

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
Tuesday, October 4, 2022 – 4:00 PM – p.m.
In Person**

Roll taken, Quorum present – Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m. ended at 6:26 p.m.

Members Present: Gregory Curtis, Carla Major, Chris Ross, William Bradshaw, Judy Barrasso, Cleveland Spears, Coleman Adler,

Members Absent: LeAnn Moses, Kristi Taglauer, Paul Flower, Damon Burns

Staff/Counsel Present: President Davon Barbour, Anthony Carter, Darren Harris, Hunter Hebert, T. Trent Dang, Stuart Taylor, Scott Whittaker (Counsel, Stone Pigman), Brittany Carnes (Stone Pigman)

Other Staff Present: N/A

Notice: The time, location, and agenda had been adequately and publicly noticed.

Call for Public Input Cards:

- Letter submitted on Monday, October 3, 2022 to be read at board meeting on Tuesday, October 4, 2022, from Aaron J. Jordan regarding Agenda Item #VI. Mr. Jordan is concerned minutes from board meetings are not posted in a timely manner.
- Chair Curtis requested public input cards be disseminated to the board prior to the board meeting.
- Chair Curtis asked counsel to research if we can restrict individuals from making personal attacks on staff.
- Commissioner Spears asked if it is the same comment from the last month, whether we are required to read again. Counsel will advise the board at the next meeting.

Public Comments: N/A

Action Items

- Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 7, 2022, Board Meeting – **Action Item**
- Approval of August 2022 Financial Reports – **Action Item***
- Resolution to Set 2023 Millage – **Action Item***
- Resolution to Approve 2023 Budget – **Action Item***

Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 7, 2022, Board Meeting

Entertain a motion by Chair Curtis to approve minutes, motion by Commissioner Spears, seconded by Vice-Chair Major. Motion carried.

CAO Gilbert Montano touched on the following:

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- City at an intersection period, relative to finances, financial obligations, operational, public safety investments
- Presently going through the budget process, and ARPA process a federal investment which came in because of covid. Being thoughtful, diligent going through/managing these resources
- Revenue is on track from pre covid
- City still not fully recovered from re-occurring expenses
- City's investment in public safety
- Infrastructure
- Overseeing of execution of those investments
- Responsible for providing the city with financial stability

Commissioner Barrasso questioned the look of downtown, what does the city intend to do about the crumbling sidewalks, graffiti, dog feces, are there funds in the city's budget to address these issues?

CAO Montano response – Sanitation, infrastructure, clean-up is within the budget

Commissioner Spears – what is the status of broken, non-working traffic lights?

CAO Montano – there is significant investment for traffic and streetlights. Presently in the process of creating an internal team and contractors to take care of these issues.

Commissioner Adler - does having a consent decree create problem?

CAO Montano – From a personal perspective it is good as a corrective issue. Considerable progress has been made. Concerns have loosened. Note numbers are down in response time. It all comes down to subjectivity.

Anthony Carter asked for assistance with getting accurate numbers from the city for the DDD 2021 audit. President to send follow-up email.

President Barbour re-iterated the DDD commitment to collaborating with his CAO's team

Anthony Carter

Read the rules for Public Comment stressing the time limit (see rules for detailed procedures):

- Public may address each item for a cumulative total of up to ten (10) minutes for each item
- Individual speakers shall be limited to no more than three (3) minutes per item
- Public wishing to speak on more than one agenda item shall limit his/her remarks to a total of six (6) minutes per meeting

President Barbour introduced the Work Plan and Budget for 2023:

Two actions needed:

1. Adopt the resolution to approve the millage rate
 2. Adopt workplan and Budget
- Discussed DDD Core Strategy –
 - Safe community
 - Delivering an attractive public realm
 - Reliable infrastructure,
 - Future of CBD – need high quality of life

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- Office Market – last high rise built was the Benson Tower in 1989
- Focus is on bio-medical district, technology
- Recovery – foot traffic, tourism sector –give locals a reason to come downtown
- Perception survey - stakeholders stated the importance of a clean downtown, a safe downtown, focus on sanitation, infrastructure, homelessness
- Pres & CEO Touched on the DDD 10-year budget history
- DDD will look at diversifying revenue stream e.g. grant dollars, producing events
- Key budget milestones – Downtown perception research, convened meeting with individual commissioners to discuss/understand their budget aspiration, priorities.
- President & CEO engaged residential meetings with condominium associations, United4NOLA to understand what their priorities were.
- Met with CM Joe Giarrusso to discuss the budget
- The finance committee recommended this budget

Anthony Carter gave a brief overview of the 2023 workplan/budget:

