

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting of Monday, July 9, 2018

Brennan’s Restaurant

417 Royal Street, New Orleans

**DRAFT MINUTES**

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| **Commissioners Present:** |  |  |
| David Bilbe | Susan Klein | David Speights |
| Steve Caputo (Lv 4:05) | Nicholas Musso | Robert Watters (Lv 3:30) |
| Brian Furness  Jeremy DeBlieux (Lv 3:00) | Darryl Berger (Lv 3:45)  Christian Pendleton | Jim Oliver  Kim Rosenberg |
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**Absent:**

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| **Executive Director:** Emily Remington  **Committee Co-Chairs:** |  |  |

Bob Simms, Security & Enforcement Committee Gail Cavett, Infrastructure Committee

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| **Guests:** |  |
| Brittany McGovern, FQBA  Jodi Poretto, FQC  Matthew Emory, Rita’s Tequila Bar  Kristen G. Palmer, Councilperson “C”  Daniel Hammer, HNOC  Jack Greenwood, VCPORA | Meg Lousteau, VCPORA  Albin Guillot, FQMD SEC  Ellen Davis, LA Restaurant Assoc.  Rickey Planche, Resident  Sarah Porteous, City Special Projects  Susan Guillot, FQC | |

Andrew Sullivan, District C, Chief of Staff

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL: Chair Nick Musso called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. The roll was called and a quorum was present.
2. EXECUTIVE SESSION for consideration of matters related to Executive Director Remington. Mr. Furness motioned **(M1)** to “adjourn to Executive Session for consideration of matters related to Executive Director Remington”, seconded by Mr. Watters and unanimously approved at 2:04 pm.
3. RECONVENE REGULAR MEETING: Mr. Musso reconvened the regular meeting at 2:35 p.m. Mr. Caputto motioned (**M2)** to” reconvene the Regular Meeting…”, seconded by Mr. Speights and unanimously approved.
4. INTODUCTION OF ATTENDEES & PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Musso asked for introductions of those present and reminded members of the public wishing to address particular items to record their interest on the sign-up sheet. The Agenda was noted.
5. DISTRICT “C” UPDATES: City: Councilperson Kristin Gisleson Palmer was introduced by Chairman Musso. CM Palmer noted that she is seeing a lot of the same issues from her former tenure. As before, her office is accessible & open to us.
6. She agreed that the dedicated FQMD line of funding should be utilized through greater City accountability with the City upholding their side of the agreement. She sees her role as working with the City Administration to get the funding information, receipt/disbursement & to help determine where the money should be directed in terms of safety, infrastructure and FQMD’s mission of work.
7. She would like to utilize FQMD recommendations for French Quarter needs and improvements. She requested that FQMD circulate information received from her office to all the member organizations represented on the FQMD Board. She understands that there will not be consensus on all issues, but requested that dissemination of all information is unilateral and transparent. This would also include FQMD feedback to her office. This way she & her staff can make better, and more informed decisions. A current issue is the aggressive push by the Lime Scooter owner to place them within the FQ. These are serious safety concerns and she is working to prevent their placement.
8. CM Palmer at this point asked for questions;
9. Mr. Musso concurred with CM Palmer’s on the duel responsibility of accounting from the City.
10. Mr. Simms noted that CM Palmer attended the Costas Christ (internationally recognized authority on *Sustainable Tourism)* lecture last week and asked her opinion. CM Palmer stated she was in agreement with his findings. She noted housing & transportation are two of the most important things for the hospitality worker. Off-site parking for workers and visitors is also important. Transportation is a huge part of sustainable tourism. She believes New Orleans and Company should be housed in City Hall. She brought members of the last administration to Charleston to see how they manage their tourism. NOLA has 24% less transportation options post-Katrina. Also, there is less on-street available. Tourism is not going to go away and she stated that tourism should work for us. She would like to see a “Sustainable Tourism Commission”. The Mayor is very interested in a successful tourism management model for the FQ.
11. Mr. Pendleton noted that he has seen a dedicated march in the wrong direction regarding cleanliness. Also noted was the out of control rat population and that catch basins should be baited on a regular schedule and during sidewalk & street construction. He noted that some convention groups are not rescheduling because of the FQ filth. CM Palmer stated that the NOLA Mosquito, Termite & Rodent Control Department was one of the best in the country, but every year she was in office the Landrieu Administration cut their budget & she will look into this.
