

**Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
November 15, 2023**

Present

Michael Corbin
Drayden Dunn
Chelette Holden (arrived 3:49)
Tim Huck (left at 4:44)
Kathy Malone (Left at 4:50)
Terry Moore (arrived 3:43)
Kyle Southard

Absent

Staff

Liz Swaine
Janie Landry
Stacie Leng
Peggy Hellyer

Others Present

Councilman Gary Brooks

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

There were no absences.

III. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

There was no action taken on the approval of absences. This item will be removed from future agendas.

IV. AMEND AGENDA

The agenda was not amended.

V. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS

There were no introductions or presentations.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes

Ms. Swaine asked for a review of the October 25, 2023, regular meeting minutes and for any revisions. Drayden Dunn had two revisions to the minutes: 1. He requested the board grant an increase for PrizeFest and also mentioned increasing the overall grant line item for other festivals and events. 2. Regarding employee/staff raises he would like the minutes to reflect that a cost analysis was requested in the meeting for Streetscape raises and raises for employees who are already earning \$15 per hour. He stated that Kathy Malone voiced the idea and he and other board members agreed.

A motion was made by Tim Huck to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2023, meeting as amended. Drayden Dunn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

B. October 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement

Ms. Swaine reviewed the October 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement. She stated that a small amount of tax revenue was recently received but noted that most of the tax revenue has already been received for the year. The Streetscape and Parking contracts are current. Some interest income has been received.

On the expense side, she noted that staff parking has increased, and the insurance line item will be over. Some funds were spent on watering the new trees due to lack of rain. She spoke with Bossier

Parish about their trees and was informed that they do not water theirs but rather let the trees die and then replace, which they believe is less expensive than recurring watering.

The Earthplanters have arrived. Michael Corbin said that in front of Midsouth Tower there is a water spigot in a box and asked if there are many downtown. Ms. Swaine responded that there are a few but not all are working. The spigots are located at the base of parking meters. Streetscapes uses the spigots for watering the older trees. Tim Huck commented that the spigots are often turned on and left running and said that he has witnessed individuals turning them on. He puts straps on the meters as he sees this type of activity happening.

A motion was made by Kyle Southard to approve the September 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. Tim Huck seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VIII. REPORTS

A. Director's Report

1. Vandalism Downtown
Dangerous vandalism occurred Tues. night/Wed. morning, Nov. 7/8
Sun. night/Mon. morning, Nov.12/13
Coopers Corner windows were hit on two occasions.
Other businesses were also targeted with what officials are calling a high velocity hunter grade sling shot.
No calls of gunfire.
SPD has video of car and the slingshot.
2. NW Louisiana State Building - 500 Fannin Street
Official Groundbreaking Monday, Oct. 30, 10:30 am
Phase I – Abatement of all asbestos containing materials on site.
Complete exterior and interior demolition of the main building.
The only items that will remain will be the floor slabs and steel structure.
Demolition of the existing parking garage.
Gill Industries in Shreveport will oversee Phase 1 and will use 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.
3. Millennium Studio
Introduction of Ordinance at City Council 11-14-23.
Lease Millennium to G Unit Film & Television, LLC.
G-Unit Film and Television Inc. is a film and television production company founded by rapper 50 Cent in 2003.
Terms: Lease for property is \$200/month. G-Unit to pay all utilities, insurance, interior and exterior repairs, exterior upkeep, and for any injury/loss of life while working there.
Building will be back on the tax roll.
4. Petroleum Tower - 425 Edwards St.
Project still viable.
Additional investors.
Developers will be in town in early December to meet with mayor.

5. RiverView Park
Bids being received to replace/repair spray park.
Completion anticipated by early summer.
New technology.
6. Cooper's Corner - 700 Texas Street.
Potential opening Dec. 1 or 2, 2023.
101st anniversary of the building.
Pending final approval by Fire Marshal
7. Lunch on Us a Hit.
Tuesdays and Wednesdays (except. Nov. 20) through Dec. 20.
Kyle Southard asked if meals were comped by restaurants. Ms. Swaine reported that DDA is repaying the restaurants at the end of each month.

