



Monday, November 2, 2015; 2-4pm
365 Canal Street

20th Floor: Phelps Dunbar Conference Room

Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

2 November 2015

Commissioners Present

Darryl Berger (tardy)
Jeremy DeBlieux
Brian Furness
Mia Matassa
Lary Hesdorffer
Jim Oliver
Steve Pettus
Sal Sunseri (tardy)
Robert Watters
Ted Young

Commissioners Absent

Al Groos
Kim Rosenberg

Guests

Emily Remington, Executive Director

I. CALL TO ORDER: ROLL CALL: INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES

Steve Pettus called the meeting to order at 2:05pm. Emily Remington called the roll.

III. Chairman's Comments

Steve welcomed attendees and reminded them about signing in on the public comment sheet. Steve thanked Kim for filling in for him at the October 2015 meeting. Steve announced that the EDD had passed and it was truly a team effort, so thanks to everyone who had worked on that. Steve said that FQMD would ensure compliance of the CEA for the EDD.

IV. Executive Director Report

Emily thanked everyone who had been involved with the EDD: residents, Cheryl Teamer from the CVB, Brittany Mulla with FQBA, and French Quarter Advocates. She mentioned that a budget would be presented at the December meeting. She said that the Preservation Resource Center had reached out to do a story on businesses or restaurants that have moved into historic spaces; she asked anyone interested in speaking to PRC to be in touch with her. She informed attendees that in November she would be meeting with the CVB and other French Quarter leaders about the French Quarter parking proposal, with the DDD to discuss downtown public safety initiatives and vagrancy, and with other stakeholders on supplemental police patrols. Emily also reminded attendees that the FQMD is legislatively prohibited from becoming involved in zoning issues, as she had recently received many notices about the proposed building at 121 Royal Street and about a proposed dog park.

Robert Watters moved to suspend the agenda in order to allow Councilwoman Nadine Ramsey to speak. The motion was seconded by Jim and passed unanimously.

Councilwoman Ramsey welcomed Emily as the Executive Director and stated that she looked forward to working with her and with the Commissioners. She stated that the FQMD is a leader in the community in terms of infrastructure and safety. She said FQMD had helped to put important safeguards into the French Quarter, including the 36' maximum for trucks. This has created an important change in the French Quarter for sidewalks and balconies. Ramsey stated that the NOPD is now authorized to issue traffic citations, and she thanked FQMD for helping her shepherd that legislation through. She said that the DPW is conducting a traffic study in the Vieux Carre to examine signage, freight zones, and loading zones. She stated the need for this study and its potential major impact on traffic once completed. Ramsey spoke about the rash of crime in the French Quarter and noted that FQMD support allowed the development of the EDD. She stated that passing the EDD is an example of what can happen when everyone is on the same page: we see positive results. She thanked her staff for their work with Royal Street businesses to improve issues of sanitation and vagrancy and noted that her staff are working with NOPD quality of life officers to help find a balance around adequate enforcement. Ramsey noted that the City Council is on board to use city money for enforcement.

Ramsey listed her administration's accomplishments in the French Quarter: the installation of Big Belly trashcans and their effects on vagrancy; glass recycling; increased revenue from retail taxes and the BP settlement; occupancy improvements for hotels and motels; funding for NOFD and the Sheriff's office; the implementation of the consent decree; and 15% raises for NOPD, which will allow for more crime to be tackled.

Ramsey said there is a new proposal which will increase parking rates to \$2/hour in the rest of the city and \$3/hour in the French Quarter. The proposal includes Sundays and goes until 10p. She expressed concern about locals visiting the French Quarter and how the proposal would affect businesses, musicians, and residents who want to enjoy the great restaurants in the Quarter. She said the Mayor doesn't need Council approval for this measure, but she wants to have a discussion with him. Ramsey stated that the French Quarter is doing well, but the major problem is crime and city wide enforcement of laws already on the books. She challenged business owners to provide opportunities to develop the city's young people and stated that this is a successful pattern in major cities throughout the country to lower crime.

Ramsey stated that the French Quarter draws in tourists and has a special significance to residents and to people who grew up in New Orleans. She said she was grateful for the opportunity to see all of the leaders of the Quarter together. She said that everyone had done very good things this year and needed to continue to work together to do a good job on protecting our city's jewel.

Steve thanked Councilwoman Ramsey for her cohesiveness. Ramsey stated that her office has an open door policy.

