



**Board of Directors  
Public Hearing Minutes**

Wednesday, November 16, 2022 | 5:30 PM  
City Council Chambers  
312 E. Charles Street, Hammond, LA 70401

**1. Accepting Nominations for the West Side Property/Business Owner Seat.**

Frank DiVittorio opened the public hearing for accepting nomination for the West Side Property/Business Owner Seat. Mrs. Chelsea Little announced nominations can be made at the meeting and the deadline for nominations is December 2, 2022 via email or in-person at the DDD office.

Mr. DiVittorio invited those seeking to nominate or be nominated to the podium. Mrs. Little noted the nominations received for largest assessed property owner seats, of which there are three, and they are: John Exnicios for Hancock Whitney Bank, Evan Singer for First Guaranty Bank, and Kali Norton for Regions Bank.

No nominations were made for the West Side Property/ Business Owner seat.





**Board of Directors**  
**Public Hearing Minutes**  
Wednesday, November 16, 2022 | 5:30 PM  
City Council Chambers  
312 E. Charles Street, Hammond, LA 70401

**I. CALL TO ORDER: Frank DiVittorio**

**II. Roll Call: Chelsea Tallo Little, Executive Director**

Frank Di Vittorio	Present
John Daniel Guerin	Absent
John Exnicios	Absent
Elsbet Hollywood	Present
Cassie Ragan	Present
Evan Singer	Present
Bryan Wong	Absent

**Old Business**

**1. Approval of the October 2022 financial report**

Cassie Ragan made a motion, seconded by Evan Singer, to approve the October 2022 financial report as written.

Frank Di Vittorio	Yes
John Daniel Guerin	Absent
John Exnicios	Absent
Elsbet Hollywood	Yes
Cassie Ragan	Yes
Evan Singer	Yes
Bryan Wong	Absent

**Motion carried. Yes: 4 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 3**

**2. Approval of minutes from October 18, 2022**

Frank DiVittorio made a motion, seconded by Elsbet Hollywood, to amend the agenda from “approval of minutes from October 18, 2022” to “approval of minutes from October 19, 2022”.

Frank Di Vittorio	Yes
John Daniel Guerin	Absent
John Exnicios	Absent
Elsbet Hollywood	Yes
Cassie Ragan	Yes
Evan Singer	Yes
Bryan Wong	Absent



**Motion carried. Yes: 4 | No: 0 | Abstain: 2 | Absent: 3**

Cassie Ragan made a motion, seconded by Elsbet Hollywood, to approve the minutes from October 19, 2022 as written.

<b>Frank Di Vittorio</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Daniel Guerin</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Bryan Wong</b>	<b>Absent</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 4 | No: 0 | Abstain: 2 | Absent: 3**

#### **New Business:**

##### **1. Design Committee Report**

Cassie Ragan provided an overview of the November Design Committee meeting including the Downtown Welcome Sign, History Panels, and One Thirteen Restaurant exterior renovations. Member noted the renovations would change parking to be available on the street and would only result in the loss of two spots. The renovations include seating, hardscaping, fireplaces, and shade trees.

Jessica Shirey, members of the Hammond Historic District Commission, approached the podium and noted the One Thirteen Restaurant has been brought before the Historic District Commission for conceptual approvals. A final review and approval have not yet occurred.

Members discussed strategies to increase communication between the Hammond Historic Commission and the Hammond DDD. Issues were noted with board members serving on both boards with issues to recusal.

##### **2. Railroad Park**

###### **a. Brick and bench sales**

Mrs. Little presented the document with update numbers for brick sales, noting 250 are left to sell. She mentioned three benches are still for sale. She presented a budget for future projects in the park to fund the history panels and additional trash cans.

###### **b. History Exhibit**

Ms. Kendall provided an update for the History Exhibits, noting the topics for the exhibits were approved by the Board in October. She mentioned the History Trivia Night was not hosted as planned and the group will convene in December to regroup and move forward in the new year productively.



Erika Hemphill approached the podium and inquired about the citizen from the last meeting that had interest in the work group. Ms. Kendall responded that contact was made and she will be included in future meeting dates.

