

**Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
February 28, 2024**

Present	Absent	Staff	Others Present
Michael Corbin		Janie Landry	Christopher Coe
Drayden Dunn		Stacie Leng	Ed Crawford
Chelette Holden		Peggy Hellyer	David Alexander
Tim Huck			Link Coleman
Kathy Malone			Hayden Wallace
Terry Moore – Arrived 3:44pm			Beth King
Kyle Southard			

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:33 pm by Chair Michael Corbin.

II. ROLL CALL

There were no absences.

AMEND AGENDA

The agenda was not amended.

III. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS

There were no introductions or presentations.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items)

Christopher Coe, Architect, Coe Architects International: Mr. Coe reported that he had sent a letter to the search committee recently. He gave his opinion that Ms. Swaine was experienced at marketing, but he believes the job is now a more legislative role. He believes the city has reached a turning point and needs legal expertise. Other municipalities are moving forward with vacant properties and punitive actions. He believes the job description should also be tweaked.

Link Coleman: UL Coleman Companies: Mr. Coleman reported that UL Coleman’s office has been downtown for years and they own the properties at 201-209 Milam Street. He is very involved in the Urban Land Institute. He believes the DDA Director and MPC Director are the most important positions in downtown. He said the Urban Land Institute had studied Shreveport Bossier in 2008 prior to the implementation of the Master Plan. Tom Murphy of the Institute was the mayor of Pittsburgh when the steel mills closed. He is familiar with Shreveport and has offered to come pro bono with ideas to help reinvigorate downtown. He encouraged the board to take Murphy up on his offer. Michael Corbin asked for a copy of the 2008 study, and Mr. Coleman said he will provide a copy.

Ed Crawford: He stated his believe that the Executive Director job is a professional classification. The DDA needs someone who already knows how to do the job. He suggested hiring a firm that does this type of search and pay more salary if needed. There is definitely a sense of urgency here. He stated his belief that businesses are moving out and no replacements moving in. He believes this situation needs to be turned around very quickly. Outside money can be used to boost the salary.

David Alexander, Vintage Realty: Mr. Alexander was on the DDA board for 10 years and was chair for several of those years. He hired Andy Taft. Mr. Taft had the skills, knowledge, and tools required to do the job. He would encourage the board to take a step back and revise the job description as necessary. Mr. Alexander stated his opinion that the board owes it to the city to see what talent is available and to seek out that person through a regional and national search.

Beth King, Beth King Real Estate: Ms. King agrees with what everyone else said. She said she also believes time is critical . Hiring the right person could take some time. pShe asked the board to not put any current DDA efforts on hold while waiting for the new hire and for that person to be brought up to speed concerning the job. She did not want current DDA efforts to be put on hold.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes

Mr. Corbin asked for any changes to the January 31, 2024, meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Drayden Dunn to approve the minutes of the January 31, 2024, meeting minutes. Chelette Holden seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

B. January 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement

Ms. Landry reviewed the January 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement. She stated that an electronic deposit from the city of approximately \$229K is expected soon and would be the second payment of property taxes. The overall total between the two deposits would represent 98% of the anticipated 2024 budget. The streetscape and parking contracts are paid. DSDC has paid its management agreement. Interest income is up.

Under expenses, the salary line item is higher than normal. Ms. Swaine had 101 days of vacation that was owed to her for a total of \$48k. No other expenditures are out of line. Michael Corbin asked about the vacation carry-over policy for DDA. Ms. Landry reported that there is a policy in place, and staff can only carry over ten days. When Ms. Swaine brought it to the board to approve her vacation rollover, she did not mention how many days would be carried forward or the total amount owed to her in vacation pay. Mr. Corbin stated the need to take vacation for mental health. Drayden Dunn stated that the vacation carry forward should be added to the new hire contract.

A motion was made by Tim Huck to approve the January 2024 Budgetary Comparison Financial Statement as presented. Kathy Malone seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VI. REPORTS

Ms. Landry introduced staff members Monica Rogers, Kathleen Eddy and Kirk Black to the DDA Board. She wanted the board to meet the employees who are behind the scenes.

