



Board of Directors
Public Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 19, 2023 | 5:30 PM
City Council Chambers
312 E. Charles Street, Hammond, LA 70401

I. CALL TO ORDER: John Exnicios

II. Roll Call: Michelle Kendall, Executive Director

Todd Delaune	Present
John Exnicios	Present
Elsbet Hollywood	Present
Chelsea Kessenich	Present
Kali Norton	Present
Cassie Ragan	Present
Evan Singer	Present

Old Business

1. Approval of the March 2023 financial report

Evan Singer made a motion, seconded by Cassie Ragan, to approve the March 2023 financial report as written.

Todd Delaune	Yes
John Exnicios	Yes
Elsbet Hollywood	Yes
Chelsea Kessenich	Yes
Kali Norton	Yes
Cassie Ragan	Yes
Evan Singer	Yes

Motion carried. Yes: 7 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 0

2. Approval of the meeting minutes from March 15, 2023

Cassie Ragan made a motion, seconded by Elsbet Hollywood, to approve the minutes from March 15, 2023 as written.

Todd Delaune	Yes
John Exnicios	Yes
Elsbet Hollywood	Yes
Chelsea Kessenich	Yes
Kali Norton	Yes
Cassie Ragan	Yes



Evan Singer

Yes

Motion carried. Yes: 7 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 0

3. Creating an Annual Partner Sponsorship Package

John Exnicios made a motion, seconded by Cassie Ragan, to approve the Annual Partner Sponsorship Package.

Todd Delaune

Yes

John Exnicios

Yes

Elsbet Hollywood

Yes

Chelsea Kessenich

Yes

Kali Norton

Yes

Cassie Ragan

Yes

Evan Singer

Yes

Motion carried. Yes: 7 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 0

New Business:

1. Providing recommendations to City Council for member appointments

Ms. Kendall stated this agenda item was requested by Mayor Pete Panepinto due to the competitiveness of the nominees presented to the City Council early in the year. Mrs. Hollywood believed that it was not requested to provide a recommendation due to not having legislative authority, the council needs to ultimately appoint, someone recommended may not be confirmed by the council, etc. Mr. Exnicios stated he believes the board should not be involved in that process so that the city council can create an unbiased board of directors. Ms. Hollywood agreed. Mr. Delaune said he believes it's likely within the rules to give a verbal or written proxy to the city council regarding board member appointments and voting on the matter. Ms. Kendall informed that the board has not submitted a recommendation to the council in a number of years due to the statute outlining what the nomination process should look like. It was then discussed amongst Ms. Hollywood and Mr. Exnicios that improving the process has been looked into before but it is a lengthy procedure. Ms. Ragan added that in the past when the board did provide a recommendation to the city council, the city council went against it. It was felt that it may be redundant to make recommendations that will ultimately end up being disapproved. Mr. Exnicios proposed that the board can help the city council become aware that is why the process is in place because they (the board) are not supposed to have a large role in that respect. Ms. Ragan suggested sending a written explanation or attending a council meeting to elaborate. Ms. Kessenich asked for clarification on the matter. Board members went on to explain the issue more in depth. Ms. Kendall explained the process that takes place at the city council meeting. Ms. Kessenich inquired if the process could replicate an anonymous survey prior to a meeting, then an appointee can be selected that way to curate a more unbiased approach and the results can be discussed publicly. Ms. Kendall asked for further clarification on the suggestion. Ms. Hollywood informed that according to city law, meeting decisions cannot take place outside of the meeting and all conversations must be done publicly during the meeting. There was a unanimous board agreement that it is the city council's responsibility to select a board appointee based on their statute and that the board has no further involvement in the matter.



2. Proposed budget for fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)

Ms. Kendall presented the proposed budget for FY 2024. Ms. Ragan asked if it takes in account any sidewalk projects. A group discussion was held to potentially expand the sidewalk budget and create a limit on the number of sidewalk projects done within one year and its respective budget cap. Ms. Ragan believes it requires \$10-15,000 per project and the current budget is \$20,000. Ms. Hollywood reminded the board that this proposal is operating at a deficit and expanding budget may not be ideal. Mr. Exnicios inquired to know what the fund balance should be in order to better view the budget with a business mindset and make suggestions for Hammond improvements from there. Ms. Ragan noted that sidewalk projects may not come to fruition during the 2024 fiscal year or cost as much. Mr. Exnicios reiterated that although the budget proposed operates at a deficit, spending money should require more astuteness if the budget is to go over. Mr. Singer agreed with the caveat being they are also creating less revenue. Ms. Kendall discussed that she cross referenced what she examined from city accounting located in MUNIS (accounting software) to view how the money is being used. She found that in the current fiscal year there was revenue for Railroad Park brick and bench sales. Some of that revenue will be spent to pay for the bricks, installation and a few other items related to Railroad Park. She anticipates some money to roll over into the fund balance for the upcoming fiscal year and for the numbers to eventually balance out in their respective budget categories. Ms. Kendall stated revenue for the bricks and benches to date is around \$50,000 and around \$8,000 of that will be spent this upcoming fiscal year for the aforementioned reasons. Ms. Kendall intends for about \$35,000 to be placed into the fund budget. She also gave an 11% deficit in the budget due to the difficulty estimating what the DDD will make in property taxes. She created an average of the revenue generated from property taxes from the previous 3 years to propose a reasonable budget. She also noted less revenue due to changes regarding events. Mr. Exnicios asked Ms. Kendall if she underestimated the expenses for the budget. Ms. Norton inquired to know what was included in the contract services and fixed asset budgets. Ms. Kendall elaborated that under contract services, David Danel is paid roughly \$2,000 a year to preparing DDD financial statements each month. Other contract services are for items related to the history exhibit and event photographers. The fixed assets are for iPads for public meetings.

John Exnicios made a motion, seconded by Cassie Ragan, to approve the budget as presented with the addition to increase the sidewalk improvement line item from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

Todd Delaune	Yes
John Exnicios	Yes
Elsbet Hollywood	Yes
Chelsea Kessenich	Yes
Kali Norton	Yes
Cassie Ragan	Yes
Evan Singer	Yes

Motion carried. Yes: 7 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 0

3. Railroad Park



a. Notification of ending of warranty period on April 22, 2023

Ms. Kendall communicated on behalf of Roy Dufreche that there are expenditures to think about that are not covered in the warranty. The only time sensitive item is the cap stones on the seat wall that are damaged due to skateboarding. The idea is that while other warranty items are being taken care of such as cleaning up graffiti, cleaning bricks and maintaining the fountain, the cap stones can be taken care of as well which will cost \$1,404. Ms. Ragan asked if Ms. Kendall is requesting to have the cap stone cost be approved by the board. Ms. Kendall confirmed. It was then discussed amongst the group other Railroad Park anticipated expenditures and how to budget should reflect that. One topic discussed was the main stage having a roof installed at some point in the future for performers to have protection from the elements.

Cassie Ragan made a motion, seconded by John Exnicios, to approve the \$1,404 to reinstall the cap stone masonry for the seat wall in Railroad Park.

Todd Delaune	Yes
John Exnicios	Yes
Elsbet Hollywood	Yes
Chelsea Kessenich	Yes
Kali Norton	Yes
Cassie Ragan	Yes
Evan Singer	Yes

Motion carried. Yes: 7 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 0

b. Railroad Park electrical improvement proposal

Ms. Kendall stated it is a continuous issue having working electricity in the park for vendors participating in the Hammond Farmers & Artisans Market. She presented three quotes to electrical improvements by the following companies: M & R, Tangi Electric, and HR Rocker Electric Company. Upon much discussion, members decided that Ms. Ragan and Ms. Kendall would discuss the electrical improvements again with the contractors to ensure level quotes for the same scope of work.

c. History exhibit draft narratives

Ms. Kendall reviewed the progress being made on the project and the diligent work continuously being done. Ms. Kendall discussed National Preservation Month which is in May and the DDD's partnership with the Hammond Historic District to promote it. Ms. Kendall continued to inform the board of the History Exhibit public input sessions regarding the draft panels for the park. She further explained the timeline and steps that will be taken next as the project gets closer to completion.

4. Events Committee Report (Chelsea Kessenich)

Ms. Kessenich recapped that in February she met with restaurant and bar owners to discuss hot august night. The day could begin with the farmers market, pop up events scattered throughout the day, and in the evening there would be a picnic in the park type of event to wrap it up. The event to be



discussed is the wine walk and launching an event committee to help orchestrate hot august night and other events held by the DDD. It is still on Ms. Kessenich and Ms. Kendall's task list to meeting with the city and police department to discuss restructuring the event. Ms. Kendall and Ms. Kessenich discussed the promotion of the event to begin the last week of May. Mr. Exnicios inquired if the wine walk would be a day time or evening event. Ms. Kendall discussed they could visit downtown business and guide them on mechanisms on how to execute a wine walk independently and if the Hammond Regional Arts Center would be interested in coordinating that segment of the event. Mr. Delaune suggested that Arts Center hosted the wine walk function and merchants were offered a table to represent their business, similar to Art of the Cocktail. Ms. Kessenich liked his idea. Ms. Kendall said that is something they could take a look at. Ms. Norton agreed that it makes sense to collaborate with the Arts Center for the event.

5. Design Committee Report (Cassie Ragan)

Ms. Ragan had a design committee meeting on Thursday, April 6th. The meeting was short and what was discussed was the sidewalk reimbursements. For the meeting in May, more input is expected regarding improved guidelines on the program. Mr. Exnicios what the design fees are. Ms. Ragan informed that design fees are for an entire project. She said the design committee focuses on major renovations or construction and lately they have focused on new construction. It was suggested from a design committee members that design committee meetings take place in the evenings instead of mornings. It was discussed at the meeting but was ultimately decided to stay as a morning meeting. Ms. Kendall added there is a draft of a cooperative endeavor agreement that Eric Andre prepared requesting all information needed for the DDD from a potential sidewalk reimbursement applicant.

6. Farmers Market Manager position – executive session may be called

Mr. Exnicios sat in with Ms. Kendall on two market manager interviews thus far. Ms. Kendall stated there were roughly 25 applicants. She performed 10 phone interviews and 6 in-person interviews. It was narrowed down to two applicants who will be invited to have a second round of interviewing conducted by Ms. Kendall and Mr. Exnicios. Once agreed upon, they will come back with the applicant recommended for hire.

7. Staff Report

Ms. Kendall informed the board that Katie Taylor, Administrative Assistant, was not present at the meeting due to her participation at the State Historic Preservation Conference held in Lake Charles, LA. This quarterly conference secures Main Street accreditation for the Hammond DDD. Ms. Kendall stated upcoming events which is the Hammond Farmers & Artisans Market: Spring Fest, Chalk Walk, and Picnic in the Park all held on Saturday, April 29th. Ms. Kendall then credited Mr. Delaune for successfully walking around the east side of the train tracks in downtown and reporting un-operating or broken street lights. He was able to report outages through Entergy which was taken care of swiftly. Ms. Norton inquired about promoting events through Locable. Ms. Kendall explained the process of adding events on the downtown calendar and how a local business could create their own account and add their events to the calendar at their leisure. This overall helps promote their business and is accessible for any business owner that creates their own account

-Adjourned