

**Downtown Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
January 31, 2024**

**Present**

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

**Absent**

**Staff**

Janie Landry  
Stacie Leng  
Peggy Hellyer

**Others Present**

Bill Robertson  
Jason Cram  
Destiny Garcia  
Chase Boytim  
Dianne Clark  
Logan Lewis  
Councilman Gary Brooks

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 pm by Chair Michael Corbin.

**II. ROLL CALL**

There were no absences.

**AMEND AGENDA**

The agenda was amended to add the DDA / DSDC Management Agreement to new business.  
The Lake Street Letter discussion was moved from Old Business to Public Comments.

**III. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS**

There were no introductions or presentations.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chase Boytim spoke to the board regarding the Red River District. He has owned Fatty Arbuckle's since 2005. He reported that the District needs attention and help. Councilman Brooks has made good strides regarding the RRD since he has been in office, but more needs to be done. The crowd has shifted away from late nights to an earlier timeframe. People are getting parking tickets that is causing frustration and anger aimed at the City. Many of them are out-of-towners who do not understand the parking system. Ghost Ramen is potentially moving back to the district. Cassandra's Riverfront Restaurant has recently opened. Mr. Boytim is asking for help in revitalizing the district. He stated that in his opinion, crime is not the issue; bad management is the problem. The East Bank in Bossier is the competition, but the Red River District is connected to the casinos. He asked the board if there was anything the DDA could do to support the RRD.

Logan Lewis, Executive Director of the Red River Revel spoke to the board regarding the Lake Street Union Pacific railroad closure. He spoke on behalf of a group of concerned business owners who are affected by what was supposed to be a temporary two-year closure of the railroad crossing in 2015. Bill Roberston, consultant for the business group, said that they have joined forces to push to reopen Lake Street. The city has not been responsive to requests from the group to address the issue. It was stated that there have been promises made to reopen the crossing several times in the past. The Revel has parking lots on both sides of the crossing, and they cannot cross over. Lewis stated that the Holiday Inn has pledged \$250,000 to assist. The crossing is consistently used. Mr. Lewis stated his opinion that having the crossing open as a quiet zone would be a huge help for events at Sci-port, Festival Plaza and more. The railroad has not been helpful in the process. In 2018 the estimate to reopen was \$1.8 million. It is now a much higher number. The group is requesting a statement of support from DDA for the reopening. The challenge is the group does not have access to an engineer to determine costs of reopening, etc.

Michael Corbin reported that he was on the city council when the decision was made to close the crossing. Holiday Inn had lost their flagship, and they requested a quiet zone. It was to be a temporary closing and the

gates were to be opened for special events and festivals. The reopening was brought before the council after two years, but it was not supported by the mayor or council. Holiday Inn put \$250,000 in escrow. The most recent past council voted again, and the proposed legislation did not pass. A letter of support was sent from DDA / DSDC to the council in December of 2023. The railroad has no interest in pursuing a reopening. It is possible that Union Pacific damaged a city street without authority. It was suggested that the city attorney should review to determine if the railroad did damage the street. The re-opening as a quiet zone project was presented to the bond committee but did not make the final cut. He has not seen an official statement from DODT, but he believes the department does not want to reopen the crossing due to the fact that it is a dangerous intersection.

Drayden Dunn asked who the December letter of support was sent to. Ms. Landry reported that it was sent to the mayor's office. Michael Corbin suggested that it be presented directly to the mayor and the head of council. Bill Roberston stated that the December letter was good, but that it is not a definitive statement on the reopening. He would be happy to draft a new one, in which he will address all the issues. A quiet zone is required for the hotels. Mr. Roberston would like a definitive statement of support from the board. Ms. Landry suggested that a resolution would be stronger.

**Tim Huck made a motion for the DDA to draft a resolution to reopen the Lake Street Union Pacific railroad crossing as a quiet zone. Drayden Dunn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Kyle Southard asked what teeth can be in the resolution. Michael Corbin suggested adding city and state officials to the resolution and including them in the mailing. He invited the Lake Street group to come back to the board in the future with updates.

Drayden Dunn asked Chase Boytim what the impact on business was when the previous open container law was in place. Mr. Boytim reported that the open container law was good for business and there was no violent crime due to the law. It ended, in Mr. Boytim's opinion, because the RRD was not being programmed and other bars/nightclubs had moved out of the district. The open container law was in place for two years, according to Mr. Boytim, before it was pulled in 2008 or 2009.

