

FSJNA Meeting
August 4, 2020
7pm via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance: Beaux Jones, Nancy Shepard, Antoine Pedeaux, Andy Ryan, Rocky Seydel, Linda Landesberg, Jenny Carey, Sally Main, Brenda London, Jim Danner, Clark Thompson, Bruce Hamilton, Jeanie Donovan

7:03pm call to order

1. 7:03pm Call to Order
2. President's Update (5 min)
 - a. Happy to see that we've been able to meet each month and continue to be productive
3. Quick Board Business (5 min)
 - a. Approve July Minutes
 - i. Motion from Andy, 2nd, passes without objection
 - ii. Treasurer's Report
 1. General operating funds, \$22,000
 2. Bought more stop signs for Esplanade
 3. Paid last payment to Desmare/Saving our Urban Landscape
4. Guests/Current Topics (22 min)
 - a. Lafitte Greenway (Nellie Catzen)-(5 min)
 - i. Program Director at Lafitte Greenway, Greenway Ambassador joining her
 - ii. Building a pedestrian plaza, there are opportunities for neighbors to engage in the process
 - iii. Work with NORD to promote the greenway, familiar programming has come back, yoga 3 days/week, transitioning to more projects to make more public spaces
 - iv. Where? Old brake tag station where the Greenway meets the Bayou - 2 block driveway space leading up to it, working to put a pedestrian plaza there, \$40K project to become a community use space.
 - v. Working with Urbanscapes, greenway master plan has this becoming a plaza, and during Greenway Fest, people have expressed desire to bring more seating, flowers, art, and shade to this area
 - vi. This sits between two anchors - cut the ribbon with the city for the new brake tag pavilion - NORD will have programming there.
 - vii. Will have an art sculpture there (Iris of Memory), 17ft x 17ft that will illuminate at night and will be located right at the front of the site
 - viii. Launching community engagement this Saturday (August 9) and will have a virtual public meeting on Tuesday Aug 11 at 6pm, lafittegreenway.org/plaza
 - b. District A Councilmember Giarrusso-(3 min)

- i. Complete Streets - administration shared draft policy last week, should be going out to the public soon. Need to add some points about neighborhood engagement
- ii. S&WB bills - since he's been in office, over 2 years, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of time is spent on S&WB issues, but in the past 3-4 weeks the number of complaints has gone from a couple of emails per day to several emails per day. Seeing billing issues (\$103K bill for one resident) It's happening on such a broad swath that it's completely frustrating, trying to figure out how we can hold S&WB to some deadlines - another neighborhood group designated someone in their neighborhood to assemble all of the bad bills and they got 36 bad bills, every bill got to us, and his office has a single meeting with S&WB to go through the bills.
- iii. Will send an email tomorrow to all of the neighborhood leaders to designate a single point of contact to collect bad bills.
- iv. Good news is that there are capital outlay funds that are going before the bond commission for S&WB that would pay for a new turbine and other needs.
- v. Question from Conrad - problem is that we haven't seen a meter reader in years in Venetian Isles - they admit that the meters are not being read, so sending a bunch of bills one month might not stop it from happening the next month. On grand route st. john, we get identical bills for two different meters on two different units - they are just not reading the meters.
- vi. Joe - Meter readers are one of the symptoms of the problem; the wrong estimate going out is a problem with the billing office, I've almost never had anyone say that they get a resolution when they call the S&WB billing office, have problems from soup to nuts and having a volume of bills to demonstrate what's going on will show that there are many problems.
- c. Stephen Mosgrove – Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Engagement-(3 min)
 - i. Census - encourage everyone to do it, deadline has been changed from Oct 31 to Sept 30.
 - ii. City's assisted evacuation plan could use some volunteers at the Palmer Park and Delarosa location, consider volunteering, profile of an ideal volunteer is those who can deal with stressful situation, some trainings are coming up, more to come
 - iii. Virtual S&WB meeting last week went well, Stephen will send out presentation
- d. Representative Matthew Willard-(3 min)
 - i. House Ways & Means committee deals with capitol outlay budget, some will be used for a new turbine, \$12.7 million going to S&WB, non-cash line of credit in priority 5, bond committee meeting which is toward the end of August is the last step
 - ii. There's a link on the census website that will allow you to respond without having your number.

