



**BioDistrict New Orleans
Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2025 | 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Location: Greater New Orleans Foundation, 919 St. Charles Ave, New Orleans, LA 70130

I Call to Order

The BioDistrict Board Meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Andy Kopplin, at 2:38 pm.

II Board Member Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Arnel Cosey, Charlotte Parent, Andy Kopplin, Kaneisha Akinpelumi, Nicole Honoree, Patrick Norton, Larissa Littleton-Steib, Gregorie Tillery, Josh Fleig

Commissioners Present via Zoom: Blake Stanfill

Commissioners Absent: Emily Arata, Michael Hecht, Lowry Curley, Judith Dangerfield

Quorum: Present

Andy Kopplin welcomed Patrick Norton to his first BioDistrict Board Meeting as the newest appointed member to the board representing Tulane University replacing Sharon Courtney.

III Introduction of Guest(s)

Andreas Pashos (Consultant to BioDistrict), Sharonda Williams (Counsel to BioDistrict), Madeline Kawanaka (LED), Jennie West (Studio West), Jason Richards (Studio West), Seth Knudsen (DDD), Rene Pastorek (DDD), Tyler Correa (DDD), Ronald Carrere (XULA)

Mr. Kopplin congratulated Seth Knudsen on his new position leading DDD, and highlighted the cooperative work that the BioDistrict and DDD have recently accomplished with landscaping and signage projects in the district.

IV Adoption of Previous Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Kopplin requested the approval of the minutes from the previous BioDistrict board meeting on January 8, 2025. Nicole Honoree motioned for approval, and Josh Fleig seconded. There was no discussion or public comment and the motion was unanimously approved.

V Financial Report

Andreas Pashos shared detailed explanations on the P&L and Balance Sheet reports provided to the board. The reports are current to the end of April 2025. Our bank account balance is approximately \$72K. We started the calendar year with \$1,566. So far we have received approximately \$390K from city tax funds accrued in 2024. We are still waiting for the remaining balance of the 2024 funds. The due date for 2025 Q1 city tax funds is May 20th, so we are also expecting those funds soon.

Mr. Kopplin mentioned that approved budgets from 2024 will be sent to the board.

Mr. Kopplin outlined that legal fees include payments for our the BioDistrict counsel and a legal settlement. Outside contract services were payments provided to DDD for landscape projects, and other contracting fees included administrative and financial support. The expenses also include the PO Box for the BioDistrict.

VI Chair's Report / Action Items

a. Authorization for Chair and Vice Chair to approve payments for budgeted expenditures of less than \$10,000 without prior board approval

Mr. Kopplin explained that this resolution would allow the Chair and Vice Chair to make minor budgeted expenditures without additional board authorization every time.

Charlotte Parent motioned for approval, and Patrick Norton seconded. There was no discussion or public comment and the motion was unanimously approved.

b. Authorization for Chair to sign CEA with GroundWork New Orleans for up to \$90,000 in 2025 programmatic funds to support tree planting along Tulane Ave in the BioDistrict.

Public infrastructure and improving Tulane Avenue from Loyola to Xavier is one of the major BioDistrict goals. A local organization, Groundwork New Orleans, does tree planting workforce development programming. As a nonprofit, the BioDistrict can partner through a CEA to do tree planting on Tulane Ave. Tree planting season won't be again until after the summer, but approving this CEA now will allow for setting this project up. This project is within the planned budget. Kaneisha Akinpelumi wanted to verify that the project includes maintenance to ensure tree survival. Mr. Kopplin suggested amending the CEA to include 12 months of maintenance for the trees per best practices to ensure tree viability.

Ms. Akinpelumi also opened discussion related to the 30 day termination clause for convenience. Mr. Kopplin suggested that BioDistrict receive and need to approve project and payment schedules from Groundwork to improve project oversight. Nicole Honoree motioned for approval and Larissa Littleton-Steib seconded. There was no discussion or public comment and the motion was unanimously approved.

VII Chair's Report / Discussion Items

a. Update on Greater New Orleans Foundation/Kresge Foundation sponsored trip with anchor institutions and banking partners to the Memphis Medical District March 26-27th

Mr. Kopplin thanked the board members and their organizations for their support of the visit to Memphis. A takeaway from the trip is that the BioDistrict has a lot of assets, so we are perhaps even better positioned for success. One aspect the BioDistrict should try to replicate that the Memphis Medical District has excelled at is creating a community investment fund which is supported by local banks. First Horizon, which is headquartered in Memphis and championed the fund there also supports creating one in New Orleans.

