
LIVABILITY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes
Wednesday, 6 April 2022
2:00 pm

Omni Royal Orleans
621st. Louis Street

1. Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm and the agenda was read into the record.

ROLL CALL: COMMITTEE MEMBERS				VOTES
First Name	Last Name	Present	Absent	Approve Notes
David	Bilbe		X	-
Madison	Charleston	X		Yes
Rene	Fransen	X		Yes
Mamie	Gasperecz	X		Yes
Erin	Holmes	X		Yes
Dave	Jorgensen		X	-
Christian	Pendleton	X		Yes
Frank	Perez	X		Yes

INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES: GUESTS		
First Name	Last Name	Role
Jane	Cooper	Commissioner – SEC Chair

2. Public Comment:

No written public comment or request for live comment were received at the conclusion of the reading of the agenda.

3. Committee Chair Comments by Mamie Gasperecz

Mr. Perez made a motion to approve the previous meeting notes. Mr. Fransen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

- a. Welcome new members Maddie Charleston and Rene Fransen, and Vice-Chair Erin Holmes

Nominations were unanimously approved by the Board of Commissioners.

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b. Keep the Quarter Clean

- i. Board approval of budget request
- ii. Public Relations partnership with Young Leadership Council

Budget was approved by the Board of Commissioners for window vinyls and bumper magnets. A partnership has been forged with the Young Leadership Council to help promote the campaign. Graham Williams will be helping the committee with the launch.

c. Homelessness Services update

Working with Jane Cooper chair of the Security & Enforcement Committee. Meeting with leaders in the homeless services regarding resources to bare. Covenant House is excited to partner and has offered to hosts Livability Committee meetings going forward. St. Mark's is next to meet with. Ms. Cooper reported that the FQEDD will be looking at a midyear budget adjustment for possible funding for homeless services.

d. French Market Corporation terra cotta art

FQMD was contacted by Charles Marsala of an Italian American group about a damaged terra cotta frieze that honors the contributions of Italian American at the French Market. FMC has funds for the repair and Mr. Marsala has helped them find three artists to repair the frieze. It is now going through the bidding process. FMC is inviting other artists to contribute public art for the area and has been discussed with Bryan Block of the VCC already. Contact Leslie Alley.

4. Update on 5G small cell tower installations by Erin Holmes

Mrs. Holmes reported that Zach Hodgens will be contacted because they are still waiting for the historic elements to be manufactured because they need to be more substantial to last in the FQ and the lamps need to be reworked to look more appropriate. All of the Verizon and half of the AT&T poles have been placed. Waiting to get more information on why there are stickers that say people need to stay five feet away and when this was pointed out they were covered with a three foot. Going to need more information regarding the long-term health effects of these microwaves. The assurances are coming only from the carriers. The work in the French Quarter Executive Directors. (EDs) prevented the installation of the 40' poles that are being installed in the rest of the city. The federal government under the previous president is responsible for the authorization of this installation of 5G poles by deregulating and preventing local cities from regulating installations. This was fought in the courts and no city can say no to installation or delay permitting installations. The EDs negotiated a no net gain of poles in the FQ, but there should be an audit to assure that has been followed. VCC does have limited oversight. Ms. Holmes was informed that the updated map was not provided by the City; they said it was "protected". It may require a public records request. Mrs. Charleston offered to walk the neighborhood to photograph the installations. Mr. Perez discussed writing an article on the subject.

5. Update on the street light assessment by Dave Jorgensen

Mr. Jorgensen was not in attendance to provide a report. Ms. Gasperecz reported that she would be putting together a lighting summit to get the volunteers off the ground to begin work on collecting the data for the survey. Mrs. Holmes reported that a Community Liaison Officer saying that the 8th District is looking for additional lighting on Bourbon Street.

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There will need to be weighed in by VCC on the design and wattage. There is not enough illumination and there are lights that are out. She asked that the FQEDD funds be used for additional lighting for public safety.

6. Update on Homer Plessy Elementary School possible relocation by Frank Perez

Mr. Perez reported that because of heavy community input, the school board has kept Homer Plessy school at their location in the FQ and have dedicated \$2M for renovations. Repairs were the reason given for relating the school, but the school board was poised to sell the building for housing. Cm. Morrell had said that he would pass a resolution to assure that the building remains a school if Homer Plessy was relocated. Cm. King called the school to see if they would attend a public meeting and was told it was a private meeting. Mrs. Charleston was kicked out of that meeting. She is organizing a book bag drive for the school. VCPORA will assist. VCC does not have jurisdiction over public buildings.

7. Update on Tour Guide Regulations by Frank Perez

Mr. Perez reported that the proposed revisions to the tour guide regulations have not yet been submitted to the City Council as formal amendments. There will be a public meeting on April 11th. The Friends of the Cabildo and Delgado program met with Public Works and District C re: enforcement of current regulations would reduce complaints. And want to address the quality of tour guides. They discussed the unfeasibility of the proposed regulations but revised the guidance for the tour guide test. Some tour company owners have hired attorneys and lobbyists to fight the changes. If group size is cut in half it will double the number of groups. Mrs. Charleston brought up the issue of tours blocking the sidewalks and preventing wheelchairs from getting down the sidewalk; this is an issue of lack of City enforcement. Mr. Perez noted that the tour guide tests are supposed to include ethics and logistics, but the handouts are not being provided. The test is more than history, it is how to lead a tour practically including how to keep sound in reasonable amount, how to keep the guests safe, how to not block the sidewalks for ADA. Mrs. Charleston asked if the tour guides could partner with the Keep the Quarter Clean campaign. Venice just outlawed nighttime tours in its city center. Regulations could be sponsored by District B because of cemeteries located there. Bike tours were not addressed in the proposed revisions. Segways are also not addressed. Mr. Perez said that a residency requirement will be pushed for.

8. New business – To consider and take action upon any other matters that may properly come before the French Quarter Management District Livability Committee

Mrs. Holmes informed the committee to get involved with the Outdoor Entertainment Study and Sound Ordinance as outdoor entertainment is impacting residents and overnight guests re overamplified music. City Council sent the Outdoor Entertainment Study back to the City Planning Commission. It would allow an increase in outdoor entertainment permits, currently capped at 8 per year for 3 days, totaling 24. The change would be 2-3 times per week, totaling 104-156 days per year a six-fold increase. The study was requested on CPC before the pandemic and was undertaken during the pandemic without much public engagement and was responsive to the impacts of the pandemic. VCPORA is concerned about the increase in outdoor entertainment events because of lack of enforcement. The study does note that there is not an enforceable sound ordinance so addressed this by permitting only during certain hours of the day, not decibel levels. The NOPD has been instructed not to enforce any part of the sound ordinance as likely constitutionally unenforceable. Her public records request was denied as attorney client privilege. VCPORA is working with other neighborhood groups to research the Outdoor Entertainment Study. There are good components to the revisions re: building cultural infrastructure to support a healthy entertainment and musician economy, but there are parts that need to be backed off. Ms. Gaspercz gave some background on previous attempts to amend the sound ordinance were not

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successful. She is not sure it would gain traction at the full board of commissioners; Ms. Cooper agreed with Ms. Gasperecz. Mrs. Holmes noted that the residential groups from around the city would be working on the issue.

Ms. Gasperecz reported that the Mayor has decided to replace her on the Vieux Carré Commission with the Lt. Governor's Chief of Staff. This would impact her ability to serve on the Board of Commissioners but will continue to volunteer on the Livability Committee initiatives. No one from City Hall informed her but found out from the agenda for the Government Affairs Committee. The Louisiana Museum Association and the Vieux Carré Commission were also not aware of the Mayor's decision until after the fact. Mrs. Holmes credited Ms. Gasperecz with years of dedicated service to the French Quarter and noted her severe disappointment in the actions of the Mayor. Mr. Perez and Mrs. Charleston agreed. The executive committee of the Vieux Carré Commission Foundation moved her to an at-large seat so she could continue as their president.

Mrs. Charleston said there is information going around about the Royal Street Pedestrian Mall. There is a brochure going around with false information and slandering individuals. Mrs. Holmes said it is reported to go back into effect on April 11th. The amplified music for performers is an issue. Mrs. Charleston noted the issues with ADA enforcement with wheelchairs being able to navigate the sidewalks around street performers.

Mrs. Charleston reported that a resident was hit by a scooter Ms. Cooper said that there is discussion in the SEC about getting speeding enforcement in the FQ. Mrs. Holmes noted that the LSP would enforce on N. Rampart Street.

9. Next meeting date – 5 May 2022

The correct date of the next scheduled meeting of the committee is Wednesday, May 4th at 2:00pm.

10. Adjournment

Mrs. Holmes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Fransen seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm