

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TAKEN AT A MEETING
ON WEDNESDAY, December 18, 2024, at 7:45 AM.

Roll Call, Present: Denice Skinner, Jaci Russo, Will LaBar, Miles Matt, and Marie Centanni

Roll Call, Absent: none (two board positions open)

The meeting was called to order by Russo.

Public comment process is attached to the end of the agenda for individuals wishing to address the Board on agenda items. Request to speak must be submitted prior to the discussion of the item. Individuals are allowed three minutes for comments.

Administrative Approvals/Reports

Minutes of the Nov. 20, 2024 meeting were presented for approval. Centanni moved to approve as presented. Matt seconded. All voted in favor.

Blanchard presented the financials through September 2024. Miles moved to acknowledge the receipt of the financials. LaBar seconded. All voted in favor.

Blanchard presented the proposed schedule for the 2025 meeting dates. Centanni moved to approve the schedule as presented, with meetings starting at 7:30 a.m. LaBar seconded. All voted in favor.

CEO Report

Blanchard updated the board on Hotel Lafayette, which was approved for an incentive package by the Lafayette Public Trust Financing Authority earlier in December. Also, the DDA staff used the occasion of that LPTFA Board meeting to brief the LPTFA on the new Ambassador Program.

The DDA has proposed a parking agreement to the city, which would dedicate the revenue raised by parking to maintaining the bathrooms under the Vermilion Garage. The DDA has proposed that the bathrooms be renovated.

Directors Report

Holland advised the board that the DDA is working with Mader Engineering and the hotel group to design Taylor Street plaza and do other sidewalk improvements in the area as part of the hotel project.

Sans Souci Building construction project has started. Lee Avenue Streetscape project kicked off earlier in December.

Responses on the Ambassador Program RFP are due back in the first week of January. DDA staff had a phone call to answer questions on the RFP earlier in the week. Will be discussing with LCG and the EDD administrator in early January.

There is a line item in the City-Parish Budget called "Downtown Infrastructure Improvements" in the amount of \$1.45 million. The DDA alerted the new LCG administration earlier in the year that these funds were not currently programmed (the funds were originally earmarked to begin design on a public parking garage by the previous LCG administration). The DDA has proposed to program the funds to pay for the Vermilion Garage bathroom renovation, sidewalk improvements associated with Hotel Lafayette, a railroad quiet zone, and other public safety improvements. Will advise the board as these discussions with LCG continue. The Board discussed the proposed projects, which the DDA has offered to match funding and to manage the projects more closely:

- \$100K - Ambassador Program Start-Up Capital
- \$500K - Verm Garage Bathrooms
- \$50K - Security Infrastructure - spot lighting, police cameras, ID scanners for bars (in Downtown, McKinley Strip, and Simcoe), Parc Putnam tree pruning
- \$150K - Taft-Cameron Railroad Quiet Zone Study
- \$100K - Cypress Tree care - pruning + priority root barrier areas to reduce utility issues
- \$100K - Cathedral pedestrian study
- \$325K - Hotel Lafayette sidewalks/Taylor Street plaza
- \$75K - Music Museum Plaza planning/design

DLU update

DTA! dates have been chosen, and the Spring season is just about booked. The DLU elected Leah Graeff as president. DLU is interviewing for an communications and community engagement opening. The new Downtown Lafayette website will launch very soon.

Police Update

Capt. David LeBlanc introduced a new member of the Downtown Police Precinct. LeBlanc said things have been relatively quiet. LeBlanc said that the Police Department would be releasing a new website soon to share crime statistics.

Public Comment

Jeff Johnson said that in 2024 there were six (6) meetings on the second Wednesday of the month and seven (7) meetings on a date other than the second Wednesday of the month. In 2025, there is a new schedule and a new time change. Blanchard explained open meetings and notice rules to Mr. Johnson, saying that the schedule is adopted at the start of a year, but there are sometimes that the DDA has to adjust those meeting dates and/or times. In the event there is a change, the public is notified of that change as soon as possible and within legal deadlines. Mr. Johnson was reminded that he is on that emailed notification list.

Other Business

There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned.