



**BioDistrict New Orleans Board of  
Commissioners Meeting Wednesday,  
February 20, 2019**

**3 p.m. – 4 p.m.**

**Location: New Orleans Business Alliance 1250  
Poydras Street, Suite 2150  
New Orleans, LA 70113**

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**Commissioners Present:** Gene D’Amour, Alison Bordelon, Andy Kopplin, Blake J. Stanfill, Harold Gaspard, Sharon Courtney  
Michael Pernici and Larry Hollier attended via phone

**Commissioners Absent:** Donna G. Klein, Roger Ogden, Lowry Curley

**Others:** Ellen Lee (Mayor’s Office for Community and Economic Development, City of New Orleans), Paul Richard (Latter & Blum), Coleman Ridley (Business Council of New Orleans), Kurt Weigle (Downtown Development District)

**New Orleans Business Alliance Staff:** Louis David, Sally Lindsay, Dominique Flugence, Jeanette Weiland, Nolan Marshall, Norman Barnum

- I. Call to Order  
The first quarter BioDistrict Board Meeting of 2019 was called to order at 3:11pm.
- II. Roll Call  
Ms. Sally Lindsay performed a roll call of the Board Commissioners at 3:11pm. Quorum was present.
- III. Adopt Agenda for Board Meeting  
Board Commissioners adopted the agenda for the current Board meeting. No comments were made regarding the agenda.
- IV. Introduction of Guest(s)  
Chairperson D’Amour had several guests briefly introduce themselves, including Mr. Coleman Ridley, Mr. Paul Richard, Ms. Jeanette Weiland, and Mr. Kurt Weigle.
- V. Call for Public Input Cards on Agenda Items  
No public input cards were collected.
- VI. Adoption of BioDistrict Minutes  
The minutes from the fourth quarter BioDistrict Board of Commissioners Meeting, held on December 5, 2018, were adopted. Commissioner Gaspard moved and Commissioner Courtney seconded at 3:13pm.

VII. Financial Report – Ms. Dominique Flugence

For 2018, the BioDistrict Board accrued \$12,000 in contributions from investors. Of that, \$6,000 was collected. The total expenses for 2018 were \$4,779.92, leaving a net income of \$1,220.08. The retained earnings as of February 20, 2019 were \$7,414.57. Accounting fees for this quarter were \$1,200.

VIII. Chairperson’s Report

Chairperson D’Amour attended Washington DC Mardi Gras and noted that there was increased legislative interest in the BioDistrict. Other Commissioners were in attendance, including Commissioner Courtney, Commissioner Hecht, Commissioner Bordelon, Commissioner Stanfill, and Commissioner Kopplin. Representative Walt Leger was among the engaged officials who expressed enthusiastic support for the BioDistrict and said the same for Karen Carter Peterson.

Chairperson D’Amour also shared that Mr. Aaron Miscenich had resigned from the New Orleans BioInnovation Center (NOBIC) and was congratulated for a job well done. Dr. D’Amour underscored that NOBIC helped over 145 tenants during Mr. Miscenich’s 14-year tenure, resulting in \$150MM in financing. Mr. Kris Khalil will be NOBIC’s Interim Director. Chairperson D’Amour said that local universities were stepping up to take a larger role in NOBIC’s management and would also provide new financing. Chairperson D’Amour said he was on the NOBIC Board, along with Commissioner Hollier, and that the Board was feeling optimistic about the future and excited to take advantage of new opportunities.

Chairperson D’Amour also noted that we have three vacancies on the BioDistrict Board and that number will increase to four vacancies when Chairperson Klein’s term ends on June 20<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged suggestions of individuals to fill those vacancies. He underscored that the BioDistrict Board needs to improve in terms of diversity, encouraging members to nominate women and people of color.

Ms. Sally Lindsay noted that of the three available positions, two commissioners must reside within the geographic boundaries of the BioDistrict.

Chairperson D’Amour went on to say that New Orleans participated in the Equitable Economic Development Fellowship, but that we would hear an update from Ms. Ellen Lee later in the meeting.

IX. *Ms. Ellen Lee: Mayor’s study on equitable economy (moved to later in the meeting to accommodate Ms. Ellen Lee’s schedule).*

X. Strategic Planning Committee & BioDistrict “Story”

Chairperson D’Amour referred the Board to some talking points he recently presented to the Mayor’s Office. The contextual details he provided about the BioDistrict highlighted the promise of high-paying jobs tied to the bioscience sector, emphasizing that these jobs are crucial for increasing equity in New Orleans, particularly for people of color. He said that increased cooperation and support between universities and businesses will result in a more vibrant and diversified economy, strengthened by coordinated workforce development pathways.