### **3. Farmers Market Report**

Mrs. Little provided an update regarding the Farmers Market logo. Members viewed the updated logo. Mrs. Little gave an overview of the programming planned for the Grand Reopening. Ms. Kendall gave an overview of the street closure logistics. Mrs. Little gave an overview of the Feed & Seed clean out.

Mr. Di Vittorio inquired about the electricity in the park. Ms. Kendall confirmed that it was communicated there would be ample electricity to meet the market's needs. Ms. Kendall confirmed that the postmaster has been communicated with regarding the closure and is on board, given no severe issues during the closure itself.

Erika Hemphill approached the podium and inquired about the Feed & Seed property. Ms. Cassie Ragan stated the last day of the DDD's lease on the property is November 30, 2022 and it will be the property owner's decision on what to do moving forward.

### **4. Events Report**

#### **a. Picnic in the Park**

Mrs. Little provide a recap for the Fall 2022 series of Picnic in the Park.

#### **b. Starry November Night**

Mrs. Little provided the full brochure for the event, including reopening of the farmers & artisans market from 8AM-12PM, search for Santa from 12PM-3PM, a wine & cheese walk from 3PM-6PM, and programming in Cate Square Park from 6PM-8PM. Mrs. Little mentioned artists would be set up in businesses. She mentioned Smile Doctors is the sponsor for this event in the amount of \$2,500.

Mr. DiVittorio inquired about crowd at Picnic in the Park and discussion to better estimate event attendance.

#### **c. Shop Small Saturday**

Mrs. Little introduced plans to promote Shop Small Saturday and conduct a Scavenger Hunt for Shop Small Saturday. She mentioned a larger shopping campaign in summer to push shopping. She mentioned an advertising campaign through holiday season. Ms. Ragan asked about a schedule for coordinate social media promotion of businesses. Members discussed shop small programming and how the scavenger hunt works.

### **5. 2023 Planning**

Mrs. Little presented plans for a board orientation including yearly goals, marketing plans, event schedule, and work plans. Mr. DiVittorio requested a conversation between the Executive Committee to discuss the board orientation.



Amanda Adams, owners of Bayou Booksellers, requested business owners be included in developing the board orientation agenda. Members discussed meeting format options and to have public feedback as part of the orientation.

## **6. Staff Report**

Mrs. Little provided the board with office closure dates including and the latest reports for staff time reporting. Mrs. Elsbet Hollywood inquired about the task breakdown of staff and interns and how future reports can be pulled. Members discussed internship opportunities for college and high school students.

## **7. Employment Matters – Michelle Kendall – Executive Session may be called**

Mr. DiVittorio inquired about going into executive session. Ms. Ragan stated it is the employee's discretion to enter into executive session. Ms. Kendall stated that she would prefer this item be conducted in executive session.

Mrs. Little inquired about the nature of the agenda item and stated she did not have any context for this agenda item. Mr. DiVittorio stated that the matter was general including the consultant's work and anything regarding employment.

Erika Hemphill inquired if staff were aware of the agenda. Mr. DiVittorio stated they knew at the time the final agenda was prepared.

Jessica Shirey asked about the consultants. Mr. DiVittorio stated the DDD has been working with a consultant for months.

Mrs. Little stated that she did not want her item to be done in executive session. Mr. DiVittorio stated she will have that decision at the time of her agenda item.

Elsbet Hollywood made motion, seconded by Evan Singer, to enter to executive session to discuss employment matters pertaining to Michelle Kendall.

<b>Frank Di Vittorio</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Daniel Guerin</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Bryan Wong</b>	<b>Absent</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 4 | No: 0 | Abstain: 2 | Absent: 3**

Frank DiVittorio made motion, seconded by Cassie Ragan, to leave to executive session to discuss employment matters pertaining to Michelle Kendall.

<b>Frank Di Vittorio</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Daniel Guerin</b>	<b>Absent</b>





<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Bryan Wong</b>	<b>Absent</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 4 | No: 0 | Abstain: 2 | Absent: 3**

Mr. DiVittorio stated that given the assessment and evaluations conducted per the consultant, the board had to come consideration to promote employee, Michelle Kendall, to Co-Executive Director.

Mrs. Little inquired about how the responsibilities would be split. Mr. DiVittorio stated each employee would be co-equal and report directly to the board. More information would be provided via the consultant's report and further procedures can be developed at the next board meeting.

