

Downtown Development District Board of Commissioners Meeting
Ronald E. Gardner Board Room
November 19, 2024– 3:00 PM
In Person

Roll taken, Quorum present – Meeting called to order at 3:06 p.m.

Members Present: Chair Chris Ross, Vice-Chair Alex Glaser, Treasurer William Bradshaw, II, Secretary Scott Polakoff, Commissioner Kenny Rubenstein, Commissioner Ryan King (via zoom), Commissioner David Piscola, Commissioner Frank Zumbo, Commissioner Edwin Murray,

Members Absent: Commissioner Gregory Curtis, Commissioner Miles Tully, Jr.

Staff/Counsel Present: President & CEO Davon Barbour, Michael McKnight, CFO, Erica Sensenbrenner, Associate, Adams & Reese,

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

Call for Public Input Cards: N/A

Public Comments: N/A

Action Items:

- Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 1, 2024, Board Meeting – **Action Item***
- Approval of September 2024 Financial Report – **Action Item***
- Approval of 2025 DDD Board of Commissioners & Committee Meeting Dates- **Action Item***
- Approval of Resolution Designating an Individual from the Downtown Development District to Act on its Behalf in All Matters Pertaining to Act 776 – **Action Item***

Downtown New Orleans Perceptions Survey – MDRG

- Kristy Roldan gave a presentation on the survey research, which included a discussion on qualitative and quantitative studies. Ms. Roldan discussed the general population's preferences for visiting downtown, with the majority preferring noon and afternoon times. The reasons for visiting downtown were restaurants, local food, entertainment, and cultural events.
- However, the cost of living was identified as a significant issue, with those responding stating that it was too expensive.
- Also noted were safety concerns with the population perceiving downtown as unsafe.
- The awareness of the DDD was higher among stakeholders, but the general population was less aware of its services and impact.
- Ms. Roldan discussed the confusion surrounding the services provided by the DDD, highlighting that 51% of respondents believe the DDD oversees graffiti, while 43% think it is responsible for streetlights and 38% for missing street signs.

- She emphasized the need to educate people about what the DDD does and its successes. A comparison of perceptions from 2022 and 2024, was made, noting improvements in favorability however there is continued concern for safety and cleanliness. She suggested that the DDD could benefit from increased communication with stakeholders with a focus on local issues.
- Note the Survey is included in the board packet.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 1, 2024, Board Meeting – **Action Item***

Motion to approve October 1, 2024, meeting minutes made by Treasurer Bradshaw. Second, Secretary Polakoff. Motion carried.

Approval of September 2024 Financial Report – Action Item*

- Michael McKnight presented the financial report for the year to date, highlighting a favorable balance of \$2.8 million and a variance of \$1.8 million due to ongoing collection of Ad Valorem taxes. She also discussed the budget for public space operations, public safety, development and planning, marketing communications, and administration. (detailed financial report is in the meeting packer)

Motion to approve September 2024 Financial Report made by Commissioner Piscola. Second by Commissioner Rubenstein.

Davon Barbour, President & CEO read in full resolution 23-06 to designate the President & CEO as a representative to act on behalf of the DDD for the State of Louisiana line-item appropriations under Act 776. The roll was called, and the resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners.

President's report:

President & CEO provided an update on the following initiatives:

- Quality of Life Committee's progress, highlighting the recruitment of a Chief of Public Safety and Field Operations.
 - Discussed the Super Bowl preparations.
 - Deployment of signage at Spanish Plaza.
- French Doors project aimed at beautifying key gateways into the French Quarter. Collaborating with stakeholders to clean up and maintain the alley behind the Hyatt Centric.
- The tree plantings - approximately 40 and CEA with Tulane for landscaping enhancements.
- The renovation of the Public Safety outpost - lease signed with Astor Crown Hotel. Hopefully, there will be a ribbon cutting in early 2025.
- DDD working with Entergy on Decorative Lighting on Lafayette Street
- President & CEO announced that the Economic Department of the DDD was able to secure \$150,000 grant from the US Department of Transportation for a study to improve mobility and safety in downtown.
- Canal Street Lighting on Tuesday, November 26th. Event starts at 4:30 p.m.

Note:

- Davon Barbour, President & CEO to provide an update on the public safety outpost at the next board meeting.
- Davon Barbour, President & CEO to conduct benchmarking with similar organizations on developing baseline city services.
- DDD team to continue efforts to amplify DDD's work and services through various channels, including the Lamarr Marketing Advertising campaign on 13-billboards, at no cost to the DDD.
- Quality of Life Committee to continue addressing cleanliness issues and collaborating with vendors to improve problem areas in the district.

Old Business: N/A

New Business:

At the beginning of the Board Meeting, Chair Ross asked for a motion/approval by the board to amend the agenda to include two action items under New Business.

- The two action items were to allow the President & CEO to:
 1. To enter into a CEA with the BioDistrict
 2. To modify the existing contract for beautifications efforts

Commissioner Murray moved to add the action items to the agenda, which motion was seconded by Treasurer Bradshaw. Motion carried unanimously and the agenda was amended.

The Board and Mr. Barbour discussed the above action items. Motion to approve was made by Commissioner Murray, second by Treasurer Bradshaw. Motion carried.

Executive Session: Motion by Treasurer Bradshaw to enter Executive Session. Second by Commissioner Rubenstein. Roll Called. Motion carried unanimously, and the Board entered executive session. Commissioners and Board counsel discussed the *Jordan* matter noticed on the agenda, and Board counsel provided requested guidance on matters covered by the attorney client privilege. The Board came out of executive session. No decisions or actions were taken during the executive session.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Treasurer Bradshaw. Second by Commissioner Polakoff. Motion carried.