#### **IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

##### **A. Minutes**

Mr. Corbin asked for any changes to the December 20, 2023 meeting minutes.

**A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2023 meeting minutes. Kathy Malone seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

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

Ms. Landry reviewed the December 2023 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement. She stated that nothing is out of line relative to income and expense. The Streetscapes and Parking contracts are current. The mural UV coating and wayfinding signs need to be completed. Insurance has increased, and sponsorships are up over the budgeted amount. The Artspace line item is also more than anticipated primarily due to an increase in utility costs.

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

#### **V. REPORTS**

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

1. Millennium Studio – 300 Douglas Street  
30-year lease to G Unit Film & Television Louisiana and Millennium Studio / Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson

30 Year lease  
Option for 15-year extension  
Lease includes furniture, fixtures & equipment.  
\$2400 per year/Triple Net  
Property will be on tax roll.  
Administration planning signing ceremony

2. Petroleum Tower, 425 Edwards St.  
Project still a possibility.  
New investment group providing financial resources.  
Met with administration in November 2023.  
Asking for sales tax abatement on building materials.  
Also asking for approval of RTA program from 5-10 years to 20 years.  
Mayor reviewing requests. Indicated support of sales tax abatement.  
Hope to start construction summer 2024 (likely 24-month construction period)  
Planned 120 units. Exploring potential for few units to be affordable  
Project will still be market rate for majority of units.
3. RiverView Park Repairs  
Low bidder selected but had to withdraw bid.  
City Purchasing Dept. preparing to start the process over.
4. EV Chargers  
\$35,638 LaDEQ Grant (DSDC) received in January.  
Software installed and chargers functional as of 1/24/24.  
Software company providing training for Aquarium and DSDC (if desired).  
Shreveport Aquarium will set the charging rate to cover utility cost.  
Aquarium or software company can provide necessary annual report from DSDC for state.  
3 chargers – will take 4-6 hrs. to fully charge (Level 2 chargers)  
EVERCharge LLC – Software company believes will get lots of use due to location.
5. Foley and Puls– Market Analysis Study (DSDC)  
Not completed due to Puls health issues.  
DSDC owed \$4250 for reimbursement of retainer fee.  
Talking to Town Square Media to have this study done locally.
6. Robinson Film Center – Abby Singer Bistro Remodel  
Remodel is going well.  
Hope to reopen in February.  
Events and bistro – using Event Center
7. Marketing – Town Square Media  
Considering less expensive marketing campaign  
Working to redesign DDA/DSDC website to be more user friendly (design changes can be made at no extra cost – included in monthly fee).
8. A Truss Bridge – DSDC2, Inc. – Fiscal Agent  
Bobby Jelks – President Franks Foundation – Will provide funding.  
Step 1 – Clear land to access bridge  
Step 2 – Structural Assessment

9. 416 Cotton Street – Roof repairs  
DDA approved repairs and/or new roof not to exceed \$45k.  
Repairs being made currently – Southern Roofing (\$5230)
10. Lake Street Closure  
DDA/DSDC letter of support for re-opening  
Business owners considering options and advocating for reopening.  
RR – no estimate of cost to reopen at this time.
11. Red River District – Open Container Veto – Council Override  
Council mtg. 1/ 23/24 – Voted 5-2 to override Mayor’s veto.  
City will begin development and security plans now.
12. Red River District – Ordinance Change – Meter Parking on Commerce Street  
Legislation introduced by Councilman Brooks to eliminate enforcement on Commerce Street from 11 am – 5 pm.  
Not to be adopted prior to 2/13/24  
Councilman Taliaferro has asked staff for advice relating to removal of meters/use of app.  
The current ordinance allows for free parking from 11am -3pm. Ms. Landry stated DDA does not make money on the meters; all revenue goes to the city.

Lorenzo Lee said that he wanted to update the street to app-only parking with new signage, but he is waiting on traffic and engineering. The railroad owns the right-of-way where the signage needs to be installed. Mr. Lee stated that there is not much traffic on Commerce Street currently and very little revenue from the meters. As the Red River District grows and more people visit the area, enforcement will be required. On-street parking is designed for short term parking.

