

# French Quarter MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## Notes Government Affairs Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 24 June 2020  
2:10 to 3:40pm

Via Teleconference:  
<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1486684653>

Video:  
<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/personallink.html>

Meeting ID: 148 668 4653

Audio:  
+1 (469) 445 0100

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting is called to order at 2:12 pm

ROLL CALL:

Committee Members			
First Name	Last Name	Present	Absent
David	Bilbe		X
Sherry	Cannon		X
Jane	Cooper	X	
Jeremy	DeBlieux	X	
Brian	Furness	X	
Juliet	Laughlin	X	
Brittany	McGovern	X	
Christian	Pendleton	X	
Kim	Rosenberg	X	
Frank	Zumbo	X	

INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES:

Guests		
First Name	Last Name	Role
Mamie	Gasperez	Commissioner
Gail	Cavett	Commissioner
Matthew	Emory	Commissioner
Heidi	Raines	Commissioner
Robert	Watters	Commissioner
Nadra	Enzy	Marigny Resident
Erin	Holmes	VCPOA
202-374-8905		

- II. Public Comment: Anyone who wishes to comment on actionable items must announce their name for the recording and indicate the item(s) on which s/he wishes to comment.
- III. Approval of May 2020 meeting notes  
Ms. Rosenberg made the motion to approve the May 2020 meeting notes. Mr. Pendleton seconded the motion, and the committee approved the motion.
- IV. Update from on state funding efforts by Jeremy DeBlieux & Juliet Laughlin  
Ms. Laughlin reported that she had no update. Mr. DeBlieux reported that he is working with the Lt. Governor and FQMD's ask for funding has been submitted and he is waiting to hear back. Ms. Cooper asked about the time frame. Mr. DeBlieux reported that the funds he is working on is CDBG funds and this could happen at any time.

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## V. Discussion of the French Quarter Economic Development District Sales Tax

Mr. DeBlieux reported that he and Ms. Frankic had met with members of the Mayor's staff and Cm. Palmer's staff yesterday. He reported that the City provided five potential options for renewing the EDD Sales:

1. Leave the program as is with the renewal
2. Renew the EDD with changes to LSP CEA for transparency & accountability
3. Hybrid of LSP getting a portion after \$1.2M to NOHSEP Grounds Patrol
4. Hybrid of NOPD getting a portion for overtime officers after \$1.2M goes to NOHSEP Grounds Patrol
5. Do nothing and let it expire

FQMD floated a sixth option:

- EDD goes to FQMD to pay for supplemental police patrol program utilizing post certified NOPD

Mr. DeBlieux reported that the idea was optimistically received. And that the mayor's chief of staff requested another meeting early next week. He also thought that New Orleans & Company and the convention center would be supportive.

Ms. Rosenberg noted that a change to consider would be if the hotels were not paying the hotel assessment, they should pay into the Quarter for the Quarter. Mr. Pendleton noted that at the last full board meeting that there needs to be specificity for the voters to support this ballot initiative. Mr. DeBlieux noted that the specificity needs to be reflected in the CEA and all related ordinances. If the City is receptive to FQMD's office, then he would like to immediately start working with the District C office to carefully word the referendum and governing act language to be specific and clear. Ms. Cooper noted that the ballot language needs to be simple and clear about the agreement into the CEA. Ms. Cavett asked for clarity on how the consent decree would be impacted. Mr. DeBlieux indicated that this was a non-issue in the conversation with the Mayor and District C's staff.

Ms. Cooper asked for clarification if this was the referendum was approved it would eliminate the LSP from the French Quarter. Mr. DeBlieux noted that it would remove the EDD sales tax from LSP's budget. He did not know about their other funding sources or plans for deployment in the City. That is up to the Governor and the State Police.

Ms. Frankic noted that in the meeting with City Hall it was discussed that funds beyond that necessary to fund the SPPP could be utilized for quality of life and code enforcement with non-post certified officers via NOHSEP, but everyone would be under the supervision and unified command within the 8<sup>th</sup> District. Ms. Cavett asked about the specific roles of NOHSEP and FQMD in the management of the money and patrols. Ms. Frankic noted that the conversation did not get that granular but was focused on keeping as many post-certified boots on the ground and continuing the financial transparency and accountability and responsiveness to the stakeholders to assure their support. She noted that she was concerned about the voters perception of the City doing away with LSP and the FQMD-SPPP to be replaced with a new patrol that was 80% non-post-certified.

The committee discussed further representation at future meetings with the City with residential member joining the committee chair and the executive director. Ms. Cavett noted that she had more

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institutional knowledge than Ms. Cooper so she should be the residential representative on the meetings with the City. Ms. Rosenberg recommended Ms. Klein as an executive officer. Ms. Cooper noted that Ms. Raines is the Vice-Chair and a resident of the Quarter. Ms. Cavett said that institutional knowledge was important and therefore she should be the representative. Ms. Rosenberg noted that there are so many residents of the French Quarter that are not members of any organizations and therefore she did not think that VCPORA and French Quarter Citizens should be speaking for all of the residents of the French Quarter. Ms. Cavett said that the Committee Chair and Executive director could not represent the entire board of commissioners as there is no residential representation in those meetings. Ms. Rosenberg noted that Mr. DeBlieux represents the Government Committee and Ms. Frankic's is the selected representative of the board. She is only speaking to what she is authorized to do. Ms. Cavett continued.

