Houma Restoration District

Board Meeting Minutes

September 5, 2023

Commissioners Present:

Noah Lirette Jason Underwood – via phone Kevin Champagne

Daniel Babin (11:10 am) Tom Hassell Sondra Corbitt

Nick Hebert Kevin Faulk Bryan Bunn

Others Present:

Michelle Neil Rep. Tanner Magee Justin Bourgeios

Chris Pulaski Cohen Guidry Angela Hidalgo

Jules Hebert Bobbie O’Brein Jarad Charpentier

David Wagner Brighton Schmill

A meeting of the Houma Restoration District Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman N. Lirette at 11:00 a.m. at the 7th Floor Conference Room of the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government Towers, 8026 Main Street, Houma, LA.

T. Hassell led the prayer and N. Lirette led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

S. Corbitt performed roll call and a quorum was present.

Justin Bourgeois addressed the Board under Public Comment regarding his intentions to purchase the South LA Seed Building.

A motion was made by B. Bunn, seconded by K. Champagne to approve the minutes of the prior meeting. Motion carried.

N. Hebert presented the financial report. A motion was made by S. Corbitt, seconded by B. Bunn, to approve the financial report as presented. Motion carried.

New Business: Nick Hebert’s reappointment letter has been received.

A motion was made by T. Hassell, seconded by B. Bunn, to approve the current officers and allow them to continue to serve for another year.

S. Corbitt updated the board on the upcoming National Main Street Conference next Spring.

N. Lirette presented the job description for the vacant CEO position. A few adjustments need to be made and will be brought back before the board at a future meeting.

The final Ethics Board opinion was received regarding whether non-profit organizations may apply for funding through the HRD, while an appointed commissioner of the HRD serves on the board of the non-profit, as well as whether that commissioner can participate in those transactions. It mirrors the draft received last month. It is recommended that an advisory opinion be sought on a case-by-case basis.

Leadership Terrebonne Alumni Association submitted a grant application for Christmas Decorations. A motion was made by B. Bunn, seconded by T. Hassell, to approve their application in the amount of $5,000.00. N. Hebert and K. Champagne abstained. Motion carried.

N. Lirette discussed the draft HRCD Overlay District Ordinance and the Opelousas Ordinance. M. Neil discussed the drafting language to present to the Council for consideration. It is requested to keep the business owners accountable for their vacant buildings. It is intended to be a helpful ordinance to be used as a tool to register vacant buildings to help return them into commerce. Fees and deadlines would only apply for those buildings that remain vacant for a certain defined amount of time. This draft does not include a list of acceptable uses. Jules Hebert discussed existing parish ordinances for abandoned buildings, nuisance, condemnations, and zoning. Chris Pulaski discussed amending the parish ordinances (Ch. 20 and Ch. 28). He discussed Zone C-1 of the commercial zoning area with the definition of a restricted list of prohibited uses within the HRD Overlay District.

Jules Hebert discussed inverse condemnation and expropriation with respect to property rights. An extensive discussion followed regarding enforcement of the maintenance code, nuisance abatement, blighted properties, vacant properties. Ultimately, the intent of this ordinance is to register vacant properties with the purpose of enticing property owners to maintain and promote commerce; to put in place procedures to encourage and incentivize them to restore the buildings to meet code.

It was suggested that five properties be identified, and the property owners be invited to the board meeting to discuss goals and HRD offer assistance. A discussion followed regarding HRD possibly paying the salary for a part-time employee to work for the interests of the HRD.

Chris Pulaski will provide the board with the minimum levels of the building code and will look at the parish ordinances and report back to the board.

Old Business: Bobbie O’Brien reported that additional cameras have been added in the area, as well as parking meter enforcement and US Coast Guard parking relocations. He reported that HPD is coordinating with START regarding the homeless population and may start issuing summons. A brief discussion ensued regarding parking meters and Park Mobile.

N. Lirette updated the board regarding the contract for the non-profit maintenance work. All insurance certificates have been approved by TPCG. A motion was made by B. Bunn, seconded by T. Hassell to execute this contract. Motion carried. He thanked the board for approving this work and is eager for this work to get started.

N. Lirette met with Jules Hebert and South Central Planning to begin Phase 2 of the remediation process for the Landry Building using the Brownsfield Act. Mr. Landry is going to sign the consent form for this to begin and N. Lirette will keep the board updated on its progress.

The Weyls Jewelry Sign will be complete in October 2023.

Work on the Bayou Boardwalk has not begun due to the extensive heat.

Officer Reports: N. Lirette has created a Google email account as well as a Facebook page. He reached out to TEDA, BCF, Bayou Arts Council, Elks Lodge and other non-profits performing restoration work and sent them a grant application to encourage them to apply.

A motion was made by K. Faulk, seconded by B. Bunn, to adjourn the meeting at 12:33 p.m. Motion carried.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 4, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. at the 7th Floor Conference Room, 8026 Main Street, Houma, LA.

Noah Lirette, Chairman Sondra Corbitt, Secretary