12. CM Palmer recommended that the FQMD concerns be sent on letterhead to the Mayor and to her individually, with her being copied on the letter to the Mayor. She stated that the concerns should include the general uncleanliness including the rat situation, inadequate sidewalks, financial accountability, traffic and alternative vehicles. She suggested that FQMD have a press conference on the rat problem. FQMD needs to raise these issues in a thoughtful and smart way and be part of the solution and that “creative conflict” can be a good thing. She also believes FQMD should hold administration accountable on poor sidewalk installations (inherited from Landrieu administration).
13. The French Quarter contributes the most revenue to the City. CM Palmer said Mayor Cantrell understands the importance of the FQ to the City; financially, architecturally and culturally. A problem is that the public has been told that direct & indirect dollar figures have been aggregated and so not able to be segregated for useable data. However, Ms. Rickey Plaunche shared that when Ray Nagin was mayor, he told her 70% of City direct and indirect revenue was generated in the French Quarter.
14. The homeless population should be somewhat relieved by the Low-Barrier Shelter which will require less individual accountability to stay & is slated to open this summer. This could have its own problems, yet to be seen and will be housed in the VA Hospital. CM Palmer said she would follow-up on this.
15. Darryl Berger thanked CM Palmer for hitting the ground running and is glad she will be utilizing FQMD more regarding FQ issues. This is not to supersede the representative organizations, but he noted FQMD is carefully crafted to have representation from all groups. He also noted that there has never been any FQ dedicated funding, until the “Quarter for the Quarter” tax was approved at the polls. He agreed that FQMD does need to be more politically pro-active. CM Palmer shared there is a lot of money flowing into the FQ and with her help, FQMD should look at those finances and how the public moneys are allocated. She noted that the French Market Corporation has over 50 employees and questioned if that was an effective use of public funds as the FMC revenue is dedicated to the FQ. An FQMD representative should be at those meetings. The FMC security guards do not carry guns and are not constitutionally trained, so perhaps the FQMD STF should be expanded to do FMC Security. Public dollars need better utilization; (the DDD collects $878,000 annually on the District C side ). CM Palmer shared that she worked to have $15-16M approved for the FQ in the recent budget, so FQMD should review those allocations for the best return on that investment.
16. Mr. Musso thanked CM Palmer for coming to our meeting and welcomed her to all future meetings. CM Palmer would like us to be more visible. Gail thanked her for helping regarding the Infrastructure Committee’s problem with HopOn/HopOff bus parking.
17. RoadworkNOLA UPDATES for BOURBON STREET PHASE II: Sarah McLaughlin Porteous
18. Ms. Porteous reported that this City office was created specifically to address citizen concerns on City projects. Bourbon Street Phase II is out to bid, with bid opening next week. Construction should start after Labor Day to last 6 months from the start. There will be a 2 week immobilization during Mardi Gras. Other immobilizations can be scheduled as needed for major events.
19. As requested by Mr. Musso, Ms. Porteous shall send Phase II contract specifications to Ms. Remington.
20. Ms. Porteous noted that the black-out screening on Phase I promoted an increase in crime, so they will change this and look into alternative fencing.
21. Entergy, gas and electric should be completed before the City work. More specifics will be available at the pre-construction meetings.
22. Mr. Emory noted that claims are not paid on business interruption insurance unless sidewalks are totally closed. Ms. Porteous said there are no plans to totally close sidewalks, but she will get back to Ms. Remington on this. A question was raised on pathways being ADA compliant. Also, if you can’t cross the street, even at the corners then a pedestrian must circumvent an entire block (4-5 block walk) to cross. An overhead crosswalk as other cities have provided is not included in the plans. Ms. Porteous noted that time frame will be tighter, because this time the utilities will be coordinated, which was a major problem with Phase I. She will get back to Ms. Remington on this concern.
23. Mr. Simms noted that building damage occurred because a street-specific jack hammer was used on the sidewalks. Single sidewalk-specific jack hammers should be used on the sidewalks. Ms. Porteous didn’t know about this issue. Mr. Musso said this would be known pursuant to the Phase II project contract specification documents that Ms. Porteous is sending to Ms. Remington.
24. Temporary lighting will also be placed.
25. She will look into the rodent problem.
26. They are looking at a QR reader for area information.
27. Pre-construction meetings will be noticed to all. Mr. Musso requested that Ms. Porteous return to report on updates. She agreed and noted that she would request the Departments of Public Works to accompany her for more specific information.
28. The City is working with the manufacturer to address the current bollard problems.
29. APPROVAL OF MAY 2018 MINUTES: Mr. Caputo motioned **(M3)** - to “…approve the Minutes of the May 7, 2018 Regular Meeting…” seconded by Ms. Rosenberg, and approved unanimously.
30. CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS - Mr. Musso

