



MINUTES OF THE DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS COMMISSION

Friday, February 24, 2023, 9 AM
114 North Main Street

Board Members Present: Benjamin Orgel (Chair), Elizabeth Low (Secretary), Williams Brack (Treasurer), Deni Reilly, John Zeanah (for Mayor Harris), Ashley Cash (for Mayor Strickland), Julie Ellis, Ed Stephans III, Victoria Young, and Cheryl Pesce

Board Members Not Present: Demar Roberts (Vice Chair), John Pontius, Senator Raumesh Akbari, Commissioner Mickell Lowery, and Councilwoman Cheyenne Johnson

Staff Present: Paul Young, Brett Roler, Christine Taylor, Penelope Springer, Penelope Huston, Lauren Bermudez, Sara Barrera, Lawrence Green, Abe Lueders, Tori Haliburton, Nesha Cotton, Halle Novarese, and Sam Caldwell

Guests: Mike Humes, and Member of the Public

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM. Christine Taylor called roll for board members present to confirm quorum. Chairman Orgel called for approval of the January 27, 2023, minutes. Elizabeth Low motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Williams Brack seconded the motion, after roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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

Chairman Orgel updated board on board approvals.

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called for agenda item IV: Financial Update

Penelope Springer presented the financial report, and monthly highlights.

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called for agenda item V: Organizational Priorities

Paul Young presented an interactive poll for board members to participate regarding the upcoming DMC budget. Board members discussed several issues, such as what would be the greatest impact on public safety, 60 % think reducing the number of blighted buildings and vacant lots would have an impact. What is Downtown's greatest challenges in the next 3 years? Board members think attracting conventions, bring more small businesses, crime, attracting capital and investment. Is there anything new that the DMC should consider taking on? Sustainability, Mud Island Amphitheater, and holding developers accountable for the money they receive. What one thing would you improve about Downtown? Some of the answers were public perception, more workers & visitors, beautification, late night entertainment & dining, and collectively raising the standards.

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called for agenda item VI: President's Report

Paul Young gave brief updates on ongoing Downtown projects.

Vice Chairman Demar Roberts called for agenda item VII: New Business/ Adjournment

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