



**Board of Directors**  
**Public Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, July 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	Absent
Chelsea Kessenich	Present
Kali Norton	Present
Cassie Ragan	Present
Evan Singer	Present

**Old Business**

**1. Approval of the June 2023 financial report**

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

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

**Motion carried. Yes: 6 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 1**

**2. Amend the agenda to add the approval of the meeting minutes from May 17, 2023**

Cassie Ragan made a motion, seconded by Kali Norton, to amend the agenda and add the approval of the minutes from May 17, 2023 as written.

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



**Motion carried. Yes: 6 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 1**

**3. Approval of the meeting minutes from May 17, 2023**

Cassie Ragan made a motion, seconded by Kali Norton, to approve the minutes from May 17, 2023 as written

<b>Todd Delaune</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Chelsea Kessenich</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Kali Norton</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 5 | No: 0 | Abstain: 1 | Absent: 1**

**4. Approval of the meeting minutes from June 21, 2023**

Cassie Ragan made a motion, seconded by Kali Norton, to approve the minutes from June 21, 2023 as written.

<b>Todd Delaune</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Chelsea Kessenich</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
<b>Kali Norton</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 5 | No: 0 | Abstain: 1 | Absent: 1**

**5. Discussion of DDD Loan Program and Application**

Ms. Kendall presented the most updated version of the loan application to the board. Mr. Singer discussed the increase of loan amounts and rates. He also overviewed that he spoke with a member of the USDA to discuss and ensure the DDD is in compliance with the application program. Ms. Kendall informed the board that the DDD is starting out with a figure of \$360,000 available in loans for the fiscal year.

John Exnicios made a motion, seconded by Chelsea Kessenich, to approve the DDD Loan Program Application with the contingency that a \$150,000 increase on the secured fund loan needs to seek further approval by the USDA.

<b>Todd Delaune</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Chelsea Kessenich</b>	<b>Yes</b>



Kali Norton	Yes
Cassie Ragan	Yes
Evan Singer	Yes

**Motion carried. Yes: 6 | No: 0 | Abstain: 1 | Absent: 1**

#### **New Business:**

##### **1. Adopt the millage rate of 14.13 for tax year 2023**

Ms. Kendall informed this is required to do every year. She also noted that this millage rate received guidance from the assessor's office on how this millage should be adopted. She stated the \$366,000 was generated by tax revenue and the projection for this year fiscal year was figured by taking an average from the previous three years. Upon the adoption, the approval and resolution will be sent to the assessor's office.

Cassie Ragan made a motion, seconded by Kali Norton, to approve and adopt the millage rate of 14.13 for tax year 2023

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

**Motion carried. Yes: 6 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 1**

##### **2. Approval of DDD Loan for Luma Coffee Roasters**

Ms. Kendall overviewed the application information submitted by Luma Coffee Roasters with the board. Mr. Singer explained how the loan amount figure was reached. Ms. Kendall informed that the last time a loan was processed for that amount was 2015.

Cassie Ragan made a motion, seconded by John Exnicios, to approve the DDD Loan for Luma Coffee Roasters in the amount written with the potential to increase the loan to an additional \$41,200 to reach a max of \$75,000.

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



**Motion carried. Yes: 6 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 1**

### **3. Railroad Park**

#### **a. Review of History Exhibit project budget**

Ms. Kendall discussed that a rate for fabrication will be presented in August. Roy Dufreche, a member of the DDD design committee, will be collecting three bids from three different fabricators. The rate for the project will easily be covered by the combined grant received from the state and brick sales.

#### **b. Approval of panel renderings for Railroad Park History Exhibit**

Anntoine Marketing + Design created the panel renderings. The board reviewed the panel renderings in their binders. Ms. Kendall let the board know that the panel renderings received conceptual approval from the Hammond Historic District. Their feedback was to adjust the font size of the panels. Mr. Exnicios voiced he would prefer to see the information trimmed and condensed. He also inquired to know who has reviewed and edited the content. Ms. Kendall informed that the information was reviewed by a Graduate Assistant from the Center of Southeastern Louisiana Studies, Tara Bennett from the DDD Design Committee, Dr. Hyde, and Dr. Nichols. Ms. Kendall anticipates some information will be able to be moved around and condensed if they are able. Ms. Kessenich suggested the idea of incorporating a QR code on a panel for passerby's to learn more information in lieu of having all of the information on one panel. The only question would be if today's technology changed and that method of receiving more information eventually becomes outdated. Ms. Kendall confirmed she would condense the information as much as she can without compromising too much of the important elements that make up the historical facts of the panels. Ms. Kendall encouraged the board to read the panel renderings when final edits are made and encouraged any and all feedback on them. She ended with noting the scope of the project is moving in the right direction.

John Exnicios made a motion, seconded by Chelsea Kessenich, to approve the panel renderings for the Railroad Park History Exhibit as a concept.

<b>Todd Delaune</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Chelsea Kessenich</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Kali Norton</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 6 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 1**

### **4. Design Committee Report (Cassie Ragan)**

Ms. Ragan stated the design committee approved the façade grant for 203, 205, 207 E Charles St. The grant was for \$2,000 to improving awnings and painting.

#### **a. Approval of Façade Grant for 203, 205, 207 E Charles St**

John Exnicios made a motion, seconded by Evan Singer, to approve the Façade Grant for 203, 205, 207 E Charles St in the amount of \$2,000.

<b>Todd Delaune</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>John Exnicios</b>	<b>Yes</b>





<b>Elsbet Hollywood</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Chelsea Kessenich</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Kali Norton</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cassie Ragan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Evan Singer</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Motion carried. Yes: 6 | No: 0 | Abstain: 0 | Absent: 1**

#### **b. Review of Sidewalk Reimbursement Program Guidelines and Application**

Ms. Kendall informed the board the Lacy Landrum overviewed the application. The application reflects edits with Ms. Landrum's suggestions. The design committee suggested that they be notified of potential projects and the projects costs as soon as possible. Project cost estimation is in the application. Ms. Kendall discussed that the sidewalk reimbursement application would be submitted after a project is complete so that the committee and board could prepare and plan for financial coverage and also communicate it all with the city of Hammond. Ms. Ragan felt that the application should be reviewed by the design committee so they can further discuss it. Ms. Ragan added that the application looks different than what was discussed after incorporating Ms. Landrum's suggestions.

Mr. Exnicios asked for further clarification on why the application would be submitted after project completion. Ms. Kendall explained that initially, some parts of the application were an estimate and other parts needed to have firm times on when the council and board would approve. There needed to be a phased approach. Submitting the application post completion was one way to help clarify that process. Mr. Exnicios inquired to know if an applicant would want approval prior to being that far along in the course of the project before committing to it. Ms. Ragan explained that the project costs are split between the DDD, the city of Hammond and the owner. She informed that the city is not going to financially contribute until the project is complete. Ms. Ragan also suggested that a city council member could attend the next upcoming design committee meeting to help streamline the process and provide further clarification about the process from the city's perspective.

Mr. Delaune questioned if there was a way to prove if the business owner owns the sidewalk or if it is under city ownership. Mr. Delaune believes that if the business owner does not own the sidewalk, it should be an expense on the DDD and the city. Ms. Kendall did not have an answer to that question at that point in time. Mr. Delaune then asked to know more about the city's proposal to start charging rental fees for businesses to have furniture on the sidewalk in front of their business. Which, in the case that the business owner does own the side walk, the owner should not have to pay a fee. Mr. Delaune sought clarification to answer the aforementioned questions. Ms. Kessenich agreed with Mr. Delaune. Ms. Norton asked if any board members are eligible for the reimbursement applications. Ms. Kendall informed that to her understanding, board members are not eligible for the reimbursement programs offered by the DDD. Ms. Ragan concluded the conversation by stating the application will be sent back to the design committee and that she would try and look into answering Mr. Delaune's questions.

#### **5. Events Committee Report (Chelsea Kessenich)**

##### **a. Hot August Stroll**

Ms. Kessenich informed of the main band booked for the event and applications coming in to perform and the other stages. Ms. Kendall informed that at this time, five businesses have signed up for the Merchant Registration and door-to-door visits are anticipated to help spread the word and encourage businesses to sign up for merchant advertising. Ms. Kendall continued to discuss other activities planned



for the event. She mentioned that the Hammond police Department was interested in doing a puppy parade during the event. Ms. Kendall expressed to the board that she is still searching for volunteers for the event.

## **6. Staff Report**

Ms. Kendall discussed the DDD annual sponsorship package which would incorporate a Gold, Silver and Bronze sponsorship levels. She mentioned there will also be lower level sponsorships available for those that wish to be involved. Mr. Singer complimented the structure of the sponsorship packages but noted that the levels offered are worth a lot more and insinuated that the price should be increased. Mr. Exnicios inquired to know if North Oaks Health System has selected a package. Ms. Kendall informed that they would get back to her about that in a couple of weeks.

Ms. Kendall is still advertising for the farmer's market manager position as well as interns for the fall. Ms. Ragan spoke up to state that several vendors expressed appreciation for seeing a board member attend the market. Ms. Norton noted that she attends the farmers market every Saturday. Ms. Ragan continued to say that the said vendors had an idea of who they would suggest to be a market manager. They also expressed concern over not having a manager yet. Ms. Ragan asked Ms. Kendall if there is anything the board can do to help Ms. Kendall find a manager. Ms. Kendall suggested if they know anyone who would be a good fit to send them to her. Mr. Delaune offered to post the job opening on his business social media pages to help expose the open position. Mr. Exnicios asked to know how many applications are received per month to become a market vendor. Ms. Kendall informed that several applications are submitted each month.

Ms. Kendall moved on to inform the board of grants and tax rebate programs available for downtown businesses.

## **Adjournment**

