Houma Restoration District

Board Meeting Minutes

November 7, 2023

Commissioners Present:

Noah Lirette Jason Underwood Kevin Champagne

Daniel Babin Tom Hassell Sondra Corbitt

Nick Hebert Kevin Faulk Bryan Bunn

Others Present:

Chris Pulaski Cohen Guidry Angela Hidalgo

Jeremy Smith Ann Picou BJ Brighton

Carl Harding Michael Billiot Justin Bourgeois

Bobbie O’Bryan Keith Craft John Blanchard

A meeting of the Houma Restoration District Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman N. Lirettte 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 the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

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

Under Public, none.

A motion was made by N. Hebert, seconded by K. Champagne to approve the minutes of the prior meeting. Motion carried.

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

New Business: An amended budget for 2023 and proposed budget for 2024 will be presented at the next meeting.

Nuisance/Abatement Employee: If deemed necessary, TPCG could perform a budget amendment to add an additional employee for this effort. Currently, staff is adequately handling the work load at this time. May explore the option of entering into a CEA with TPCG and HRD to contract this work, if needed.

Government Street Road Diet: TEDA received some data from the Government Street Road Diet in Baton Rouge. The HRD would like to continue working with DOTD to implement an alternate truck route study. Chris Pulaski reported that the public meetings are wrapping up and an RFP will be let to design features of the master plan. Those plans would require submittal to DOTD for approval. Coordination with the Regional Engineer and public input will be considered. Planning Department will put a presentation together for next meeting to discuss and display what a street plan entails as well as possibly requesting a resolution of support from HRD.

Service Station: B. Bunn reported that the old service station is for sale and whether HRD would want to become involved in its restoration; possible to allow for seafood/produce vendors to sell their products. The list price is $190k. Bayou Walk Expansion may be presented for consideration using CDBD-DR funding, which will impact all of those buildings and bulkheads. The HRD is interested in looking further into this option. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

K. Faulk mentioned that the owner of Zen Restaurant is interested in the old Fakier store and is asking if the HRD board would be willing to share some of the cost for him to remodel the flooring so he can relocate downtown. Perhaps HRD could offer a low interest loan as an option. HRD could create a package and help with matching funds to mirror what South Central Planning offers to promote larger projects for downtown Houma.

Justin Bourgeois stated that South Central Planning and the loans they offer. They are working with LA Restore and do not have any additional projects to offer at this time; however, they also piggyback with local financial institutions to offer reduced rate loans to investors. He discussed his plans to improve the South LA Feed Store to provide for at least a ten booth fresh market for seafood vendors who are Louisiana certified, using a USDA grant soon to become available, as well as other grants, tax credits, etc.

Rotary Plaza’s Video and Audio Quote: Ann Picou presented the quote from Koike AV for video and audio equipment. Currently there is no equipment set up for sound on a professional manner. She is requesting HRD become a partner or perhaps a partial sponsorship. The HDDC would spearhead and be responsible for this project. She will complete the Public Amenity Grant application for HRD to consider at the next meeting.

Illuminating Bayou Terrebonne: N. Lirette reported the need for illuminating the boardwalk and pedestrian bridges for safety and other various reasons. The Arts Council is willing to be a part of this project as well. HRD will need to get an engineering/design contract underway. N. Lirette will reach out to Duplantis Design Group for use of the same electrical contractor who did the Rotary Centennial Plaza. Motion by S. Corbit, seconded by T. Hassell to allow N. Lirette to contact DDG and coordinate further.

Old Business: Bobbie O’Bryan requested that any future events planned for downtown should be reported to HPD so they can increase patrol in the area. He reported on the recent complaints in the area for the month of October. The camera project is complete. Holiday patrols will also begin this month. HPD was thanked for the police presence during the Bayou Arts Festival.

Non-Profit District Maintenance Work: Mr. Jeremy Smith, the Executive Director for A Place of Restoration provided the board with an update on work completed to date. Mostly garbage pickup, bayou clean up, weed spraying, grass cutting, under bridge clean up, and marina clean up. Planting will be in the next phase.

HRDC Zoning Overlay: Legal sent an email with the current work on the Overlay District. N. Lirette would like comments from the HRD prior to sending to the TPCG Council in the beginning of the year. C. Pulaski has reviewed the proposal and said it does need to finish going through legal and administrative review. He suggested that the Overlay District should pay attention to all of the underlying zoning and prohibited/permitted uses to ensure there is no contradictory issues. The HRD Zoning Overlay would be included in the TPCG Chapter 28 and become part of the parish’s zoning ordinance, with the final decision resting with the TPCG Council. This overlay district draft also addresses other violations like broken windows, with enforcement authority. This will be presented again at the next meeting.

Landry Furniture Building: Phase 2 remediation work paperwork is completed, awaiting execution by the owner.

Weyls Jewelry Sign: Currently being worked on. It will be complete in late 2023.

Bayou Boardwalk Project: Work on the Bayou Boardwalk began last week and should be completed before Thanksgiving.

District Parking Meters Subcommittee Update: B. Bunn discussed the parking meter removal except around the courthouse. HPD has pulled out some meters to provide for loading zones, and have noticed that vehicles use that space as free parking. HRD would like to know how much revenue is received by the parish as well as City Court from the parking meters. Park Mobile plan is to begin purchasing kiosks whereby there is an option to pay with coin or a card, with automatic renewals. Once they begin installing the kiosks, they will phase out traditional parking meters without removing paid parking all together.

Michael Billiot addressed the board regarding parking regulations.

Officer Reports: None.

A motion was made by B. Bunn seconded by K. Champagne, to adjourn the meeting at 1:09 p.m. Motion carried.

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

Noah Lirette, Chairman Sondra Corbitt, Secretary