

**Downtown Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
December 20, 2023**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Others Present</b>
Michael Corbin		Liz Swaine	Councilman Gary Brooks
Drayden Dunn		Janie Landry	Ed Crawford
Chelette Holden (Arrived 3:37)		Stacie Leng	Craig B. Lee
Tim Huck (Arrived 3:42)		Peggy Hellyer	Alvin Childs
Kathy Malone			Kevin Bryan
Terry Moore (via phone)			Jerry Jones (via phone)
Kyle Southard			

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 pm by Chair Michael Corbin.

**II. ROLL CALL**

There were no absences. Mr. Moore attended virtually via phone.

**III. AMEND AGENDA**

The agenda was not amended.

**IV. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS**

There were no introductions or presentations.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Corbin thanked Ms. Swaine for her 13 years of tireless service to the DDA. He stated his opinion that DDA does more and more every year. 2023 was a good year for Artwalk. He also acknowledged that more properties were developed and put back on the tax rolls. DDA frequently receives criticism for its responsibility of parking enforcement. DDA is also the brunt of criticism for downtown vacant properties and other things over which the organization has no control. The DDA is not responsible for creating ordinances or determining zoning requirements. Like many cities, downtown's occupancy rate is down. It was also noted that change is necessary to create density by converting office space to residential where possible and creating usage such as data centers to attract businesses to the district.

Mr. Corbin encouraged board members to tell the story of what DDA and the board is doing to be a cheerleader, relationship builder with property owners, elected officials, and the Administration. Mr. Corbin stated his concern regarding the delay with the vacant building ordinance. Vacant buildings affect perception of downtown and the city as a whole. A number of good things are on the horizon for downtown and Shreveport, but success demands more engagement with city government.

Guest Ed Crawford gave his opinion that the DDA Executive Director position should require a national search. He stated that given all the challenges, the DDA needs to hire the best person possible for the job.

**VI. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Minutes**

Mr. Corbin asked for any changes to the November 15, 2023 meeting minutes.

**A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2023, meeting minutes. Kathy Malone seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

## **B. 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement**

Ms. Swaine reviewed the November 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement. She stated that nothing is out of line relative to income and expense.

**A motion was made by Tim Huck to approve the November 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. Kathy Malone seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

## **VII. REPORTS**

### **A. Director's Report**

1. Millennium Studio- 30-year lease to G UNIT/ 50 Cent  
Lease runs through 2032. Automatic 22-year Renewal.  
\$2400 per year/Triple Net  
Property will be on tax roll.  
Lease begins January 1st.  
Plans call for hiring majority of employees locally
2. Forte and Tablada Moving Downtown  
1010 Marshall Street.  
January 2024
3. NW State Office Building  
500 Fannin St.
4. Petroleum Tower, 425 Edwards St.  
Project still a possibility.  
Investors met with Mayor.  
Two new investors now on board.  
\$25 million project.  
Mostly market rate apartments are planned.
5. Bond Committee did not forward Downtown Garage to Administration for inclusion.  
Garage would affect rehab of Johnson, Rubenstein/Lanford, Slattery, and Centerpoint Buildings  
Conversation about a public/private parking garage should not end. Banks want to see parking included with redevelopment plans.
6. RiverView Park Repairs  
Bids being received to replace/repair spray park for anticipated early summer completion  
\$30K Centerpoint grant for LED lighting.
7. DSDC EV Chargers  
\$36K LaDEQ Grant.  
Kathy Malone loaned her Tesla for a demonstration.  
Chargers should be functional by January 2024.
8. Uneeda Biscuit Artist Lofts, 711 Milam St.  
13 spaces adjacent to building for parking.  
FMC lot and street parking nights and weekends.  
Former Selber Brothers parking garage possibility.  
32 units; 100% occupied.
9. 2024 Moves
  - Appli-K's – from 616 Texas to 431 Crockett St. Crockett St. Trading Company. Refine Design closing.
  - High Gravity Glassworks - from 1200 Marshall to 1010 Texas Avenue.
  - Gator Ceramics Dental to 1200 Marshall St.
  - Maven Royalty Partners- from 620 Texas St. to 1065 Provenance Place Blvd
  - Anderson Oil & Gas- 333 Texas Street to their own building in south Shreveport
10. Window Vandalism Downtown- DSDC Offer of \$1,000 to assist businesses affected.

700 Texas (Cooper's Corner), 616 Texas (Refine Design), 212 Texas (Wade Sample), 214 Texas (Bailey Gallery). No suspects caught yet.

11. Lunch on Us a HUGE hit.

7 weeks- \$7,000 (Marketing)

Employees and restaurants loved it.

Consider repeating the program in the spring for possibly four weeks.

Funds were taken out of marketing budget.

Participants loved getting the coupons and tried out different restaurants.

12. Adopt a Pot

Sponsorships continue to be received.

Pot will be set up soon.

Garrison's assisting with peat planting material wholesale.

Tim Hoover (Aquarium horticulturist) will work with DDA staff on best time to roll out all pots

16 sponsors - most of them out of downtown.

13. Christmas is nearly here!

Robinson Film Center's Twelve Deals of Christmas

The Grove, The Agora Borealis, Refine Design/Appli-Ks, Lena's Shoes, C&C Mercantile and Lighting, On Time Fashion, Bailey Gallery, High Gravity Glassworks, Sanctuary Glass!

Gift cards from many downtown eateries.

Gift cards/memberships from: Shreveport Aquarium, Sci-Port, RFC, the Strand Theatre.

## **B. Parking Report**

Lorenzo Lee stated that revenue for last month was better than last year by a significant amount. Total revenue for the year will likely be slightly under 2023's total. Drayden Dunn asked if the Gator has a heater. Ms. Swaine reported that it has a windshield which should help. Mr. Lee reported that there was a total of six boots for the month. Next year he will be looking for approval from the city for additional revenue to replace more of the older meters that are prone to more theft and vandalism. He stated other goals are to complete the curb painting throughout downtown and installing new ParkMobile signs.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Bylaws Committee**

This issue was tabled.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Executive Director Search**

DDA Attorney Jerry Jones joined the meeting via phone. Michael Corbin reported that a search committee had been formed. The committee consists of: DDA board members Michael Corbin, Drayden Dunn and Terry Moore. DSDC is represented by two board members, Kevin Bryan and Jeri Little. Terry Moore went through this process when Ms. Swaine was hired. The goal is to get the job posted in early January and then bring one or two qualified candidates to the board by the end of February or perhaps early March for interviews. All candidates need to be thoroughly vetted. Shreveport is currently competing against downtown Lafayette for a director for approximately the same salary range and job responsibilities. Michael Corbin will forward the job description to everyone when completed. He reminded everyone that the Executive Director will be hired by the DDA board, not the mayor or city council.

Jerry Jones reported from a legal standpoint that he has represented DDA through three director searches. The process is always difficult because of the need to get the right person. One important fact for candidates to consider is that their resume will be public record. Interviews are open meetings. The committee must have an open meeting but can go into executive session for discussion. Votes and all recommendations must be public. It is a delicate process, but

compliance must be maintained. Kyle Southard asked about the authority of the entire board as a whole. Mr. Jones stated that ultimately, the board will have authority to make the hire. The chairman has the power whether or not to form a committee. It was noted that the committee is in place. The board must give the committee the power to do the search. Once the recommendations come from the committee to the board, the board will then make the selection. Typically, no more than three people are brought forward for final consideration. Mr. Southard asked if only one person could be recommended by the committee. Mr. Jones said that was possible but added his opinion that it might not be the wisest decision. Mr. Southard asked for clarification in the bylaws where the power is designated to the committee. Jerry Jones said that any member of the board can bring a name to the table, but a committee has already been appointed and the committee will bring a name or names to the board for consideration.

Michael Corbin said some questions have been asked about the delay in moving forward since Ms. Swaine's resignation. He explained that he has been extremely busy with work and travel. He also said the committee will follow the process and vet individuals to bring to the entire board. Whatever the short list ends up being, the qualified candidates will be brought to the board for consideration. Some qualified individuals may decide to back out because of the public component of the process. Mr. Jones reminded board members to bring any names of individuals they want to be considered to the committee as soon as possible to avoid prolonging the process. Kyle Southard stated for clarification that he has no intention of bringing names forward but would like to recommend that more than one name be brought to the board for consideration.

Drayden Dunn asked Mr. Jones if the board should inform the search committee of any parameters they would like the committee to follow. Mr. Jones responded that now would be the appropriate time to do so. Drayden Dunn stated his opinion that according to the bylaws the chairman is a non-voting member of the committee. He noted there are five currently serving on the committee, so that would leave two DDA and two DSDC board members. He asked Mr. Jones if it would behoove the board to add another person to the committee.

Ms. Swaine commented that the DDA bylaws are outdated and have been non-functioning for years. She also stated she does not know how much weight or authority the bylaws actually carry. Mr. Jones stated that the bylaws are not suggestions, and though they are outdated they are still what DDA must work with. As he did not have a copy of the bylaws for reference, he asked for clarification relating to the chair as being ex-officio. Mr. Dunn said that the language regarding the chair reads ex-officio for all committees. Mr. Jones then replied that Mr. Corbin can appoint himself chairman of the search committee and can be a voting member.

Ms. Swaine suggested that the committee present the candidates as a weighted list. This will be a public appointment, open to the public to attend, and all information will be available to the public. Ms. Landry stated that she has been at DDA through four previous executive director searches and that there is documentation from those searches in the files. Mr. Corbin gave his opinion that three names would be perfect as finalists to present to the board. Ms. Swaine said the requirements for the job will cull the herd quickly.

Drayden Dunn asked if the board could talk about the psychology of adding DSDC to the search committee. Michael Corbin said that the two boards interact closely with the executive director, so it is important that DSDC have input. DSDC pays a management fee to DDA for staff resources. Even though the boards are aligned, DSDC's program of work is different from DDA's. Also, it was pointed out that having five DDA members on the search committee would constitute a quorum, and committee meetings would then be designated as a public

meeting which would require the meeting to be advertised and conducted in public. The intent is to go public after the committee recommendations have been made. Currently the executive director serves as director of both organizations.

Tim Huck recommended a maximum of four finalists from the committee. He said four would not be a mandatory number, but rather a maximum number. Kyle Southard suggested maybe a minimum number would be better than a maximum number. Jerry Jones said that the committee should be allowed to present fewer or more than the four if appropriate.

**Tim Huck made a motion for the board to accept the search committee's recommendations as presented, with the requirement to bring four names minimum to present to the board for consideration unless they give justification not to bring forward four names. Kathy Malone seconded the motion. The vote was delayed by discussion.**

Michael Corbin stated that the committee has to work within the salary range and that the candidate would, of course, have to move to Shreveport if the search goes to a regional or national level. The search committee needs to vet the candidates about their feelings about Shreveport. Mr. Jones gave a real-world example. Many years ago, a water and sewerage director was hired from Buffalo, and he remained on the job less than 12 months. Ms. Swaine reminded the board members that they can talk to the committee at any time during the process. She will make sure the job description will be very detailed relative to the skills required.

Mr. Southard wants to make sure the public understands how thorough the search was. He said he could not understand a scenario where the committee will not be able to get four qualified applicants. Mr. Corbin said that at some point, the board must trust the search committee. He also stated that the position is a very specialized job. Mr. Southard also asked to what extent the DDA owes the citizens who take an interest in downtown and in the next DDA director. Ms. Swaine stated that the board's responsibility is to be accountable to downtown property owners. The DDA is funded from taxes on downtown properties. The reason the DDA was created was to promote and revitalize the Downtown Development District. The DDA should be a beacon on the hill, doing its best to attract people to downtown Shreveport, encourage individuals to want to live, work, and invest here.

The motion was restated for the board by the recording secretary.

**Tim Huck made a motion for the board to accept the search committee's recommendations as presented, with the requirement to bring forward four names minimum to present to the board, unless they give justification not to bring forward four names. Kathy Malone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **B. 416 Cotton Street Roof Replacement**

A review of the problems with the roof of 416 Cotton was presented to the board. The roof is leaking and causing significant water problems in the office. Three quotes have been received ranging in price from \$13K to \$214K. Southern Roofing determined that the endcaps on the standing seam metal roof are missing in some places and water is also leaking around the air conditioning equipment. Previous AC repairs have caused the standing seams to collapse.

**Drayden Dun made a motion to allow DDA staff to move forward with repair/installation of endcaps, and then to proceed with additional repairs not to exceed \$45K if the endcap work does not solve the issue. The motion was seconded by Kyle Southard and passed unanimously.**

### **C. Lake Street Letter**

Ms. Swaine asked the board to review a proposed letter from the DDA to the city asking the city to provide updated information to the business owners on Lake Street regarding what was supposed to have been a two-year closure of the Lake Street railroad crossing in 2015. She received a from the railroad via the mayor's office that the railroad considers the crossing permanently closed.

**Kyle Southard made a motion to support a letter asking the city to provide updated information to the businesses on Lake Street regarding the closed railroad crossing on Lake Street. Chelette Holden seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

### **D. Bank Signatories**

Ms. Swaine asked for a motion to authorize the DDA to add and remove signatories at financial institutions.

**A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to authorize the DDA to add and remove signatories at financial institutions. Tim Huck seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

## **X. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Swaine took the opportunity to thank everyone for their service to the board. She said that supporting downtown is both her vocation and advocacy. She said she will still be living and working downtown and will advocate for downtown in every possible way. She reported her opinion that the political environment has changed over the years, outside forces are finding their way onto the board, and fights are happening that are not the DDA's fights. She also said that with all that considered, DDA must continue to serve the downtown population as best it can.

Tim Huck stated that Ms. Swaine has had an impossible job. He thanked her and expressed his appreciation for all she has done, for her tactfulness in handling the hits she has taken and for all the things she has had to do on DDA's behalf. He gave his opinion that she leaves big shoes to fill. Terry Moore thanked her for all the hard work. He has been on the board since day one of her tenure and is greatly appreciative of all she has done for downtown and the DDA. Kevin Bryan, DSDC President, stated that DSDC does share the director and staff with DDA. He also said DSDC will be as heavily impacted as DDA concerning the new director.

Michael Corbin reported to the board that a press release was sent to media outlets recently that did not come from DDA staff. He asked If any board member finds out who sent the press release to make sure they understand press releases must come from the DDA office. All press releases must be vetted.

## **XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)**

There were no public comments.

## **XII. ADJOURN**

With no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 5:03 pm.