



MINUTES OF THE DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS COMMISSION

Friday, February 25, 2022, 9 AM
114 North Main Street

Board Members Present: Benjamin Orgel (Chair), Demar Roberts (Vice Chair), Ashley Cash (for Mayor Strickland), John Zeanah (for Mayor Harris), Victoria Young, Julie Ellis, Representative Barbara Cooper, Senator Raumesh Akbari, Williams Brack (Treasurer), Elizabeth Low (Secretary), Deni Reilly, Ed Stephens, Councilwoman Cheyenne Johnson, and Commissioner Mickell Lowery

Board Members Not Present: John Pontius, and Cheryl Pesce

Staff Present: Paul Young, Christine Taylor, Penelope Springer, Penelope Huston, Abram Lueders, Halle Novarese, and Sam Caldwell

Guests: Clint Anderson (Shelby County CAO), Corrinne Kennedy (CA), Janice Banks, JoAnn Massey, Neil Strebis (Daily Memphian), Dr. Vernell Bennett Fairs (LOC), and Julie Graves

Benjamin Orgel called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. Christine Taylor called roll for board members and confirmed that we have quorum. After reviewing meeting protocols, Chairman Orgel called for approval of the minutes from January 28, 2022, meeting. Elizabeth Low motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Ed Stephens seconded the motion, after roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Orgel called for agenda item III: Chair's Report

Chairman Orgel gave brief Chairs report, thanking the DMC staff for all of their work in Downtown Memphis.

Chairman Orgel called for agenda item IV: Financial Update

Penelope Springer presented the financial report and highlights. Our CBID assessment was billed higher than budgeted. As of the end of January over 90% has been collected and we are over and beyond our budgeted numbers, so later in the meeting we will discuss staff recommendations for spending the additional funds. After update, Penelope Springer introduced new staff accountant, Sam Caldwell, he has been with DMC for 3 weeks. Brief update on other DMC board financials.

Chairman Orgel called for agenda item V: LeMoyne Owen College Presentation

Paul Young introduced Dr. Vernell Bennet Fairs to present an update on LeMoyne-Owen College. LeMoyne-Owen held its first Annual Downtown Pep Rally for Homecoming Game Day in Court Square in October 2021. Dr. Vernell Bennet Fairs shared her vision for LeMoyne-Owen will be focusing on the 4 R's – Recruitment, Revenue, Retention, and Relationships. She thanked DMC for partnering with LOC with their first of hopefully many, Downtown Pep Rally. Her plan for LeMoyne-Owen is "A Resurgence to Greatness". A few brief supportive comments from board members Ashley Cash, Mickell Lowery and Ed Stephens.

Chairman Orgel called for agenda item VI: DMC Budget Amendment

Paul Young kicked off the Budget Amendment presentation. Due to our conservative budgeting, we have attained an overage and believe that we can program the funds to be beneficial to Downtown. The words to characterize the investments that we are looking to make are innovative, restoration, and beautification. Penelope Springer reviewed the budget numbers and proposed budget amendments. Paul Young update board on B2G Now, which is the industry leader in public sector diversity compliance and private sector supplier diversity. B2G is a tool that will allow DMC to have a much more efficient process managing compliance with our projects with EBO. B2G Now is also used by the City of Memphis and Shelby County. Clint Burke outlined a few of the Clean and Green initiatives to improve and beautify Main Street. For an immediate impact we will first need to remove the current planters and replace with a new set of planters at Main intersections, add high-capacity smart trash cans, additional seating in Court Square and also clean the mall by power washing. Brett Roler present the Development and recruitment tools Vistity and Placer.Ai. Vistity is an online platform that creates intentionally curated and visually impactful virtual tours. The Placer.ai dashboard provides insights into visitor data and competition allowing discovery of new opportunities. Both programs will allow us to be proactive in recruiting Downtown Investments. Before the motion was taking Julie Ellis had a few questions regarding CBID assessment and the development tools answered by staff. After discussion, Julie Ellis motioned to approve the proposed budget amendments, Ed Stephens seconded the motion, after roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Orgel called for agenda item VII: President's Report

Paul Young update board on staffing, Jay Goff, previous VP of Operations & Chief Diversity Officer is no longer with DMC, Paul Young will directly engage more with WMBE outreach and also manage the operations team (Clean & Green and BSB). The role will ultimately be filled as needed. Also provided an update on Shelby County Commission Funding (\$100,000), thanks to Commissioner Mickell Lowery. Funds are allocated for lighting, public safety, MPD 4X4 vehicles and smart infrastructure in the Downtown area. Also, the Marketing department is working with PEER Power on a Downtown Spring Break program. Julie Ellis asked about a program with local college students to participate in the BSB program and Paul Young also answered a question regarding PEER Power program before closing.

Chairman Orgel called for agenda item VIII: New Business/ Adjournment

Chairman Orgel made brief closing remarks, seeing no other business, the meeting was adjourned.