A. Director's Report

1. DDA 2023 Audit

Cook & Morehart

In office March 11 and 12

2. Artwalks 2024

1st Wednesday each month April – December (except October due to Revel)

April 3, 2024 – Texas Street Corridor

Setting up an artist database; planning few changes; will get artists more involved.
regular meetings with artists to build on current downtown arts infrastructure.

3. DDA 25-Year Tax Renewal

The current authorization period expires 12/31/27

Current millage rate 9.04 mills

Will work with City Administration/DDA Legal Counsel to determine the best date to put

proposition on city-wide ballot.
Property tax paid only by downtown property owners but voted on city-wide.
Will be a renewal; not new tax.
Developing plan of action to engage property owners/business owners.

4. Water Leak – 610 Texas Street – Southern University
City Streets/Drainage called out on Sunday, February 25th.
Determined to be private leak; notified property owner.
Potential damage to two trees in front of the building due to standing water.
Notified Southern of liability in case trees die.

5. A Truss Bridge – DSDC2, Inc. – Fiscal Agent
Private donor – Providing funds for clearing land for access.
\$25,000 received; signed work order for Miller Tree Service (\$22,500); 2/28/24.
Step 1 – Clear land to access bridge.
Step 2 – Structural Assessment

6. 416 Cotton Street – Roof Repairs
DDA approved repairs and/or new roof not to exceed \$45k.
Southern Roofing made repairs (\$5230); 1 area is still leaking.
Getting quotes for environmental review/remediation if necessary.

7. Lake Street Closure
DDA/DSDC letter of support for re-opening
Business owners are considering options and advocating for reopening.
RR – no estimate of cost at this time.
Joint Resolution of Support – DDA/DSDC sent to Mayor, Councilmembers; Businesses advocating for re-opening.

8. 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.
Passed by Council on 2/13/24; effective after Mayor's signature 2/28/24.

9. New restaurant – 605 Texas Street
Angelo's Deli
Homemade comfort food.
Former food truck in Blanchard.
Zandy Hayes
She helped open Missing Link & worked there for 2 yrs.
Opening March 12th
Hrs. Mon – Thurs. 7am-3pm
Fri. 7 am-3 pm; 5pm-9pm
Sat. 11am-3pm; 5pm-9pm

10. Downtown Security Cameras
DDA donation of 4 cameras (\$12,203) to SPD.
City Council approved the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with SPD 2-27-24.

11. DDA Funds to SPD for Downtown Security

DDA transfers money to DSDC for funding additional police downtown.
\$62,674.55 to DSDC since 2021; Officers paid \$35/hr. for 4 hrs. on Saturdays.
\$50,365 used to date.

\$12,309.55 Surplus to apply to 2024.

DDA has \$18,000 allocated in 2024 budget for security.

Surplus + 2024 allocation totals \$30,309.55 and funds program for 108 weeks (if current pay structure remains same).

12. UV Coating – Once in Millennium Moon Mural

Visited Pam Atchison; made decisions relating to ways to reduce costs.

SRAC moving forward now.

Funding carried over from 2022 COS allocation.

13. Holy Trinity Catholic Church – Greyhound Bus Terminal

Spoke with Father Dwayne Trombetta regarding use of the terminal.

Staff will help with HTC if eligible.

Church is reviewing options for use.

14. 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 soon.

15. 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.

Developer waiting for input from Mayor’s office & Community Development Dept.

16. Marketing – Town Square Media

Considering a 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).

17. Forte and Tablada – 1010 Marshall

Renovation has begun – New windows; painting façade; remodeling interior.

Jordan Pearson – Manager

18. Gary Yellen Building – 203 Texas Street
Formerly Style Bar
Yellen reports the building has been leased to a restaurant.
Reports establishment is in business now; he has known operator for 40 years.

Ms. Landry reported that calls have increased greatly about available buildings downtown. Terry Moore stated that everyone needs to support the restaurants that are open; get the word out in the office buildings, target a particular restaurant with a day, discounts, etc. Michael Corbin would like to restart Lunch on Us. Drayden Dunn said that compared to East Bank, parking downtown is the issue. There is no fee to park at East Bank. Perhaps expand the free parking for lunch. He asked if Mr. Lee could run the analytics. He also reported that he attended the ribbon cutting at Abby Singers Bistro and it looks fabulous.

Michael Corbin stated that regarding item 11, downtown police officers, he is still concerned that DDA is paying for what the police department should be doing on their own. He would like to keep the pressure on SPD for a downtown police unit. This is a small victory but need to keep pushing. Downtown absolutely needs a uniform presence. He also reported Public Works will run a street sweeper down Marshall Street to start cleaning up around Builder's Supply.

B. Parking Report

Lorenzo Lee reported there was only three weeks of operation due to the ice storm. The revenue was slightly down. Three vehicles were booted; the largest fine was \$350. Terry Moore asked about the number of spaces DDA manages vs. Douglas Parking. Mr. Lee reported that Douglas Parking is all off-street. ShrevePark only manages on-street parking. Douglas manages has the majority of the spaces downtown. Mr. Moore suggested adding Douglas Parking to the discussion about lunchtime parking. Michael Corbin suggested that perhaps one of the Douglas lots close to the main restaurants could be used.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Search Committee – Executive Director Position

Michael Corbin reported that there was an executive session with DDA / DSDC boards yesterday. He followed up on a question that Kyle Southard asked at the meeting. Applications were accepted through the end of January and every applicant got a thank you note from Mr. Corbin and a rough timeline of the process. The committee created a short job description and borrowed some wording from Lafayette's job description. They also asked Ms. Swaine to add bullet points highlighting her responsibilities which resulted in too much detail being included. The job description is not positive at all. As the process has evolved, it has been determined that the committee is not looking for another Liz Swaine. She did a great job, but the job has evolved as well. The DDA cannot make property owners fix the problems but can ensure that legislation is brought before the city council. The mayor announced that he intends to take the vacant property ordinance to Council early in the second quarter. The DDA board's job and the new executive director's job is to keep that legislation in front of the council. The vacant ordinance would begin implementation downtown and then be expanded to the rest of the city to address blight.

Mr. Corbin's take away from the executive session was that DSDC was not necessarily on board with DDA. Kevin Bryan gave Mr. Corbin the name of a local job recruiter. This recruiter can refine the job description. If a contract is signed with the recruiter, they will open the search, rank the applicants, and take some of the burden off the committee. Drayden Dunn said due diligence needs to be completed, and a rubric should be created. There have not been discussions with any of the current applicants. Mr. Corbin said that if a recruiter is hired, the current

applicants' resumes will be forwarded to be reviewed. Terry Moore stated that Shreveport deserves the very best talent they can get, and it will be worth spending funds, with stakeholder help, to get the best. Kyle Southard said the rewritten job description would be helpful. Michael Corbin stated that the salary range should be commensurate with experience and the DDA is ideally looking for the number two or three person at a downtown organization elsewhere who is ready to step up to be number one. If no one can be convinced to move to Shreveport, the committee or the recruiter can review the original applicant pool and potentially raise the salary.

Christopher Coe commented that he chaired the city's Architectural Committee. The city did not advertise their open positions. He said recruiters will find the best applicant there is. It is possible that the committee may have to reject all the candidates, rewrite the job description, and re-advertise. The current applicants can re-apply.

Terry Moore thanked Mr. Coe for his comments. The DDA wants someone with talent and the headhunters should investigate fast growing areas and include in the search.

Michael Corbin reported that the mayor will be hiring an economic developer for the city very soon.

David Alexander commented that he has no problem with his name being on a donation, which could be used for search costs or in support of the candidate.

Ed Crawford simply stated, "save downtown Shreveport".

Drayden Dunn commented that the board needs to come to a consensus on how to proceed. The success rate of the search firms is important.

Link Coleman commented that he was DSU chairman for several years. He said that downtown office buildings are among the lowest office rates in the nation. The Urban Land Institute is made up of many officials and has over 40K members and would provide the road map of the way forward. Tom Murphy could provide assistance via a phone call. Mr. Coleman stated his belief that Mr. Murphy would be a direct pipeline to what the DDA needs.

