

# French Quarter MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## Notes Livability Committee Meeting

Wednesday 5 August 2020  
2:10 to 3:10pm

Via Teleconference:

<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/2047589217>

Meeting ID: 204 758 9217

Video:

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

Audio:

+1 (469) 445 0100

- I. CALL TO ORDER: The agenda was read into the record and the meeting was called to order at 2:12 pm

### ROLL CALL:

First Name	Last Name	Present	Absent
Adrienne	Thomas		X
Beverly	Fulk		X
Brittany	McGovern	X	
Christian	Pendleton	X	
Dave	Jorgensen	X	
Gail	Cavett		X
Kim	Rosenberg	X	
Lee	Tucker		X

### INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES:

First Name	Last Name	Role
Karley	Frankic	Executive Director
Erin	Holmes	VCPORA
Frances	Hegenberger	Resident
Bob	Simms	Resident
John	Michel	
Jodi	Poretto	FQ Citizens
Mamie	Gasperecz	Commissioner
Juliet	Laughlin	Commissioner
Sue	Klein	Commissioner
Dwight	Barnes	Business

- 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. Adoption of previous meeting notes (action item)
- There was not a quorum of the committee present to approve the previous meeting notes.

IV. Update on Sidewalk Assessment by Dave Jorgensen and Kim Rosenberg  
Mr. Jorgensen reported that the summary spreadsheet was updated and loaded into the file share and reviewed the progress with the committee. There is a long way to go to be fully complete with the field work and update to the spreadsheet. Ms. Rosenberg noted that there is some field work that needs to be confirmed as complete based on the work of previous volunteer. Each of the streets that have been surveyed are noted where there are hazards, minor hazards and major hazards. Hazards and major hazards are those that are impacting ADA accessibility. The photos of some blocks indicate that they require a complete rebuild. It is sometimes that in those areas there are no serviceable sidewalks. Previous surveys emphasized

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the commercial areas and the residential districts have been unrepaired. Mr. Jorgensen is hopeful that \$2M identified by the City for repairs will address these areas.

Ms. Rosenberg noted that Ms. Frankic had asked the volunteers to identify about 20 of the worst block faces to bring to the attention of the City as they prioritize the budget for the bond funded repairs. Ms. Rosenberg said that all of those blocks were in the lower Quarter and she confirmed those with Mr. Jorgensen. Ms. Frankic noted that both the spreadsheet and the high-level recommendations were shared with Sarah Porteous at the City so that they can begin work. Ms. Rosenberg noted that the City funds were not going to be used for widening sidewalks per the Mayor's pedestrianization concepts. But that if those projects proceed other funding would be used. Mr. Pendleton inquired what materials would be used for the repairs. Mr. Jorgensen noted that the VCC recommendations for the sidewalks are limited to brick and slate without mention of cement. Which is the primarily in the lower Quarter. He further noted that \$2M was not close to what would be required to entirely fix the sidewalks in the District to the VCC standard.

Mr. Simms noted that \$2M could be frittered away quickly with the City's approach. Decatur Street was redone not long ago, and he feels that the job was not properly finished and there are bricks missing at corners, etc. The same goes for his block on Dumaine Street. He feels the City is really bad at managing their subcontractors. To him it is not good to continue on this path.

Ms. Rosenberg noted that there are a number of issues with the recently redone Bourbon Street sidewalks with the work was not fully done, there is grout missing, there are loose bricks around the electrical boxes. They are in horrible condition.

Mr. Jorgensen noted that junction boxes that were installed in the Bourbon Street should have been filled with a red mortar around those boxes because other wise it leaves the bricks around them subject to coming out. The key to the structure of that installation is not grouting these in but assuring that bricks are in tight. As soon as you cut a hole and you don't fill that hole with something substantial it greatly shortens the life of that whole paving job by tens of years. The party responsible for doing that damage need to be held accountable promptly and completely before we have to redo it again.

To repair parts of the sidewalk on Dumaine or around Cabrini Park will require a complete rebuild and not just repairs. He would like to understand the City's plans for the project. Ms. Rosenberg asked if Ms. Frankic could follow up with the City to see if the contractors who did Bourbon and Decatur Street could go back and complete the work where it is not done. She further asked when the Sanitation contract is relet that when they blow out the sidewalk grout with the pressure washers, the sanitation contractor will be obligated to repair the grout. Mr. Jorgensen noted that the sidewalks need to repointed and regouted, every couple of years so that is a couple dollar repair instead of a \$50 repair every time one of these bricks pops out. He noted the importance of maintenance to improve the longevity of the sidewalks and keep them in ADA compliance over the long run. Ms. Frankic will follow up with Mrs. Porteous with notes from today.