- iii. Main street recovery program - supplies grants up to 15k to small business owners who are impacted by coronavirus - but you cannot have received funds through a SBA loan or \$40m set aside for minority and women owned businesses, \$250M program, encourage everyone who thinks they may be eligible to apply to that program
- iv. Frontline worker program - \$250 checks, please encourage them to apply for that
- v. Governor is extended phase II through the end of August, numbers of cases and hospitalizations are improving but we're not where we need to be
- vi. Federal unemployment insurance benefits have expired and Congress is working on a new plan, state benefit is a max of \$247, those receiving unemployment benefits now need to be actively searching for work, 3 jobs per week, problematic from my perspective for a number of reasons, working with the governor's office to see if he will extend the suspension
- vii. Clark - the state's roadway's crossings are extremely unsafe - chef highway, etc. would like Rep. Willard to bring some heat to DOTD and legislators in Baton Rouge
- e. NOPD 1st District / Fair Grounds Patrol-(3 min)
 - i. Not in attendance
- f. Orleans Parish School Board Update (5 min)
 - i. Not in attendance
- 5. Other Updates/Discussion Topics (25 mins)
 - a. 2803 St. Phillip Variance Discussion
 - i. Beaux - Last meeting we invited Son of a Saint to discuss variance request - intent of inviting them to come was to introduce the process, significant neighbor opposition so we did not submit letter of support, would have been misrepresenting the neighborhood opinion, comment period has closed and there was silence from FSJNA.
 - ii. Mike Harris - concerned about the process and engagement; talked with every immediate neighbor and the parking variance is just a nonstarter. We have a lot of questions - very unusual building, had parking problems galore when they used it as a coworking space. It's 13,000 sq feet, proposal is to extend it to 16,000 sq ft, felt blindsided by it, engagement didn't happen and want to know what to do next - is there a hearing? Could it be revisited by the board? Parking is a big issue and we feel like it's all overlooked.
 - iii. Karen and Bobby - we have issues with the parking and the building expansion and we're wondering what's next and how we can have our voices heard.
 - iv. Paula Bruner - Want to reiterate that there is no other business in our neighborhood that requires this amount of parking - need to work out some

- v. Jessica and Weenta - live directly across the street, parking has been crazy, have been blindsided by the parking variance and the development of the building
 - vi. Susan and David - SoS is looking to add a deck to the building; that is the expansion, we're concerned that it will be at such a height that it will look over our property. The building that is currently there is big enough for them to fulfill the needs of their programs and participants
 - vii. Beaux - my understanding that in a normal NPP the applicant would put on a public meeting, that will not happen during COVID.
 - viii. FSJNA is willing to sponsor a zoom meeting with SoS and interested neighbors
 - ix. Mike Harris - will there be a hearing?
 - 1. Joe G - ordinarily parking comes to council but since this is a waiver, it will be a hearing at BZA - monitor the agenda for BZA to see when it's going to be
 - x. Karen - they want parking waiver and the building expansion - will both go before the board in the same meeting?
 - 1. Joe G - yes, that would be the regular process
 - 2. Issues that come to the council on zoning related to conditional use and up-zoning, other issues go to BZA and then to Civil District Court if appealed, we have nothing to do with any of that.
 - 3. Those matters that deal with a single property are usually docketed on the same agenda and taken up at one time
 - xi. Conrad - neighbors need to get together and organize their thoughts and weigh pros and cons, BZA - the only appeal from BZA is the court system, City Planning appeals go to council.
- b. Fortier Park 2.0
- i. Linda Landesburg - send out the survey results, a lot of information, the next step is for the committee to meet and develop a written plan proposal, take 3-5 vision points from the survey, work with those and flesh them out, present a vision of what version 2 of Fortier Park would be, present that to CM Giarrusso, Parks and Parkway
 - ii. Committee meeting next Tuesday night

6. Questions from Membership

Q: Cynthia Maldonado - what happened with the FG requests?

A: Beaux - we received a letter from City Park, asking us to support an expansion of hours from a budgetary aspect, received a letter from neighbors on Fortin Street, reached out to FGs to see if they would circle back with the mayor or the FG Advisory Committee; haven't heard anything from them and they are not present today

A: Stephen - last conversation was a day or two after last month's meeting, a representative of the FG said the best course was to engage with the FG Advisory Council

Q: Beaux - Rocky, did that happen?

A: Rocky: No

7. Next meeting: Membership & Board meeting

Tuesday, September 1, 7 pm, Zoom or Haus

8. Motion to Adjourn - motion from Andy Ryan, 2nd from Brenda London, passes without opposition