1. Nominations for FQMD Executive Officers: 2018: Mr. Musso stated that he will not be Chairman next year and requested nominations for any Officer position be sent to Ms. Klein via email.
2. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT
3. The audit has been submitted to the legislative auditors & Ms. Remington should receive confirmation within the next few weeks. When Ms. Remington receives the audit from the CPA firm she will forward it to the Commissioners.
4. French Quarter Museum Association (FQMA) represents 7 organizations with 14 FQ properties. Ms. Remington was approached by Daniel Hammer of HNOC for FQMD to act as this group’s fiscal agent. At this point Mr. Hammer made his presentation. HNOC as a private foundation is not able to operate as the Museum Association’s fiscal agent, but they are acting as the administrator for this new group. And, the other organizations do not have the capacity to fill this role. A third party is required as a fiscal agent to mange FQMA dues, donations and sales. No action was taken, because the Commissioners raised questions regarding FQMD’s fit and liability. Mr. Hammer noted that this would a great opportunity for FQMD to have a positive influence on the FQ. The recent Sustainable Tourism lecture relayed how increasing visitor numbers must be analyzed along with City services and other tourism public and private expenses to see a true picture of a city’s tourism profit**.** Mr. Musso stated this was a commendable effort to bring all these organizations together. To vet this request, Mr. Musso tasked Ms. Rosenberg to determine if FQMD can legally act as a fiduciary agent for a non-profit. Additionally, FQMA should present a written proposal to FQMD listing what the tasks required would be, as well as the projected expenses and revenue, including conditions and expectations which could be reviewed at the next FQMD meeting. While there was a general appreciation for the formation of this new group, it was determined at this time, more detailed information must be reviewed. Mr. Hammer shared that any help FQMD could provide would be appreciated. FQMA does not have non-profit status at this point.
5. Professional development updates—VCCF, VCPORA and HNOC worked collaboratively to produce the Sustainable Tourism presentation by international expert, Costa Christ. Councilmember Palmer also spoke and introduced Mr. Christ. In August Ms. Remington along with Commander Gernon will be traveling to Charleston to have conversations with sister organizations, the police, administration and tourism managers there to learn how they have been able to keep their historic area clean and vagrant free. They will also be discussing how the sustainable tourism model has been implemented there. Ms. Remington concluded by thanking FQBA for the distributed “Passport” Booklets.
6. TREASURER’S REPORTS: The May and June 2018 Operating financials for FQMD & STF were distributed. Mr. Oliver noted that July’s payment was made by the CVB, and so those costs need to be paid. Any expenditure requires two approvals. The Commissioners did approve a smart car from the STF fund. Mr. Musso noted that financial info is shared throughout the month with him, Ms. Remington, Mr. Furness and Mr. Oliver, so there is oversight. Mr. Furness motioned (**M4**), seconded by Ms. Rosenberg to “approve the March and April financial reports as submitted,” and they were unanimously approved.
7. REPORT BY CHAIRS, INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT
8. Novelty Vehicles – Ms. Cavett reported that Mayor Cantrell has created a new transportation category of “novelty scooter” to accommodate the new Lime Scooters which ride on the sidewalk. They are proposing to share bike lanes which they will not do, but ride in all vehicular lane. They travel at 15 mph with a 20 hour charge. Other cities have begun confiscating them as they are a public nuisance and safety hazard. They slow other vehicular traffic on the street, because of traveling below the minimum speed. FQMD is already on record as of 2013 to be against novelty vehicles in the FQ. Ms. Cavett will obtain a copy of the Mayor’s ordinance for Ms. Rosenberg to review. Ms. Rosenberg, Ms. Cavet and Ms. Remington will meet with Councilmember Palmer and/or her staff to craft an amendment to the Mayor’s ordinance to prohibit the Lime Scooters in the FQ. These Lime Scooters will cost the City $200,000 and will return to the City revenue of only $10,000; this leaves a $190,000 loss to the City budget. Also, this business has no administrative arm, so that will fall to the City. Ms. Lousteau noted VCPORA, FQC, FQBA & FQMD is meeting with this company tomorrow which took her months to set up, because Lime Scooter did not want to meet with the community groups. Also, she noted that at even with a $500 fine for sidewalk driving, there is no way to educate and enforce 18 million visitors regarding this nuisance vehicle & its safety issues. Mr. Musso said there is the bigger issue of adding another vehicle type to an overburdened FQ. San Francisco is having a severe problem with them Ms. Rosenberg suggested some requirements: 1- a FQ icon with the universal red circle and slash mark, 2- the forms needed to rent must note the FQ prohibition. This will be dealt with in committee. Mr. Musso tasked Ms. Cavett to hastily produce a resolution that FQMD can send to Mayor Cantrell and Councilmember Palmer. Mr. Pendleton motioned (**M5**) “…to have the Infrastructure Committee Co-Chairs for FQMD oppose the placement of novelty vehicles within the FQMD area…” seconded by Ms. Rosenberg and approved by all Commissioners with the exception of Mr.Watters, who abstained.