Commissioner Stanfill said he wanted to build from the 2014 Master Plan and update it with support of a focus group that could include real estate developers, economic developers, business leaders, and residents. He hoped to chart out and refine the mission of the BioDistrict, contextualized by the new landscape of New Orleans. He also planned on defining the role that the BioDistrict Board should play with concrete strategies and tactics for attaining those goals; he looks forward to bringing recommendations to the Board.

Commissioner Courtney asked about an ideal timeline. Commissioner Stanfill said that stakeholder engagement likely was not feasible until after Mardi Gras, then he would move into goal orientation, strategic planning, and defining next steps. He did not outline an exact date for completion, but emphasized he wanted the process to be both quick and responsible.

Commissioner Hecht said we should try to be narrow and specific about our goals, posing the question, “in 10 years, what would success look like? What are three to five things that need to happen to achieve success?” He recommended defining the stakeholders carefully and orient objectives to the board, not trying to be all things to all people.

Chairperson D’Amour said that he was excited about the new focus; he said that the Board had been struggling but has been making significant progress with new Board members and new Mayoral leadership. He hopes that new plan will help the Board raise money and gain momentum.

Mr. Paul Richard referenced the ‘Geography of Innovation’ seminar the Board hosted in October of 2018, saying that Bruce Katz’s last directive was to define what ‘bio’ means to our city. He said that would be an important part of defining the Board’s goals.

- XI. Proposal for survey of projected capital needs for district – Mr. Paul Richard  
Chairperson D’Amour then moved onto the next agenda item, saying that he and Mr. Paul Richard had been talking about Opportunity Zones.

Mr. Richard said that in his experience with Opportunity Zones, an important step is to find projects that could be readily funded. He said that key stakeholders within the BioDistrict could identify capital needs for projects, which could include real estate or business operating needs.

Commissioner Hecht said there’s a template that could be adapted from the Charity Hospital redevelopment and also said that [www.gnozone.com](http://www.gnozone.com) could be used to solicit projects and available land.

Commissioner Kopplin asked if the BioDistrict should be included in the Opportunity Zone GNO, Inc. prospectus that is being developed for the Spirit of Charity. Mr. Richard cautioned that the Charity District does not include all of the BioDistrict. Chairperson D’Amour underscored this, saying that some anchors, such as Xavier, are in the BioDistrict but not in an Opportunity Zone. Mr. Richard said that capital needs should be identified regardless of whether or not they are within an Opportunity Zone.

Commissioner Hecht said that the projects should be prioritized based on the needs, and should be specific to the district's development objectives (for example, university expansions are a solid project but shopping malls do not necessarily align with strategic goals). He said the Board should aim to 'reverse engineer' projects; rather than take an inventory of projects for a wish list, they should try and do a gap analysis to determine what the district needs. If we aspire to be a Houston or a Birmingham, we need to identify where the problem lies – is there a funding issue? A collaboration issue? A branding issue? He also said that other cities have found success after 50 years of focus, we might still be the Texas Medical Center, but in its early stages.

Ms. Jeanette Weiland noted that a big part of success in those other cities was government investment; Commissioner Hecht agreed and underscored that we need to play to our city's strengths. The Board discussed whether capital projects should be determined based on comparative needs, or be driven from the community-up, based on a 'wish list' of anchors.

Commissioner Kopplin said that private capital, unlike government funding and grants, will follow projects that are good investments. Commissioner Hecht said that people are investing in funds, not the projects themselves, so it's about getting the materials together to convince the funds that the investment is safe. He said that the prospectus for Charity went beyond real estate, also including information about jobs, anchors, and governmental support; the BioDistrict assessment should emphasize which funding needs align with which goals.

Commissioner Stanfill restated that his goal is to synthesize, refine, and show what the BioDistrict Board should do; he will orchestrate a needs assessment, gap analysis, and survey to understand what the Board can do to affect change.

XII. Update on the Spirit of Charity Initiative – Commissioner Andy Kopplin

Commissioner Kopplin said that they are developing a Spirit of Charity prospectus and thanked the New Orleans Business Alliance, Downtown Development District, and Greater New Orleans, Inc. for participating in the community input portion of the project.

He said The Greater New Orleans Foundation is also conducting an analysis for tax increment financing. They are looking at multiple TIF boundaries, including Charity, the BioDistrict, and Claiborne to assess how the different boundaries will impact the region and revenue capabilities. The Greater New Orleans Foundation will share the results with legislators and are also open to sharing the report with the Board.