**Ms. Rosenberg made the motion: The Government Affairs Committee recommends to the Board of Commissions to see to have the EDD renewed with those funds going to the FQMD for the administration and execution of the SPPP.** Ms. McGovern seconded the motion. The motion passed with 6 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain votes.

Ms. Klein asked for clarification if Troop N does not receive new funding from the Governor how would that impact the ability to arrest under state law vs local law. Mr. DeBlieux said that NOPD has the ability charge someone with municipal or state law.

Ms. Rosenberg asked for clarity on the election date being in December.

## VI. Discussion of Property Tax Ballot Measure

Mr. DeBlieux discussed whether the FQMD should take up the topic of entertaining a new property tax to fund the full legislative mandate of the agency beyond just patrols.

*The statutory purpose of the French Quarter Management District is to strengthen the District as a vital component of Louisiana's tourism industry; aid in the preservation of the District's architecture, quaint charm and tout ensemble; beautify the District's appearance; improve public safety, foster quality experiences and quality of life within the District; and improve commercial and residential vitality. The statutory functions of the FQMD include strategic planning, business and commercial development activities and administering capital improvement funds.*

Ms. McGovern asked if the SPPP could be funded just with the EDD and not require additional funding through a property tax. Mr. DeBlieux noted that this referendum would be to do the other work in the agencies mandate, notably the things that FQMD has asked the City to do with the French Quarter Improvement Fund that have remained unfunded. Mr. Pendleton asked why did or did not VCPORA, French Quarter Citizens, and French Quarter Business League support the property tax referendum in 2010. Ms. Klein said that at he time she was on the board of French Quarter Citizens and they did support it because they wanted more security. Ms. Cooper said that VCPORA did not support the tax in 2010 and does not have the notes on the reasons why. Ms. Rosenberg said that one of the reasons that VCPORA did not support the tax at that time was personal. Ms. Gasperecz said that she was on the board of VCPORA at that time the position was to have the police do their job and enough time has past and perhaps things have changed. Ms Klein recall noted that at eh time many residents may not have belonged to either association and felt that their city taxes entitled them to a certain level of city services for sanitation, police, etc. and they didn't think they should have to be burdened with an extra tax. And since that time taxes have been increased annually, but drastically at least twice on French Quarter property owners and that is going to be

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an issue. Mr. DeBlieux noted that with this pandemic and the loss of the hotel self-assessment funds has given businesses and residents an opportunity, through both of these measures, for self-determination and not be beholden to the City and convention center how we choose to make improvements and make life better in the French Quarter. Mr. Watters said that this is not the time to be considering additional taxes or renewal of taxes on the businesses that have had a devastating impact on business from this pandemic. It will be years before businesses recover. We missed the boat on that in 2010 and that is a pity. At the time he estimated it would take \$8-10M to provide enough funds to provide the level of funding we needed in the French Quarter to assure infrastructure, sanitation, and additional policing. The ad Valorem was a fraction of that and it failed when we all put a lot of work into making it succeed. He noted that this is the only historic district in America that does not have a self-sustaining source of funding. At some point that is a measure that should be adopted, but this is not the time. Ms. Cooper noted that VCPORA would have a hard time supporting a property tax at this time for some of the reasons that Mr. Watters made. Ms. Rosenbg said that the FQMD worked on 2010 initiative for 1.5 years and there would not be enough time to work on it this time around.

Mr. DeBlieux noted that the role of the committee is to make a recommendation to the full board about if this is something they should take up at a board meeting.

**Mr. Pendleton made the motion: The Government Affairs Committee tables the conversation about the ad valorem tax until the beginning of the year allowing all stakeholders to focus the effort on the EDD.** Ms. Cooper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## VII. New Business

Ms. Raines asked about board parity history with the various entities that have come and gone. Ms. Klein noted that the Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association (FMIA) seceded and was replaced by N. Rampart Main Street, Inc. (NRMS). Ms. Cavett said that Treme was originally going to be on the board. Ms. Raines asked if there was originally intent to be parity. Ms. Cavett said it was. Ms. Holmes asked who had representation on the Board during the 2010 vote. If there were additional seats. Ms. Rosenberg said that she was part of the committee that created the FQMD and was on the board during the 2010 vote. At that time there was never a representative of Treme, but FMIA had a seat. They seceded and were replaced by NRMS and they have always had a residential representative. The VCC seat was held by a resident for two VCC Chairs. Ms. Cavett said that the VCC seat is supposed to be a neutral seat. The past four VCC Chairs have not lived in the French Quarter. Ms. Rosenberg noted that the mix of residential and commercial seats has remained the same from the beginning. Ms. Raines noted that this issue should be taken up by the board.

## VIII. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25