Drayden Dunn inquired about the budget for Lunch on Us. Ms. Swaine stated that the program ran for 7 weeks and if all the tickets are given out, the cost will be \$7,000.

Pink Weekend Downtown Nov. 17-18
Beat Black Friday & Cyber Week.

Fusion Nutrition and Moons and Sage grand opening 11/17/23
8. LOTS of things happening downtown between now and Christmas!
Calendar at: www.downtownshreveport.com/events

B. Parking Report

Lorenzo Lee stated that the month was better than anticipated in all areas. November and December are typically slower due to holidays. Only one vehicle was booted last month. He also reported that a vehicle was booted on the day of the meeting. The vehicle owner removed and damaged the boot. Law enforcement was alerted. A unique key is needed to unlock the boot. A Sheriff's deputy saw the owner removing the boot and was able to apprehend the individual. It is likely that ShrevePark Parking will have to acquire new boots. Tim Huck asked if the vehicle was towed. Mr. Lee reported that did it was not, but towing is possible.

Drayden Dunn asked how many parking lots are owned by Douglas Parking. Ms. Swaine responded that Douglas does not own any of the lots but manages them. Mr. Dunn said his vehicle was towed without warning from the lot on the corner of Travis and Market Streets while he was at an event, and he had to pay a \$300 towing fee. Ms. Swaine said she received a call from an LSU student who also got towed without a ticket warning. Terry Moore said in the Louisiana Tower parking garage, they are trying to sell stickers for parkers' vehicles to make sure the vehicles are parked where they are supposed to be. This is in addition to the monthly fee. He said that Douglas Parking is very hard to get on the phone.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Downtown Security and Homeless

Ms. Swaine reported that the shattered windows brought refocused attention to the fact that downtown has fewer SPD officers/patrols. She said she understands the allocation of resources but there is a real need for officers downtown at certain times. Caddo Common Park has become a homeless camping area, especially at night on the new pavilion stage. Residents in the apartments across the street have complained stating that they are having to walk over people to get to their

doors and it feels unsafe. Tim Huck stated his opinion that SPD is not doing proactive policing. Michael Corbin said he still has office space available for downtown officers, and there has been no response from SPD.

B. Downtown Amenity Fund / Downtown Lighting Grant

Ms. Swaine reported that the EarthPlanters have arrived and are very large. The planters will be extremely heavy when planted with soil and plants. A number of sponsors have signed up. The 41” planters will be installed in the early spring.

C. City-wide Bond Issue / Riverfront Development Fund

Ms. Swaine reported the group is still determining what to include. Terry Moore, who is on the committee, stated they have made no decisions to date. Michael Corbin said there is a meeting tomorrow night to give the administration’s final presentation to the committee. Drayden Dunn asked why the downtown lighting grant is not being utilized. There are lights out at the Aquarium parking garage; can DDA assist? Ms. Swaine stated that is a city owed parking garage and the city—either SPAR or Traffic Engineering, should be notified.

D. Noise Ordinance Update

Ms. Swaine reported on a 5-2 vote by the City Council for 75 decibels until 1 am and then 70 decibels after. The Noise Ordinance is city-wide. The companion legislation, which is the enforcement piece, is still on the agenda and should be voted on at the next council meeting.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Policies Regarding Changes to the Open Meetings Law

Ms. Landry reported that she was notified by the Legislative Auditors Office that DDA must update its procedures to include ADA accommodation requests. Teleconference participation will be the option chosen. The new document outlines procedures for the public to be able to participate and for any board member who may need ADA accommodation. She stated that she conferred with an attorney at the Auditor’s office and with DDA legal counsel and the proposed document meets with their approval.

A motion was made by Kyle Southard to accept the updated DDA ADA accommodation policy as written. The motion was seconded by Terry Moore and passed unanimously.

B. Staff Raise Discussion

Kathy Malone had to leave the meeting at this time but asked the board members to consider how much the board should be involved in issues such as DDA staff salaries. She asked the board members not to make any hasty decisions.

A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to move into Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Terry Moore and passed unanimously. (The board went into Executive Session at 4:50 pm.)

A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to reconvene into Regular Session. The motion was seconded by Chelette Holden and passed unanimously. (The board reconvened into Regular Session at 5:18 pm.)

C. Red River District Field Immersion Study

Drayden Dunn asked Ms. Swaine to review the study for the newer board members. Under former Mayor Perkins’ administration Harvard University reviewed the Red River District and made

suggestions for improvements. Six Harvard MBA students visited Shreveport, held a variety of meetings with stakeholders and compiled a report. They invested approximately 100 hours in the project. The findings were presented to city officials and the DDA.

- A thriving Red River District would benefit the City, SPAR, DDA, Convention & Tourist Bureau, Lea Hall Properties, tenants, and the people of Shreveport.
- Current negatives are: lack of business, perception of lack of safety, lack of foot traffic, poor publicity/communication, no unified vision, insufficient structure regarding leases, hours, and too many changes.
- The former SPAR employee who managed the district previously retired and was not replaced.

The consensus from the team was as follows:

- The RRE should be positioned as “Shreveport’s premier entertainment district.”
- The Harvard team believes that the entertainment district could successfully serve different people who visit the area.
- It should primarily target an audience of 25- to 34-year-olds with middle/high income levels who want a place to go after work, in the evenings, and at night (“Party Paulas”).
- The district could also target families who visit the area to go to places like the Aquarium, Sci-Port and the soon-to-be-built sports complex during the day (“Family Franks”).
- The actual businesses in the area should appeal to the Party Paulas, but a thoughtful selection of restaurants would also appeal to the Family Franks who visit the area for various activities outside the RRD.

The report was sent to the City and the administration appeared to be interested but it appears not to be a priority now. Drayden Dunn thanked Ms. Swaine for the review. He said that Chase Boytim ranted on social media recently about the lights under the bridge. Mr. Dunn would like the board to support the RRD, lean on the study, have exploratory conversations, work with Councilman Brooks, take a proactive approach and be certain that the public sees the efforts.

Michael Corbin said that the role of the DDA is to be a supportive partner to the city. There are numerous issues with the buildings in the RRD including HVAC and roof leaks. A good strategy might be to get past the possible bond issue in the spring and then follow up with the RRD discussions afterwards. The issues with lighting, etc. are the responsibility of the city. The largest space in the district still has a dirt floor.

Ms. Swaine reported that the lighting in the RRD has been updated. She said the upgrade was in the works before Mr. Boytim’s recent complaints. There are new businesses in the district including Cassandra’s Riverfront Restaurant and Fusion Nutrition. Cassandra has reportedly invested \$50k already. One other lease is anticipated to be signed in the near future according to RRD property manager Debra Camus.

Terry Moore asked how the casinos are doing relative to attendance. Councilman Brooks stated he has not checked the numbers in the last few weeks. Michael Corbin said it is his understanding that the numbers are ticking up slightly. Terry Moore asked if the numbers increasing enough for spillage into the RRD. Drayden Dunn said that GloFest is doing great.

SPAR has a stage and could draw crowds from coordinated events. Terry Moore also suggested that the Independence Bowl could be a draw. Ms. Swaine said it is a natural location for events such as the Independence Bowl. Kyle Southard reported that Lafayette is hosting many events, allows for open containers and attracts huge audiences. Tim Huck reminded the board that Lafayette is a college town and Shreveport is not. Also, Lafayette allows ages 18 and up in the clubs. Kyle Southard said Shreveport's architecture is so much better than that of Lafayette.

E. Appointment of Bylaws Committee

Michael Corbin, Chelette Holden, Drayden Dunn and Kyle Southard agreed to serve on the Bylaws Committee.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilman Brooks reported that SPAR is completely overwhelmed. They have too many properties to manage. G-Unit / Millenium Studios is a fabulous deal for the city. The benefits far outweigh the terms of the lease. He personally thinks DDA could be a better property manager than SPAR. 18 and up would be a benefit but would require more policing. Open containers are a must and could be policed.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

There were no public comments.

XIII. ADJOURN

With no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 5:18 pm.

Kyle Southard, Secretary