## V. Update on 4G and 5G small cell tower installations by Brittany McGovern

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Ms. McGovern reported that a consortium of French Quarter groups have been working to minimize the effects 5G tower installation in the French Quarter since September 2019. As design consultants, we worked diligently with the Mayor's office of Utilities and Toro Blanco to design an alternative 5G pole that looks like the current lampposts in the French Quarter.

The City hosted a public meeting on July 30, 2020 to introduce the pole design. Next, the designs will go in front of the VCC for a nonbinding recommendation and City Council.

The consortium is still asking the carriers for anti-graffiti wrap and additional crime cameras and the City for a no net gain and a prototype. We are also commenting on each individual proposed pole location as they come in.

Ms. Rosenberg asked if the orange cones in the Quarter are indicative of where the poles are going to be installed. Mr. Simms said that he believes are the mounts for where the new light poles are being installed. Ms. Frankic reported that the FQIF light poles are ready to be installed.

Mrs. Holmes noted that Verizon's 120 pole installation was inconsistent with the no net gain goal and so they have now come back with a new proposal. Ms. Frankic noted that she will follow up that with the new proposal remains not in conflict with that installation. Ms. Rosenberg & Mr. Pendleton thanked French Quarter executive directors for all of their work on improving the small cell designs.

VI. Update on City's plan for pedestrianization of the French Quarter by Gail Cavett  
Ms. Cavett was absent from the meeting and Ms. Frankic reported a high-level overview with Mrs. Holmes. Ms. Frankic noted that the City's pedestrianization survey had over 2,000 responses with the largest group of respondents being visitors to the Quarter, followed by residents and workers. Respondents biggest concern in the French Quarter remains security followed closely behind by quality of life and sanitation. While it appears that there is an even break down of support and no-support this would be more helpful with the data to see how that falls into demographics.

The improvements that respondents want to see in the French Quarter improved sidewalks and sanitation. These are things that this committee works on and those are the most desired improvements people want to see. Whereas wider sidewalks was the lowest priority, followed behind by access to bike networks and curbside dining. Cm. Palmer has agreed to hold a public meeting even though this the Mayor's concepts.

Mrs. Holmes reported that first and foremost our priority has been to stress that robust stakeholder engagement is the absolutely necessary at this point and is probably past that point. The survey went out and some members of the public were unaware of it. As only the stakeholder organizations pushed out the survey, not the City itself. The overwhelming feedback she is getting from her members is that they have not been engaged. Numerous letters have been sent to the Mayor and Cm. Palmer. There needs to be pressure on the Mayors team to hold a full set of meetings with all stakeholders. There is concern about the timeline presented on these changes. Now is the opportunity for various stakeholders to come together on concepts that have overwhelming community buy in as opposed to the concepts that seem to have near universal opposition. Mrs. Holmes proposed that there be some kind of sign on letter between the groups that have

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been working with this that can sign onto high level concepts, as opposed to specific details, that we can support and note the ones that are not workable from this point on. Mrs. Holmes added that in the City's press release came out last week and you can continue to send comments through the City's webpage. Mr. Simms noted that the website says that they are revising the concepts to reflect feedback. And that is supposed to be done soon. He asked if there was any signs of what feedback they are taking. Mrs. Holmes said that she is trying to get those comments.

Ms. Klein noted that here is a petition platform that could be used to survey the stakeholders to unify the message. Ms. Frankic noted that the City came back with a draft for how better to connect Lafitte Greenway to the Quarter which could be an indication that the City is adapting from feedback they received about the Civic Spine concept. Ms. Klein noted that the main traffic coming into the Quarter, based on the 2017 study, is entering via Iberville, Conti and Toulouse Streets. If the City decreases traffic flow on Iberville and Conti that is going to put everything onto Toulouse which is untenable. She questioned why no one on the City's Tiger Team was from City Planning which she would have thought with land use they would have been represented. Ms. Klein wants the working team to keep up the good work, so we are not left with a nightmare that we are fighting for years. And why spend money when the City is so short on money. We need to put money towards those things that do the greatest good for the most people.