Mrs. Little inquired as to when the staff would see the report. Mrs. Little stated that she did not meet with the consultant and that she met with an assistant for a short period of time. She stated she was not questioned on the responsibilities of the DDD, how she works as the Executive Director. She asked why the consultant report was done without the input of the Executive Director.

Mr. DiVittorio responded that Mrs. Little met with the consultant. Mrs. Little responded that she met with an assistant for ten minutes and asked to have another meeting with the head of the consulting firm that never happened. She mentioned she was told the consultants reported directly to Mr. DiVittorio. Mrs. Little further stated that she was never questioned in her role as Executive Director.

Ms. Kendall said she was not interested in the role of co-directors.

Erika Hemphill approached the podium and inquired about the implementation of co-directorship. Ms. Ragan stated that the employees answer to the board.

Ms. Kendall stated that she would reconsider if there was a more structured request, holistic restructuring of leadership, and Mr. DiVittorio's position as chairman.

Mr. DiVittorio stated that there is no way to make that happen tonight.

Mrs. Hemphill inquired about Ms. Kendall's comment. Ms. Kendall stated that she wished Mr. DiVittorio step down as chairman and the staff roles be restructured so she has independence in decision making in particular work areas while working alongside Mrs. Little.

Mr. DiVittorio made a motion, seconded by Cassie Ragan, to table the current agenda item to the end of the meeting.

<b>Frank Di Vittorio</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Daniel Guerin</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Absent</b>



<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Bryan Wong</b>	<b>Absent</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 4 | No: 0 | Abstain: 2 | Absent: 3**

**8. Employment Matters – Chelsea Tallo Little – Executive Session may be called**

Mr. DiVittorio provided an option to Mrs. Little to have her discussion in executive session. Mrs. Little stated that she will only go into executive session if Mr. DiVittorio is not present. Mr. DiVittorio stated he will step out for executive session.

Frank DiVittorio made a motion, seconded by Elsbet Hollywood, to move into executive session to discuss employment matters for Chelsea Tallo Little.

<b>Frank Di Vittorio</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Daniel Guerin</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Bryan Wong</b>	<b>Absent</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 4 | No: 0 | Abstain: 2 | Absent: 3**

Frank DiVittorio made a motion, seconded by Evan Singer, to leave executive session to discuss employment matters for Chelsea Tallo Little.

<b>Frank Di Vittorio</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Daniel Guerin</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Bryan Wong</b>	<b>Absent</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 4 | No: 0 | Abstain: 2 | Absent: 3**

Cassie Ragan stated that an issue had been brought to the board's attention that required further investigation.

Cassie Ragan made a motion, seconded by Elsbet Hollywood, to place employee Chelsea Tallo Little on paid administrative leave.

<b>Frank Di Vittorio</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--------------------------	------------



<b>John Daniel Guerin</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Bryan Wong</b>	<b>Absent</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 4 | No: 0 | Abstain: 2 | Absent: 3**

Erika Hemphill inquired how long administrative leave would take place. Mrs. Hollywood stated paid leave would be effective immediately and would be as long as the investigation takes.

Mrs. Hemphill expressed disappointment in the board's decision. She stated that if the board requested a salaried employee to put hours on timesheets, then it is required to include time over an eight hour work day. She stated that there was information that the issue pertained to timesheets. She furthered mentioned that if the staff of the DDD would be held to a standard, what standard is the chairman held to regarding previously a discussed incidence.

Ms. Ragan stated the board entered executive session to discuss a sensitive employment matter.

Mrs. Hemphill inquired about the call to action for this board related to Mr. DiVittorio's actions. Ms. Ragan stated the board cannot remove a board member and that item is not up for discussion at this time.

Mrs. Hemphill urged the board to hold both parties accountable regarding the previously discussed incident.

Mr. DiVittorio and board members set a special meeting for Monday, November 28, 2022 at 5:30PM.

Ms. Ragan inquired for further public comment. Mr. DiVittorio adjourned the meeting.

-Adjourned

**Chelsea Little, DDD Executive Director**  
**Hammond Downtown Development District Authority**  
**#2 West Thomas Street, Hammond, LA 70401 985-277-5681**