Robert said he was under the impression that the EDD goes into effect the first month after its election. Steve said that it starts on January 1, 2016, and the first money will come in around February 20, 2016. Steve stated that Helena Moreno's \$2M secured funding will get the EDD through the first 50 days.

Jeremy asked if NOLA Patrol would continue. Ramsey said yes.

With no further questions, Ramsey departed the meeting to return to budget hearings.

V. Treasurer's Report

Jeremy asked Commissioners to look at the reports he was submitting for October. He said that his understand was that Bourbon Patrols had ceased. Bob stated that FQMD would have a positive balance in this account and that he was negotiating what to do with the balance. Jeremy said that, per state mandate, FQMD had taken proposals from local, well-known accounting firms. He said that a decision had been made based on cost, experience, and availability of a firm to be a resource to FQMD and suggested that FQMD accept Ericksen Krentel & Laporte's bid. Sal moved, and Robert seconded. Those in favor were Darryl, Jeremy, Brian, Mia, Lary, Jim, Steve, Sal, Robert, and Ted, with no opposition and no abstentions.

Bob asked whether the 5% admin fee that FQMD receives from FQTF donations covered insurance and the audit. Jeremy stated that the budgets presented in December will have insurance in them.

VI. FQMD Officers: 2016

Steve stated that a slate of Officers had been nominated at the October meeting and needed to be voted on at the November meeting. Robert moved that the slate be adopted, and Ted seconded. Those in favor were Darryl, Jeremy, Brian, Mia, Lary, Jim, Steve, Sal, Robert, and Ted, with no opposition and no abstentions.

VII. Proposed Committee Membership

Steve said that after many discussions about Committee members who are frequent attenders, he, Jim, and Emily had developed Committee membership lists that balanced residential and business interests. He also said that every Commissioner is expected to serve as an Executive Officer or on a Committee.

Steve proposed the following members for the Infrastructure Committee: co-chairs, Gail Cavett and Al Groos; the VCPORA appointee, Darryl Berger, Bryan Dupepe, Brittany Mulla, Kim Rosenberg, Adrienne Thomas, and Ted Young. Gail said that there were two people who should be added, and Susan Guillot said that FQC had a nominee. Jeremy moved that the Committee membership as nominated be adopted, and Jim seconded. Those in favor were Darryl, Jeremy, Brian, Mia, Lary, Jim, Steve, Sal, Robert, and Ted, with no opposition and no abstentions.

Steve proposed the following members for the Government Committee: co-chairs, Jeremy DeBlieux and Kim Rosenberg; Brian Furness; Lary Hesdorffer; Hannah Kreiger-Benson; Duke LoCicero; Bobby Major; Meg Lousteau; and Tim Spratt. Jim moved that the Committee membership as nominated be adopted, and Lary seconded. Those in favor were Darryl, Jeremy, Brian, Mia, Lary, Jim, Steve, Sal, Robert, and Ted, with no opposition and no abstentions.

Steve proposed the following members for the Security Task Force: co-chairs, Bob Simms and Robert Watters; the CVB appointee; Beverly Fulk; Ann Kessler; Vincent Marcello; Brittany Mulla; Mike Roberts; and Mike Tilbury. Jeremy moved that the Committee membership as nominated be adopted, and Lary seconded. Those in favor were Darryl, Jeremy, Brian, Mia, Lary, Jim, Steve, Sal, Robert, and Ted, with no opposition and no abstentions.

Steve said that every Committee had co-chairs and that the Commissioner co-chair is the senior one. Steve suggested that the Commissioner co-chair will write the agenda and set the meeting dates/times. Jeremy moved, and Robert seconded. Those in favor were Darryl, Jeremy, Brian, Mia, Lary, Jim, Steve, Sal, Robert, and Ted, with no opposition and no abstentions.

VIII. Status of CEAs and other related matters

Robert said that he could not find a CEA for the FQBL donation to FQMD. Robert stated that there is a new pot of money for sidewalk improvements. He asked for a summary of the FQ sidewalk assessment. Jeremy stated that Cedric Grant refused to follow the prescribed method of replacing slate with slate, brick with brick, or concrete with concrete. Gail said that sidewalk materials are supposed to go back to the same. Gail stated that the Infrastructure Committee's job is to provide information that the team reviews. She said there's only so much FQMD can influence, and usually it's places with high trip and fall priority. She said that she and Emily had met with Dani and Ryan from the Mayor's office. She said that they are trying to stretch the money to two types of material at a time to get more bang for their buck.