- **Public space/Operations:**
 - Rangers conducted a 311 blitz
 - DDD/City officials partnered (CEA) for code enforcement
 - Documented/contacted owners regarding graffiti
 - Planted/Replaced trees, trashcans, repainted light poles, service agreement with city to deploy Mayor's strike team
 - SafeCams program - working on renewing with NOPJD
 - Executed new contract with private security firm
 - Homeless outreach program house 75+ individuals 2022
- **Economic Development accomplishment 2022:**
 - Re-initiated vacant storefront art program with Xavier University
 - Stormwater management plan signed by CEO. City has selected engineering firm to begin stormwater design work
 - Data collection
 - Façade program
 - Monthly meetings with Tulane representatives on the Charity development
 - Staff approved 2 façade improvement grants
 - Strengthened relationship with ICSC which resulted in ICSC event for NOLA on November 10, 2022
- **Communication/Marketing**
 - Press conferences with the mayor
 - 2 cover features with Biz New Orleans
 - Keweenaw Jingle – working with Kern Studios to produce the parade
 - State of Downtown Luncheon
 - An RFP with Destination Management to manage events
 - Doing an RFP for an advertising agency - Re-design of collateral, producing state of downtown reports
 - Create a board for the DDU and a brand specifically designed for DDU to utilize as a non-profit
 - Improving Social e.g. Tik Tok
 - Advertising e.g. SafeWalk programs, local magazines

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- Special Events & Promotions, PR, Community Engagement
- Quarterly state of downtown reports

- **Anthony Carter – What the DDD would like to achieve in 2023:**
 - Maintain reputation on cleanliness
 - Evaluate quality of public space programs
 - Build out District360 asset management platform
 - Review public infrastructure – e.g. rangers to help enhance the visual appeal
 - Code enforcement training for public safety rangers and the beginning of code enforcement outreach in partnership with city code enforcement division who will provide an exclusive code enforcement officer and title research officer to assist with adjudication
 - Educate/outreach with private property owners to address graffiti, sidewalk issues
 - Continue to address homelessness, CEO is now a member of UNITY board
 - Partner with city, waste disposal company to address trash pick up
 - Partner with FQMD, DPW and Sanitation
 - Working with city council regarding roadway markings, lighting, curb repair, traffic lights
 - Advocating with city departments to get Hard Rock site cleaned up
 - Advocate for ARPA funds
 - Partner with other Louisiana DDDs to explore opportunities to modernize the original 1974 Enabling Legislation

Comments/Questions:

- Commissioner Barrasso – Asked what the timeline is on the infrastructure plan. Anthony Carter said there is no start date available, however, the city is presently negotiating a contract
- Commissioner Barrasso expressed concern about the lack of reduction in the millage.
- Commissioner Barrasso – What is the construction behind Coppervine Restaurant and Little Gem? Commissioner Alder believes property behind Coppervine will be a 12-14 room hotel.
- President Barbour- DDD is establishing a Broker Roundtable
- Commissioner Spears/Barrasso – asked about Duncan Plaza. Was there a partnership/CEA between DDD and Tulane. Anthony Carter – CEA was never executed. However Tulane is working with others
- Other issues brought up by Commissioners Barrasso, Spears, Major: Plaza Tower, Canal St Owners Association (no longer exists, they are in property management), Hard Rock.
- All above addressed by President & CEO – DDD working behind the scenes re Plaza Tower; DDD has allocated funds towards forming Canal Street Merchant Association
- Commissioner Adler said he has heard all this before and pointed out that without safety and cleanliness, businesses will not want to come. President Barbour reiterated the DDD Core Strategy: Safe Community, Attractive Public Realm, Reliable Infrastructure. Reminded the commissioner that there is new 24-hour coverage with the hiring of additional private security. Commissioner Bradshaw said he shared similar concerns; however, he pointed out that this is a new leadership team collaborating in a new way with the city. The energy, the feedback and everything he has heard going around the city about what this team is doing, is uniformly positive. This new leadership should not be held responsible for things that past leadership failed to do in the past.

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- Chair Curtis suggested the DDD apply for the ARPA funds for infrastructure. Pres. & CEO will be sending a formal letter together with the staff survey analysis of all the light posts along Canal St to the city as part of an application for the funds.

Anthony Carter Budget Summary:

- **Internal Revenue:**
 - 500K Wisner fund is on hold
 - Ad Valorum - an increase is expected in 2023 based on 15% increase in property value
 - Stormwater Infrastructure Plan - Original fund was 2.5 Mil. a year for 5 years. Proposed that in the next year only place 1.25 Mil. Re-allocate funds to safety and public space
- **Expenses:**
 - 2023 5% increase in salary across the board except CEO and new hires
 - Delay district360 integration into the city 311 system. Re-allocate 35K to fund Homeless Outreach Worker
 - Re-allocate 15K of NOPD detail funding to fund Homeless Outreach Worker
 - Public Space – contracts, maintenance, sidewalk improvements
 - Graffiti/façade programs
 - New security patrol
 - Code enforcement – code enforcement officer/title research officer
 - Lower Barrier Shelter is 500K a year. As of the first of 2023 the obligation is 240K. Recommended DDD not re-instate the CEA for that purpose
 - Office Space rental will return to its normal level in 2023 January 1st
 - Adding an HR consultant
 - Staff Development/Travel will be available only to Directors

Treasurer's Report –

- **Approval of August 2022 Financial Reports – Action Item**
 - **Revenue Side:**
 - City collections were 83% of what was budgeted for August, 97% YTD, 96% was budgeted for the year
 - **Expenses** are in line with what was budgeted. No new expenses

Motion from the finance committee to approve the August 2022 financials, second by commissioner Bradshaw. Motion carried

Resolution to Set 2023 Millage – Action Item*

- Resolution read in full
- Roll called
- No change in millage rate
- 6 Yea, 1 Nay, 4 Absent
- **Resolution Accepted**

Chair's Report – Gregory Curtis

- Tasked the finance company to review compensation for the President & CEO
- Would like to re-negotiate a reduction in rent with the building

Resolution to Approve 2023 Budget – Action Item*

Motion to approve 2023 annual workplan/budget –resolution read; roll called. Resolution adopted

Status of 2021 Audit – 2021 Audit delayed due to city providing inaccurate information. DDD unable to submit by deadline – 60-day extension requested for November 30th. Awaiting approval

President’s Report – Davon Barbour - President & CEO will defer the report unless there are specific questions. Board has detailed packet. Partnering with ICSC to host small business event in NOLA

- **Economic Development**
- **Communications**
- **Operations**

Old Business – N/A

New Business - N/A

Executive Session – N/A

Adjournment

Chair Curtis asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion by Commissioner Major, second by Commissioner Barrasso. Motion carried

Francia Barradas

From: Aaron Jordan <aj2investigate@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, October 3, 2022 10:53 PM
To: Davon Barbour; gregoryjcurtis@yahoo.com; Judy Y. Barrasso; William Bradshaw, II; Paul Flower; LeAnn Moses; T. Trent Dang; Darren Harris; Hunter Hebert; Meaghan Nguyen; John Roussell; Stuart Taylor; Francia Barradas
Subject: DDD Public Comment Card - DDD Board Meeting of October 4th 2022, at 4:00 p.m.
Attachments: DDD Public Comment Card re Board Meeting dated October 3rd 2022.docx

Dear Mr. Curtis, CEO Barbour, DDD Board & Staff:

Please find attached the public comment card that I request to be read during the DDD Board Meeting of October 4, 2022, at 4:00 p.m., regarding Agenda Item# VI.

Sincerely,

AARON J. JORDAN

October 3, 2022

Public Comment Card Submitted by Aaron J. Jordan, DDD Board Meeting,
October 4, 2022, at 4:00 p.m., Regarding Agenda Item# VI.

Dear Members of the DDD Board & Staff:

Before you vote on Agenda Item# VI, I would like to bring to the attention of this Board and the public that the DDD has failed to timely post the Minutes from its Board Meetings to its website, in violation of The Louisiana Open Meetings Law. These Minutes are required by law to be posted in a reasonable amount of time, however, the DDD has waited over four-months in some cases to post these Minutes, keeping the public and downtown taxpayers in the dark as to its actions. I have filed a written complaint with the Louisiana Attorney General's Office regarding this failure on the part of the DDD and its staff. Miraculously, after I notified the Attorney General, the DDD managed to post past due Minutes from April through June of 2022. It is rather ironic that the DDD spends taxpayer money to hire a panel of high-priced attorneys from the prominent law firm of Stone Pigman to sit in at its Board Meetings as legal counsel. However, these high-priced Stone Pigman attorneys were not savvy enough to realize that the DDD's staff was failing to timely post the Minutes from these Board Meetings to its website, as required by The Louisiana Open Meetings Law. It is my understanding that the DDD's Director of Finance and Administration Anthony Carter is the responsible party at the DDD tasked with ensuring that the Board Minutes are posted to its website in a timely manner. Once again, Mr. Carter has failed in his duties and obligations to the DDD, the Board, and the downtown taxpayers. Mr. Carter should have been terminated from the DDD long ago, however, he remains there as a symbol of the DDD's insane woke agenda to promote failure and excuses instead of success and results. As I predicted, CEO Barbour has since made the sorry excuse that these Minutes were instead available with the Board's package that the DDD sends out. Yet, I have never seen any such package posted to the DDD's website. Further, this is not the requirement set out in The Louisiana Open Meetings Law. It's always just one sorry excuse after another.

Sincerely,
AARON J. JORDAN