Commissioner Kopplin said that the LSU Real Estate and Facilities Foundation selected 1532 Tulane Partners for the development of the Charity Hospital building; a prelease agreement was signed, permitting them 180 days to do their due diligence (with an opportunity to extend an additional 180 days before signing the full lease). The developers met earlier in the week and are exploring the design and use options for the building. Commissioner Kopplin said the process was moving along, as the developers engage investors, contractors, and potential tenants.

Chairperson D'Amour, who attended the meeting earlier in the week, said that many

important stories were shared with the developers, including a major focus on the need for psychiatric resources. Commission Kopplin agreed, saying that Charity Hospital had more mental health resources, including resources for youth, that were moved to the North Shore after Hurricane Katrina, then shut down, never fully being replaced, which led to understandable frustration.

XIII. Ms. Ellen Lee: Mayor's study on equitable economy

Ms. Ellen Lee said that earlier in the month, New Orleans had taken part in a Peer Exchange Panel as part of the Equitable Economic Development Fellowship. The Equitable Economic Development Fellowship is a project between the National League of Cities and PolicyLink. With visiting experts from other cities, they came together to answer the question "How can the City of New Orleans tackle economic inequities through targeted job creation, place-based strategies, and minority- and women-owned small business development?"

The cohort included Ms. Ellen Lee, Mr. Louis David (VP of Business Development at Strategy, New Orleans Business Alliance), Mr. Vincenzo Pasquantonio (Executive Director of the Human Relations Commission, City of New Orleans), and Ms. Tracey Jackson (Tax Incentives Administrator, Mayor's Office of Community and Economic Development, City of New Orleans). Visiting experts came from Washington DC, Birmingham, Detroit, Oakland, St. Louis, and Indianapolis.

The recommendations included (1) intergovernmental coordination around the shared goal of equity; (2) workforce development to increase economic mobility for all New Orleanians; (3) small business pathways to build onramps for success and growth for local entrepreneurs; and (4) housing and development strategies that help stabilize neighborhoods and build critical amenities through incentives. Their recommendations focused on the idea that our city has a shared destiny, and only through community-driven, people-centric strategies can we find shared success. Collaboration is essential for increasing economic mobility.

Ms. Lee shared some more details, including focusing workforce development initiatives in targeted key industries – like the biosciences and advanced manufacturing – that have quality jobs which pay a living wage with benefits at various levels of educational attainment. She also pointed out the need to leverage incentives, like Opportunity Zones, for not only real estate development, but also for operating businesses.

Small and disadvantaged businesses were another priority; Ms. Lee said that progress had been made on securing contracts for DBEs on public projects, but that private industry also needed to hire underrepresented contractors to improve economic opportunity.

Finally, she touched on placemaking: the Claiborne Corridor, New Orleans East, Federal City, and Charity Hospital District were just a few areas in the city that need investment and have strong potential to better serve the needs of the community. She underscored that projects must focus on populations that have been left out, including low income individuals, artists, culture bearers, hospitality workers, and returning citizens.

Ms. Lee welcomed the BioDistrict Board to reach out if they wanted to get involved as the strategies are built out, restating that collaborating is key to growing prosperity for all.

Chairperson D'Amour asked about the timeline; Ms. Lee said that the fellowship ends in June, at which time the National League of Cities would provide a framework for implementing the recommendations.

XIV. New Orleans Business Alliance Update – Ms. Jeanette Weiland

Ms. Jeanette Weiland told the BioDistrict Board that the New Orleans Business Alliance has partnered with MedCity News to bring INVEST Population Health to New Orleans on May 22; she said she would share more details at the next meeting, as time was running over.

She tapped Ms. Sally Lindsay to share that there were two upcoming events that the BioDistrict Board was invited to attend, including the New Orleans Health Innovators Partner Reception on Tuesday, March 26, and the New Orleans Health Innovators Pitch Finale on Wednesday, March 27 from 2:00-4:30pm at the Louisiana Cancer Research Center. At the Pitch Finale Event, top entrepreneurs from around the country come to New Orleans to partner with our local healthcare leaders with the goal of implementing new biotech solutions for our patient population. The New Orleans Health Innovators ultimately serves as a tool to support business attraction by creating meaningful partnerships between innovative, emerging companies and our healthcare entities.

XV. Other Old Business

No old business was presented.

XVI. New Business

No new business was presented.

XVII. Public Comment(s)

No public comments were submitted.

XVIII. Adjournment

The first quarter BioDistrict Board Meeting of 2019 was adjourned at 4:10pm.