Creating such a fund would be a proactive approach to maintain affordable housing as the BioDistrict improvements start generating more economic activity in the district. Mr. Kopplin said that the Greater New Orleans Foundation would take a leadership role in creating such a fund to support the BioDistrict.

b. Update on Greater New Orleans Foundation/Kresge Foundation sponsored visit from urbanist Richard Florida visit to New Orleans on April 1st and 2nd

Mr. Kopplin summarized how Richard Florida met with and provided feedback to BioDistrict institution partners including Xavier, LSU, Tulane, the DDD, and the City's New Orleans Building Corporation. One of the highlights of the conversations included seeing how the BioDistrict is connected to "healing arts" for city and region. Richard Florida commented that he believes New Orleans is well positioned for growth given its assets.

c. Update on Chair's attendance at Global Institute on Innovation District conference

Mr. Kopplin highlighted that the district is a member of the Global Institute on Innovation District created by alumni of the Brookings Institution. It includes innovation districts across the world. Mr. Kopplin went to their annual conference recently and found it to be a great learning experience.

The organization also highlighted the work done by the districts and their representatives. Mr. Kopplin was selected as a finalist for one of the awards for his work for the BioDistrict.

d. Update on Federal Directed Spending Requests

Mr. Kopplin said that last year the BioDistrict was requested to apply for two congressional spending requests. One was for the Xavier Ochsner College of Medicine

and another for Charity Hospital redevelopment. Both requests were submitted again this year.

Nicole Honoree asked if the district will be taking a fee or if the district is strictly a pass through entity on the requests. Mr. Kopplin replied that there may be a limited fee, but since the objectives of the requests match those of the BioDistrict, even without the district charging for work related to the requests, there is strong alignment and impetus to help these development projects.

e. Update on Mid City Neighborhood Association Town Hall

Mr. Kopplin communicated that Mr. Andreas Pashos represented the BioDistrict at a recent neighborhood event. Mr. Kopplin highlighted the importance of the district being connected to the local communities and sharing what the district is doing and listening to local concerns.

f. Begin RFP process

i. Public Relations & Communications

Mr. Kopplin summarized that in January the board approved the district to begin moving forward with drafting RFPs and the issuance of RFPs. Initial focuses are public relations & communications focused on telling the district's story and upgrading the district website. The BioDistrict will need to approve before proposal selection and contracting if followed through. To do this Mr. Kopplin envisions subcommittees to be tasked with this work.

g. Reminder regarding Board Member Financial Disclosures

Mr. Kopplin reminded the board that disclosures are due May 15th, tomorrow. It is a disclosure of owned businesses and boards served on. Mr. Pashos can assist with any questions.

h. Presentation from DDD and Studio West on lighting solutions for the BioDistrict

Mr. Kopplin invited the Studio West team to share their light needs project findings. DDD funded the research in the DDD portion of the BioDistrict.

Studio West expressed that they worked with Tulane University on their downtown campus and that they worked with DDD on various SuperBowl preparation work.

Studio West mentioned that the project included an analysis which included walkthroughs during nighttime, including taking handheld camera pictures and drone photography. The analysis shows a walking/residential corridor at LaSalle, primarily by students. Their study also focused on underpass lighting needs.

There are instances of city buildings using bright lights towards potential sleeping locations for the unhoused population, which is not working. Some of the new murals in

the area are not lit up at night, which is a missed opportunity. Various tree lighting concepts were also shown.

Mr. Kopplin highlighted that the cost of these four intersections is more than \$1M and the budget for lighting projects by BioDistrict is significantly lower. The district needs to find an approach forward taking into account the budget constraints, potentially choosing one of the four intersections to work on first.

It was mentioned by the board that the new Crescent City Connection lights are currently broken, and it might be wise to see if they get this project fixed before the BioDistrict undertakes a lighting project at this time. The Studio West team mentioned that all their project suggestions include parts that are widely used for sustainability reasons.

Mr. Kopplin mentioned that one of the RFPs is focused on public realm projects to help list and prioritize such projects.

The uncertain future of Duncan Plaza was also discussed by the board and board members urged engagement with the City and community going forward.

Nicole Honoree asked the Studio West team about rough project timelines for these types of projects and Studio West said that they have completed similar projects in a few months in the past.

VIII Executive Session: Pending Litigation and Threatened Litigation (La. C.E. Art. 506) ***Kinney v. The BioDistrict New Orleans, Orleans Parish Civil District Court No.*** ***2022-11481***

The board did not go into Executive Session. Instead, Mr. Kopplin invited Sharonda Williams to speak to the resolution of this litigation. Ms. Williams summarized that the board has come to an amicable resolution of the litigation and a motion to dismiss the case in court was filed and the court signed an order fully dismissing the case. There are no other litigation matters at this time.

IX New Business

a. Discussion related to impacts from recent changes to federal research funding

Mr. Kopplin highlighted that research funding is very important to the success of the district. Mr. Norton spoke about the importance of science research to innovation, and that this type of research is not funded privately, but only by government. The health of the economy also benefits from this publicly-funded research.

Gregorie Tillery shared his boots on the ground perspective of how he would think about prioritizing various district projects, and offered his help in generating community feedback and support.

X Partner Updates

There was no discussion or partner updates.

XI Public Comment(s)

There was no discussion or public comment.

XII Adjournment

Mr. Kopplin moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Parent. The chair called for discussion and public comments, of which there were none, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:20pm.