Jeremy stated that he has a problem when the City does work that is in violation of its own laws. Lary stated that spot repairs and trip and fall hazards are repairs, not sidewalk replacement. Since 1984, if someone wishes to switch from concrete, that has been allowed. All corner locations may be concrete to allow handicapped access to sidewalks. Jeremy said that he would send a document that further described his issue. His hope is that all of the French Quarter one days is slate or brick.

IX. Report by Chairs, Infrastructure Committee

Travis from the Sewerage and Water Board said that the storm drain screen project has been approved. He stated that funding is coming out of a capital drainage project. He said that SWB is cleaning out storm drains every Monday to prove how effective basins are. He said that the drains are usually full of mud and hand grenades. He said that the SWB is excited to improve neighborhood drainage. He would like to begin an educational initiative about washing mats on storm drains and said that a few warnings have been issued to make an example of this illegal activity. Susan Guillot asked if photographs can be used as evidence of wrongdoing. Travis said yes.

X. Report by Chairs, Security Task Force

Robert said that on October 2, he had met with Sheriff Gusman, Vincent Marcello, and Jeremy DeBlieux. The Sheriff is willing to work with the 8th District. On October 9, the Mayor met with leaders in the FQ to improve policing. The Mayor said that New Orleans is down officers long-term. Robert said that business report that there are fewer patrols in the French Quarter, which is a violation of the CEA with the FQMD/FQTF. Robert suggested a public records request on how many officers are patrolling which area of the District. Robert said that Bourbon Patrol has ceased; FQBL had agreed to continue but management was ineffective and unresponsive to meet. The CEA that was signed with the EDD will allow LSP training for specific FQ issues, especially as related to tourism and the Quarter's particular laws. Robert stated that FQMD must continue its strong involvement and that rules of engagement be developed for LSP officers in the FQ. Robert stated that we are looking at LSP to improve the quality of life in the Quarter.

Robert said that the RTA is putting down 50 strands of fiber optic cable for the installation of traffic cameras, particularly license plate readers so that NOPD will know who is coming in and who is driving stolen cars. He stated that an apparent \$10,000 is needed to produce a study. Bob said that is in the 2015 Mayor's budget. Robert said that budgets are just documents, and license plate readers are vital to the safety of the FQ.

Robert moved to enable himself to raise \$10,000 to conduct an engineering feasibility study to use fiber optic cable provided by RTA to install cameras on Canal and Rampart Streets. Sal seconded. Those in favor were Darryl, Jeremy, Brian, Mia, Lary, Jim, Steve, Sal, Robert, and Ted, with no opposition and no abstentions.

Albin Guillot said that the Polaris patrols have helped reduce the walking criminals, and license plate readers will help with the driving thugs. Robert said that a team needs to be assembled for vagrancy sweeps, since FQTF is clearly not getting it done. Mia said that FQTF officer don't know what to do with vagrants. Bob said that every night, officers are refused to bring vagrants to jail. Robert said we need documentation. Susan Guillot asked where Robert had heard about fewer patrols in the Quarter, and Robert said he had heard it from Emily but wanted to conduct a freedom of information request. Bob said that Robert was talking semantics and that the number of people assigned to the FQ is fluid. Bob stated that what FQTF has done has pushed criminals away from the FQ into other places in the 8th District. Susan asked if they were supplanting. Robert said that FQMD signed CEAS with very specific objectives and language that this would not happen.

Mia said that officers are not in the Marigny. She said she only sees officers if something has just happened. Bob said that a good number of officers are in the station, but at 11pm on a Saturday, few are deployed. Bob said that the manpower at night is predominantly/frighteningly light at night. Bob said that he is sure NOPD can prove that they are not supplanting.

Bob presented information on the French Quarter Task Force and Bourbon Patrol.

XI. New Business

Two representatives from The Chemical, LLC discussed their hard surface cleaner and offered to donate 20% of their proceeds to FQMD. Lary said that the VCC is not chemical experts, but that the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training in Natchitoches tests them.

Albin asked about the recent closing of bars and whether they could be shut down permanently. Steve said that the CDC was going to hear cases on Wednesday, and the businesses are owed their due process.

XII. Future meetings

The next meeting will be December 7 from 2-4pm.

XIII. Adjournment

Steve asked for a motion to adjourn at 3:48pm. Many members moved and/or seconded. The meeting was adjourned.