Kyle Southard spoke to Mr. Dunn's point about a rubric. Apply a rubric to the current applicants before the start of a national or regional search.

Michael Corbin commented that the previous rating sheet used for former search committees has not been found in the DDA files. Only the results of the ratings has been found. He has reached out to Swepcos's Human Resources Department to refine the rating sheet. He asked if it is acceptable to the board to ask for an initial proposal from local and national recruiters and the Urban Land Institute. Terry Moore replied that he believed that would be best for the stakeholders. Drayden Dunn said that when the proposals are received, the success of the firms needs to be proven. Mr. Corbin will proceed with getting proposals.

Ms. Landry stated that there is a precedent that was set when a previous Executive Director was hired. The mayor asked the search committee to reopen the search and the previous applicants were included along with new applicants. Drayden Dunn stated there is a sense of urgency here; the search committee needs to meet soon and perhaps call another special meeting. Michael Corbin will aim for mid-month.

B. Downtown Security and Homeless

Previously discussed.

C. Vacant Property Ordinance

Previously discussed.

D. Downtown Amenity Fund / Lighting Grant

There was no discussion.

E. Security Cameras

There was no discussion.

F. City-wide Bond Issue / Riverfront Development Fund

Ms. Landry reported that city council voted 5-2 on 2/27/24 to put the bond issue on the ballot. The parking garage was not included. Christopher Coe stated that the parking garage needs to be created with apartments or office space and the best way to move forward is a city / private partnership.

G. By-Laws

There was no discussion.

H. 416 Cotton Street Roof Replacement

Discussed under Director's Report.

I. Lake Street Letter

Discussed under Director's Report.

J. Open Container Ordinance – Red River District

There was no discussion.

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

Discussed under Director's Report.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Real Estate Developers Incentives

Kyle Southard challenged the staff to determine how to make out of town investors feel like VIPs. Perhaps a free day-long parking pass. Ms. Landry said that this has been done in the past and she will research how this was accomplished.

Link Coleman: Mr. Coleman stated that he had previously asked Ms. Swaine to consider not giving out parking tickets in front of the YMCA during certain hours. It is imperative that the Y remain in the downtown area. He also contributes to the Mounted Patrol and would like to see that unit utilized more. Terry Moore stated that all thriving cities have a Y. The issue with the Mounted Patrol is clean up. Mr. Coleman stated his belief that the perception of security is greater than the cost to clean up after the horses.

B. Consideration of Salary Supplement for DDA Interim Director

Michael Corbin said that as this is the beginning of month three of Ms. Landry acting as the interim director, it is fair to compensate her accordingly.

A motion was made by Terry Moore to increase the pay of the Interim Director by \$1000 per month retroactive to January 2024. Drayden Dunn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

C. ShrevePark Coinage Acceptance Policy

Ms. Landry asked the board to review the coinage acceptance policy that ShrevePark would like to enact. Ms. Landry reviewed that sometimes people pay their tickets in coinage and that action ties up the staff while the coinage is counted. The proposed policy is that there are to be no more than 25 coins accepted. Rolled coins must have identification on them indicating name, ticket number, phone number so that if there is underpayment that person will be responsible. The individual must be present while the counting takes place. Tim Huck stated that he agreed with this 100%. Kyle Southard asked for a discussion. He does not wish to limit the coinage to 25 coins. He stated it is a matter of principle that the parking window should be accepting of cash. Michael Corbin asked if there was an automatic counter to count hundreds of coins. Ms. Landry stated that Monica Rogers researched coinage acceptance policies, and it has been ruled in previous cases that counting coins has the potential to bring commerce to a halt. It is also legal in Louisiana to limit coinage. Coins can be converted to cash at local banks.

Tim Huck made a motion to accept the ShrevePark Coinage Acceptance policy as written. Kathy Malone seconded the motion, which passed. Kyle Southard abstained from voting.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Coleman said that he would forward the contact information for Tom Murphy of the Urban Land Institute.

Mr. Coe reported that the historic building located at 1030 Kings Highway could possibly be demolished. If this is allowed to happen, a precedent could be set for downtown buildings as well.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

There were no public comments.

XI. ADJOURN

With no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Kyle Southard, Secretary