9. LIGHTING – Ms. Klein noted the currently the number of missing posts is outpacing those being reinstalled. Ms. Faulk will conduct a more accurate survey of FQ interior streets this summer with results reported at the September Board Meeting.
10. DISCUSSION *(Captured in XI. a. & b. above)*
11. REPORT BY CHAIRS, SECURITY AND ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE: Mr. Simms
12. CRIME – Violent crime is down. The types of crime are about the same as last year. He showed a video of an armed robbery in progress & the perpetrator was arrested within 24 hours in the 7th District in NO East. Commander Gernon’s focus is to decrease violent crime and that shows a decrease. In another incident, an armed robber on Decatur was apprehended by SFT within minutes of the crime. Mr. Musso tasked Mr. Simms to secure any statistics on the constant blue and red flashing cams in other areas of the City to determine if they are a deterrent.
13. TRAFFIC – There continues to be fewer trucks because of enforcement and ticketing by the STF. DPW placed oversized vehicle signs at entry points throughout the District and many have been removed or vandalized. Mr. Simms forwarded this data to Councilmember Palmer who forwarded it to DPW, with no replacement yet.
14. SECURITY TASK FORCE – The new car will be in service as soon as the Mayor signs the CEA. At this point, the Polaris is owned by the City and the 2 smart cars aren’t. These 2 smart cars are owned by Mr. Torres and he no longer wants to pay the $12,000 annual insurance. The better one he will donate to the City through FQMD and that will be the STF back-up car. Previously, the Committee was asked to investigate additional measures to make the FQ safer. Mr. Simms noted that there are 20 ways into and 17 ways out of the FQ and until we get a handle on that, there will be problems; (the videoed armed robber was driving). Mr. Simms produced a plan for egress and ingress FQ points and how access could be limited; Councilmember Palmer is interested in this. Limited access by time and vehicle is done all over the world & should be part of the City’s Transportation Plan. Our Traffic Enforcement Officer works from 10 am – 2 pm with the other STF officers enforcing at the other times.
15. DISCUSSION
16. Mr. Simms noted that some committee members do not attend regularly. Mr. Musso said infrequent attendance should change a person’s status to “guest” with no voting rights. Mr. Furness noted there may be some guidance within the Bylaws.
17. Ms. Ricky Plaunche would like more gun regulation, which Mr. Musso pointed out already exists. She also noted the Moon Walk should be safer and cleaner, which is something everyone wants.
18. Ms. Lousteau requested expanding the Agenda; Mr. Musso responded that time restraints & last minute developments are limiting factors and he will try to address that.
19. NEW BUSINESS
20. The Short Term Rental issue at the CPC is tomorrow at 3 p.m.
21. Mr. Pendleton noted that the LA Restaurant Association is requesting action on improving FQ cleanliness. This includes litter, panhandling and rats. Also, Empire the contractor for trash collection has been a problem. They did not know residents could use bags, and some residents were not receiving daily garbage pick-up. Also, some businesses are keeping their carts on the sidewalk continually. Mr. Musso noted that the subterranean rat nests that are 10-12 feet down house thousands of rats and their environment is being opened with the street work. Ms. Cavett will look into the sanitation contract.
22. Mr. Oliver noted FQMD has too much business to meet only six times a year. Mr. Pendleton volunteered Brennan’s as a monthly meeting place unless otherwise instructed. Mr. Oliver motioned **(M6)** that “the FQMD Commission meet monthly until further notice on the second Monday’s of the month..” seconded by Ms. Rosenberg and unanimously approved.
23. In addition to Ms. Cavett reviewing the City sanitation contract, the need for a Sanitation Task Force was discussed. Ms. Rosenberg motioned (**M7** ) “…to empower Mr. Musso to create a Sanitation Task Force composed of Board Member(s) and public volunteers, to address sanitation, cleanliness & rodent control…” seconded by Mr. Pendleton and unanimously approved.
24. FUTURE MEETING : August 20, 2018 at Brennan’s Restaurant.
25. ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Oliver motioned **(M8)** “…that the meeting be adjourned…” seconded by Mr. Pendleton and was approved by acclamation at 4:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Klein (signed original available)

Susan Klein, Secretary Attachments: Committee Reports