Houma Restoration District

Board Meeting Minutes

October 3, 2023

Commissioners Present:

Noah Lirette - absent Jason Underwood Kevin Champagne

Daniel Babin Tom Hassell Sondra Corbitt

Nick Hebert Kevin Faulk – via phone Bryan Bunn

Others Present:

Michelle Neil Rep. Tanner Magee Chris Pulaski

Cohen Guidry Angela Hidalgo Jules Hebert

Bobbie O’Brein Jarad Charpentier W. Alex Ostheimer

Jason Bergeron Carl Harding Brien Pledger

Justin Bourgeois Melissa Boudreaux Travis Theriot

Tommy Garisco Brighton Schmill Gary Williams, Sr.

A meeting of the Houma Restoration District Board of Commissioners was called to order by Vice Chairman B. Bunn at 11:00 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.

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

Under Public, none.

N. Hebert presented the financial report. A motion was made by S. Corbit, seconded by D. Babin, to approve the financial report as presented. Motion carried.

New Business: Mr. Bunn discussed the CEA with the State of Louisiana for the Act 397 of the 2023 Legislative Session. Motion by S. Corbitt, seconded by D. Babin, to authorize its execution; motion carried.

Nuisance/Abatement Employee: Defer to next meeting.

Parking meter removals: Most business owners would like to see the parking meters removed. This will be brought up at a future meeting for suggestions with HPD and City Court. The current financial structure provides for the cost of the officer whereby also increased officer presence. Other costs are funded by City Court, who also collects fines. A formal request will be made for an accounting of the parking meters. The Downtown Business Association supports the retention of parking meters. The issue is centered around inconvenience v. vehicle turnover. There is some interest in upgrading to Park Mobile instead of the traditional parking meters. K. Champagne requested a small committee within the other agencies be formed to discuss these issues. Handicapped parking was discussed. Bobby O’Brien discussed with Chris Pulaski about handicapped parking modifications. B. Bunn, T. Hassell, D. Babin will work with the local downtown businesses regarding their interests on this issue.

Whitney Bank Building Purchase: M. Neil reported the Council already approved the TPCG purchase the Whitney Bank Building, subject to OCD fundings. C. Harding said the approval to purchase using funds already have require a budget amendment and public hearing on that action. Doing so would provide for an additional 200 people in Downtown Houma on a daily basis. A motion was made by T. Hassell seconded by K. Champagne, to support the TPCG’s intention to purchase the Whitney Bank Building. Motion carried.

Illuminating Bayou Terrebonne: D. Babin discussed lighting up the pedestrian bridges and boardwalk. Doing so is consistent with revitalization and safety measures. D. Babin will follow up with Ann Picou and be brought back to the board for further discussions.

Application from DBA and HDDC to partnership to revive Downtown Live After 5: Jason Bergeron on behalf of the Downtown Business Association submitted an application for Downtown Live After 5. HDDC is unable to fund this. The request is for $16,250.00 for two music series. Tommy Guarisco discussed revamping the entire Downtown Live After 5 program to mimic neighboring communities, having a two-piece music start at 5:00 until 7:00 then switching over to the bandstand with a larger band, doing this for 8 weeks in a row in both the Fall and Spring. For the remainder of the year, it was suggested holding 4 weeks in a row to make up for the events that weren’t held. K. Champagne questioned whether this application actually fits the purpose and mission of the grant. N. Hebert stated perhaps this would be more in line with corporate sponsorship opportunities, as the grant funding stream is non-recurring. The grant funding HRD manages should be used for larger, capital projects. HDDC does have funding for Downtown Live After 5 for next year. S. Corbitt stated there are grants available through the Houma Tourism, up to $5,000.00 for different efforts. K. Faulk agrees with the other board members and would support funding alternatives for this event. A motion was made by N. Hebert, seconded by J. Underwood to deny this application. Motion carried.

Old Business: Bobbie O’Brien reported on the recent complaints in the area for the month of September (see attached report). Travis Theriot reported that most of the crime in the area is target incidents, not random.

B. Bunn updated the board regarding the contract for the non-profit maintenance work. A sideline discussion ensued regarding the potholes along the sidewalks, as a public safety issue that needs to be addressed. Tanner Magee stated that the sidewalks are strictly the responsibility of the Parish to maintain. There may be a grant available to assist with this effort, and HRD will follow up with TPCG.

CEO Position: M. Neil reported the salary range is targeted between $50k to $80k. Further discussions will be had at a future meeting.

HRDC Zoning Overlay: None.

Landry Furniture Building: SCPDC is going through the process with the Phase 2.

The Weyls Jewelry Sign will be complete in late 2023.

Bayou Boardwalk Project: Work on the Bayou Boardwalk has not begun due to the extensive heat. The contractor is expected to begin after October 18, 2023.

Officer Reports: None.

Tanner Magee began discussions on cost of underground power in Downtown Houma. This would instantly upgrade the area. N. Hebert stated CSRS was looking at CDBG funding. Not knowing what is under the street makes the cost difficult to estimate. Sidewalk pavers may be another option, which may be more affordable.

A motion was made by S. Corbitt seconded by T. Hassell, to adjourn the meeting at 12:35 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.

Bryan Bunn, Vice-Chairman Sondra Corbitt, Secretary