Ms. Landry said the parking lot at the aquarium is leased to Bally Casino but not used. Councilman Brooks reported that Bally’s has reached an agreement with the aquarium to allow the aquarium to use the garage. Michael Corbin said he would favor exempting Commerce Street from any parking fees. If there is a resurgence of visitors to the casinos, parking could go back to meters or parking by app.

Drayden Dunn stated his opinion that the change could lead to having cars parked there for 24 hours. He believes that signage is required. Lorenzo Lee said extended parking could be reported to SPD, but the patrollers can also monitor vehicles parked there for long periods of time.

Tim Huck gave his opinion that surface parking lots would suffer from free parking. He was in support of eliminating the parking fees currently and then revisiting the issue at a later time if necessary.

Terry Moore asked whether or not Councilman Brooks could research to determine if the city’s website can be updated with parking information.

**Tim Huck made a motion that DDA support no charge for parking at any time on Commerce Street. Drayden Dunn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

13. Forte and Tablada – 1010 Marshall  
Expected move in – February.  
Renovation – New windows; painting façade; remodeling interior  
Jordan Pearson – Manager

14. Gary Yellen Building – 203 Texas Street

Formerly Style Bar

Yellen reports the building has been leased to restaurant.

Reports establishment is in business now; he has known operator for 40 years.

**B. Parking Report**

Lorenzo Lee reported that ticket revenue for the year was \$507K, in line with the previous year.

Additional meter revenue was \$119K. There were six boots last month; the highest was \$205.

Michael Corbin stated that he feels positive about the bagged meters because it means construction is going on.

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Search Committee – Executive Director Position**

Today is the final day for resumes to be submitted. There have been 13 resumes received.

Michael Corbin will be out of town for the rest of the week. He will convene the committee in early February. The committee has the option to extend and try another search. He will report back after the committee meets.

**B. Downtown Security and Homeless**

Ms. Landry reported that SPD made an arrest from the armed robbery at the Hilton and The Lofts at 624. The car has been identified in the downtown window vandalism, but not the suspects.

Michael Corbin reported to the board that he had met recently with Builders Supply at 1400 Marshall St. They are very concerned about a homeless encampment located in a partially collapsed building located at 400 3<sup>rd</sup> St. They are considering a move to Bossier because of it. Terry Moore said that the city must do whatever it takes to retain this business in Shreveport and alleviate the homeless situation. Options could include taking city council members and the city attorney to walk the area and see the situation for themselves. Tim Huck asked Councilman Brooks if he could ask property standards about it at the next council meeting. Michael Corbin said he would ask for a meeting with the mayor and Waddell's Gallery located at 1200 Marshall St. Ms. Landry reported that she was stopped at the traffic light at The Fairmont and a person was banging on the window of the car in front of her asking for money. She reported it to SPD.

**C. Vacant Property Ordinance**

Ms. Landry reported that the ordinance has not come back from the city attorney's office yet.

**D. Downtown Amenity Fund / Lighting Grant**

There was no discussion.

**E. Security Cameras**

Ms. Landry reported that the city needs to sign the management agreement. This should happen at the next city council meeting.

**F. City-wide Bond Issue / Riverfront Development Fund**

No discussion.

**G. By-Laws**

The bylaws committee was appointed at the November 15, 2023 board meeting and consists of Michael Corbin, Chelette Holden, Drayden Dunn and Kyle Southard. Ms. Landry will contact DDA legal counsel to get a potential meeting date with the committee.

**H. 416 Cotton Street Roof Replacement**

Discussed under Director's Report

**I. Lake Street Letter**

Discussed under Public Comments.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Open Container Ordinance – Red River District**

Discussed under Public Comments.

**B. Change to Code of Ordinances relative to hours of operation for parking meters – Red River District**

Discussed under Public Comments.

**C. 2023 Audit – Engagement Letter – Cook & Morehart**

Ms. Landry reported that the auditors will be in the office in March. The cost for the audit will be in the \$22K range.

**A motion was made by Tim Huck to sign the Cook & Morehart 2023 audit engagement letter. The motion was seconded by Terry Moore and passed unanimously.**

**D. DSDC Management Agreement**

**A motion was made by Michael Corbin to accept the 2024 DSDC Management Agreement. The motion was seconded by Tim H**

**X. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

There were no public comments.

**XII. ADJOURN**

With no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 5:01 pm.

---

Kyle Southard, Secretary