Mr. Simms noted that pedestrian malls tend to morph into entertainment malls. Royal Street started out to be a nice thoroughfare where people could stroll down the street and view the beautiful galleries and art shops. And the people on the Quarter were all for that. But then it morphed into an entertainment zone which nobody in the residential or business community wants. In fact, some people would like to see the Royal Street mall go away and return to what it was before. The idea of putting more pedestrian malls in the Quarter without any enforcement is asking for trouble. We can't enforce the malls we've got with the Bourbon and Royal Street malls. To think about taking an entire quadrant in the Quarter and making it a pedestrian mall, like in the Mayor's plan, to him is incredible.

Ms. Klein noted that the City needs to also consider storm water management on the streets in the French Quarter that are now chronically flooding and how these fits into their plans. We now have some serious issues that are not being addressed that need to be addressed before they move forward with a plan that most of the people she has spoken to do not want.

Ms. Rosenberg said it might be better to just extend the sidewalks out and leave just a fire lane down the middle. Current ordinance does not allow for the blocking of sidewalks and so entertainers would not be able to set up on the sidewalks. And with the street being in use for cars going by or patrols. It would allow vehicles to pass through and see what shops are there and then come back on foot. If we look at when the City closed Wilkinson row, it died, and it has never come back. Even after they got rid of the mall and returned it to a fire lane street, it is still dead.

Mr. Pendleton noted that in this exercise in hearing Ms. Rosenberg's ideas, is when we get back to the normal we all knew and you start having the plethora of second lines on the weekend and you only have one lane he envisions traffic being ten times worse. Ms. Rosenberg agreed that was a good point. Mr. Pendleton

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remembered the acrobatic group that used to perform right in front of Brennan's so loud that at one point he had to refund a bride \$20,000 because they could hear themselves giving each other their vows. And NOPD and the City refused to do anything about it. Ms. Rosenberg said that was a travesty because it is illegal to block the sidewalks. Mr. Pendleton remarked that they were in the street, but the volume and they had everyone first in front of Brennan's and then they moved the crowd to steps of the supreme court. But the volume was so loud it was a \$20,000 reimbursement.

Ms. Klein noted that with all the energy the City, the Council and all the citizens were putting into this project, imagine if we put that energy into a workable sound ordinance. Mr. Pendleton suggested that we put energy into what citizens actually wanted in the French Quarter. Make it safer, clean it up and fix the sidewalks. We would spend less money that way. Mr. Simms said that he wanted nothing to do with pedestrian malls until we can enforce the ones we have. Ms. Klein agreed.

Mrs. Holmes reiterated her proposal that with all of the issues raised about the expansion of pedestrian mall expansion both with residential quality of life and access to and enjoyment of businesses. So does the committee think they would be in a position to recommend to the FQMD Board of Commissioners to come up with a series of high-level concepts that get universal buy in while those other do not. It would make an interesting statement to the administration to hear from the variety of stakeholders through those respective organizations.

Mr. Pendleton agreed and thought it was a reasonable objective of this committee that at the next meeting everyone to come forward with a high level request that can be combined into a single document bring them in front of the board and say this is what the French Quarter representatives would like City pursue in regard to livability in the French Quarter. Mr. Pendleton asked Ms. Frankic to add this onto the agenda of the next board meeting based on what this committee put together.

Ms. Rosenberg suggested putting everyone's comments into a form that everyone can have in front of them at the next meeting. Ms. Mulla McGovern offered to create a survey to circulate to the committee. Mrs. Holmes said she is also happy to help.

## VII. New business

Ms. Klein asked Mr. Pendleton how sanitation was from the perspective of a business. Mr. Pendleton reported that most businesses are closed or only open severely reduced schedules so he doesn't know if we would see a problem at this point. Mr. Simms noted that he reviewed his security camera footage to see how the City was doing with pressure washing service. He could only go back four weeks. His street is supposed to get pressure washed three times per week. That would have been twelve times. It was pressure washed once, last Tuesday. Mr. Simms he would share that with the City and Ms. Frankic asked that he copy her on the correspondence so FQMD can have it for the records and Mr. Simms agreed.

Ms. Mulla McGovern forwarded Ms. Holmes for consideration by the Chair for Livability Committee membership. Ms. Klein noted that committee membership is confirmed by the Board. Ms. Frankic noted that

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there is no formal process by which people make recommendations, but it is the Board Chair who nominates appointees for committees and Board votes on them.

VIII. Next meeting date

The next meeting of the FQMD Livability Committee is scheduled for September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm