is still a board member. He reminded the board that, in reality, there are no approved or unapproved absences.

Ms. Landry commented that approval of absences and the DDA bylaws are inconsistent with state statutes and should have been corrected previously. Ms. Swaine said that staff often does not find out who is being nominated for a board position until the name is on the council agenda.

Brittany Dunn asked when the DDA notifies the mayor, city council, and the nominating organization of a board member's resignation.

Michael Corbin reiterated that there is no resignation. He said that a board member who decides he/she no longer wants to serve should inform the nominating organization so that the group may submit names to the mayor for replacement. Mr. Huck did alert Downtown Shreveport Unlimited (DSU) that he wished to be replaced. DSU has been in a state of flux because their executive director recently left, so the issue was not immediately addressed. They also had to present three names to the mayor for consideration. Mr. Huck also spoke to Ms. Swaine and said that he wished

to resign because he did not want to pull DDA into a personal conflict. Ms. Swaine reiterated that when Mr. Huck spoke before the city council, he was speaking as a private citizen and not as a DDA board member. She commented that she appreciated the fact that he did not want to involve DDA in the conflict.

Brittany Dunn stated her opinion that the entire board should be notified when a member wishes to resign. Michael Corbin reminded everyone that even when the names are submitted from the nominating organization in a timely fashion, the nomination can be held up for months in the mayor's office.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2024 Budget and Program of Work

Ms. Swaine reported that the budget committee met shortly before the board meeting to review the proposed 2024 budget. Committee members are Drayden Dunn, Michael Corbin and Kathy Malone. Mr. Corbin stated his opinion that the budget is conservative and closely mirrors the 2023 budget. Revenue is estimated to be 98% of the property tax revenue that will be received in 2024. The tax revenue is DDA's primary source of income.

Ms. Swaine stated that invested funds are expected to increase in value due to higher interest rates. She noted that the interest line item is estimated to be \$70k. Salary and admin expenses remain the same, but there is a slight increase in retirement, medical, payroll taxes, and workers comp. The proposed budget has a new line item: long-term projects which is funded at \$114,552. She explained that the long-term projects line item was included due to the increased revenue expected from interest. This line item allows money to be set aside for projects that make a long-term difference downtown, including things that will positively affect existing businesses, bring new business, add residential numbers, and increase foot traffic.

2024 is a reassessment year, and there is some concern that property tax revenue may decrease. Ms. Landry reminded the board that the annual budget has to be amended if revenue is under or expenses are over by 5%. If the money is reflected in the budget, it would not have to be amended.

Michael Corbin asked when the tax rolls come out. Ms. Landry said the books recently closed. Charles Hennington, Caddo Tax Assessor, did not seek re-election, so staff will be working with a new assessor in 2024. If revenue is significantly down, the legislative auditor's office can adjust the millage rate so the revenue will remain approximately the same.

Drayden Dunn stated his opinion that PrizeFest was a wonderful event, and he would like the board to continue to support it and perhaps consider increasing the grant amount. He also said he would like the board to consider paying a living wage to all DDA employees and, therefore, increase the hourly rate to \$15 if possible. Ms. Swaine said the budget did not have to be changed to do that, but a review of the Streetscape budget would be necessary to determine where the additional funds would come from. Michael Corbin suggested that for 2024 for hourly employees, an increase of one dollar per hour might be more feasible. Mr. Corbin asked what the fiscal impact of such an increase would have on the budget. Ms. Swaine reported that some employees have had raises very recently. Michael Corbin asked for clarification related to the process of the budget approval. Janie Landry stated that once the DDA board approves the program of work/budget it goes to council and has to be voted on within 30 days.

A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to approve the 2024 DDA Budget and Program of Work as presented. The motion was seconded by Terry Moore and approved unanimously.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Michael Corbin told the board that an important agreement was recently reached between the city and Krewes of Centaur and Gemini. The mayor is willing to agree to a multiyear agreement if the events are successful in February. The changes should help with safety. The Krewes must secure bonds, there can be no gaps between floats, and there must be police officers on duty. Wreckers will also be in the parade line to assist with breakdowns. The parades are to be concluded, and crowds clearing out by 7 pm. Both parades will start at Sci-port.

Michael Corbin said he would like to make a few comments before adjourning the meeting. He said the last few months have been challenging, although progress is being made. He said he attends many meetings around the city and that for the last few months, he has been hearing recaps of DDA meetings from people who were not in attendance. He reiterated that DDA meetings are open and encouraged board members to invite anyone to come and speak if those individuals believe there are issues not being addressed by DDA. Mr. Corbin said the Authority exists to support downtown businesses, developers, and taxpayers who ultimately fund DDA. He said anyone can complain, but asked whether or not they could provide better solutions. He thanked everyone and noted his appreciation for the board's participation in making Downtown Shreveport a better place.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

There were no public comments.

XIII. ADJOURN

With no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Kyle Southard, Secretary