Houma Restoration District

Board Meeting Minutes

August 1, 2023

Commissioners Present:

Noah Lirette Jason Underwood – via phone Kevin Champagne

Daniel Babin - absent Tom Hassell Sondra Corbitt

Nick Hebert (11:25) Kevin Faulk Bryan Bunn

Others Present:

Michelle Neil Rep. Tanner Magee Anne Picou

Chris Pulaski Cohen Guidry Angela Hidalgo

Carl Harding Mart Black Logan Jacobs

Shantelle Abshire Earl Eues Carly Prejean

Jules Hebert

A meeting of the Houma Restoration District Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman N. Lirette at 11:10 a.m. at the 7th Floor Conference Room of the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government Towers, 8026 Main Street, Houma, LA.

T. Hassell led the prayer, and N. Lirette led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

S. Corbitt performed roll call and a quorum was present.

No one from the Public addressed the board.

Shantelle Abshire and Carly Prejean presented a proposal on behalf of Leadership Terrebonne for decorating downtown Houma with a festive theme called “Candy Cane Lane.” They submitted a budget and a request for financial support in the amount of $5,000.00. N. Lirette stated that they could apply with a formal request once the grant application is approved later on the agenda.

Fleur De Lis Development Corporation Report – None.

A motion was made by B. Bunn, seconded by S. Corbitt, to approve the minutes of the prior meeting. Motion carried.

N. Hebert presented the financial report. A motion was made by K. Champagne, seconded by B. Bunn, to approve the financial report as presented. Motion carried.

Board Attorney Michelle Neil presented the Initiations and Operations Report to comply with State Reporting Compliance for HRD. The board has accomplished quite a bit of work since its first meeting. She will submit the progress report to the State pending any comments from the board.

Terms for N. Hebert and N. Lirette expire this month. The Houma Downtown Development Commission has already sent a letter to request N. Lirette’s reappointment. The Houma Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce will send the letter to N. Hebert shortly. Board Attorney will look at the bylaws to determine proper procedures to elect officers, which was later determined to be addressed at the next meeting.

Streetscape Plan: Tanner Magee reported that DOTD must receive funding before starting any work on the plan. Then they will have to communicate whether it can be done in-house, or will they have to contract out those services, which the latter is more likely. A meeting will need to be scheduled with HRD to determine exactly what the plan will be. C. Pulaski will also conduct a meeting with CSRS to determine various parts of the plan and will coordinate with HRD and DOTD.

N. Lirette discussed the CEO position for consideration. He will work with legal to draft a job description and present it to the board at the next meeting.

The Bayou Boardwalk agreement has been recorded, and the check will be delivered to the TPCG today. Points of contact for TPCG will be David Rome and Joey Cehan.

Old Business: Downtown Safety topic mentions more presence of police downtown; however, many more homeless people are present. Discussion followed regarding new homeless shelters.

N. Lirette discussed the contract for District maintenance work. M. Neil reported that the contract has all the insurance regulations in place, and TPCG has been made the certificate holder and listed as additional insured. The contractor needs to check on his auto policy and pollution control policy (due to the chemicals used for weed kill). Also, we still need to obtain a rate sheet for additional work outside of the routine work. A work schedule is established once per week. This topic is on the agenda for the Council public hearing next week. HRD will place this item on the next agenda.

Earl Eues with KEE Environmental Services reported on the environmental site assessment of the Landry Building. There were no recognized environmental conditions on the property. Also, there are no controlled recognized environmental conditions on the property. There exists suspected asbestos and perhaps lead-based paint that may require remediation. It is recommended that HRD obtain a certified asbestos, lead, and mold analysis and obtain estimates to remove these environmental conditions, as well as coordinate with DEQ. A discussion ensued regarding the opportunity to utilize the Brownsfield Initiative Program through the EPA. K. Champagne mentioned the interest of Ascent Health in the Landry Building. N. Lirette will follow up with that lead, and HRD will help incentivize them. HRD will navigate through the Brownsfield Initiative; however, an assessment must be ordered first. A motion was made by N. Hebert, seconded by S. Corbitt, to allow Jules Hebert to obtain quotes from a certified testing company and for N. Lirette to sign an agreement with an upset limit of $5,000.00 for this effort.

Property owner letters have been mailed out. Weyls’s Jewelry sign work will start in October.

Regarding the Opelousas Ordinance, M. Neil researched whether the HRD can implement the ordinance. The spirit of the statute is more along the lines of promoting revitalization rather than enforcing ordinances; however, HRD can suggest that the Council enforce ordinances. It is recommended that HRD not implement it as a penalty, but as a service the HRD would provide. Further, HRD should make regulations that coincide with the proposed Master Plan for Downtown Houma.

N. Lirette presented the Sponsorship Program and Application. The agreement requires projects to have a five-year commitment to provide for operations and maintenance or provide a solution for such efforts. A motion was made by K. Champagne, seconded by S. Corbitt, to approve the program and application, subject to suggested changes. Motion carried.

A draft ethics opinion was presented regarding whether board members or their associated non-profits can participate in this grant program. Further discussion followed. Under no circumstance can a board member participate in this program. In the event this should occur, the board member shall remove his/her participation regarding any business HRD has with the non-profit. This restriction applies to the HRD board and the non-profit board. Erring on the side of caution, an ethical opinion could be sought if this situation arises.

Officers’ Report: S. Corbitt reported on the status of the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the State for compliance reporting. She was still needing the professional services disclosure statement. She will coordinate with M. Neil on wrapping up.

A motion was made by B. Bunn, seconded by N. Hebert, to adjourn the meeting at 1:23 p.m. Motion carried.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 5, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. at the 7th Floor Conference Room, 8026 Main Street, Houma, LA.

Noah Lirette, Chairman Sondra Corbitt, Secretary