



FSJNA Meeting
September 1, 2020, 7pm
via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance: Beaux Jones, Jeanie Donovan, Clark Thompson, Jim Danner, Brenda London, Jenny Carey, Sally Main, George Bartlett, Rocky Seydel, Nancy Shepard, Greg Jeanfreau

AGENDA

Call to Order (Beaux) 7:05pm

1. President's Update (5 min)

- a. Rep. Willard going to Lake Charles on Saturday, reach out to Beaux if you have donations to contribute

2. Quick Board Business (5 min)

- a. Approve August Minutes: Jim Danner - motion to approve, second from Antoine Pedeaux, approved without opposition
- b. Treasurer's Report - We received an activation grant - for safety signs and crosswalks and a study on the effectiveness

3. Guests/Current Topics (20 min)

- a. District A Councilmember Giarrusso-(3 min)
 - i. Made the call for neighborhoods to send in the inaccurate S&WB bills at last meeting, meeting with S&WB tomorrow. I have two questions - when is it going to be fixed, and what does the fix look like?
 - ii. At next council meeting our office does not have a lot of stuff, going to renew Fairgrounds Advisory Committee shouldn't be an issue
 - iii. City budget - got a huge influx from Harrah's, two big lump payments for the hotel. 1% ahead of where we were last year, sales tax collection is down 20-25% down from last year due to lost conventions and festivals, property tax collections have increased, we know we're going to have to make cuts to the budget for 2021.
 - iv. Flurry of legislative activity in the next couple of weeks, have a lot of zoning issues.

1. Focused on next Public Works meeting (next week) to revise complete streets ordinance to incorporate what the administration wants to do with their policy to make clear what's required.
 2. Truck routes - it's a big issue in Hollygrove, Uptown and Midcity, less so for FSJ
 3. Better governance/transparency issues - notices for permits granted, encroachments, etc..
 4. Lowering the price for conditional use permits for multifamily dwellings, have to charge a price commensurate with the work that's being done, trying to make the price point easier for homeowners
- v. Beaux: we've been having some problems with some illegal STRs operating during COVID, 1300 block of Moss - there's been a demolition of a historic building there, stretched the project out over several years until it was a full demolition, which was denied by HDLC. HDLC levied a \$10,000 fine, but seems like there may be a loophole in the ordinance. HDLC meeting on 9/30, issued a stop work order, Beaux to chat with Joe and Amanda after meeting
 - vi. Joe: new guru over city departments, we've put a list together of 5 STRs that were causing heartburn in District A, we can add any problems in FSJ to the list, not seeing the level of enforcement that we'd like to. On Moss Street issue - we convinced them they weren't going to get demolition so they withdrew it, the hard part is that people who have money and know the system, they know where the loopholes are.
 - vii. Cynthia: You assigned someone in your office to be a point person, nothing has happened, same STR that has been illegal since before the original ordinance, license expired so they were out of compliance, now they don't fit, they can't get a license, but continue to rent every single weekend, for parties. Not distanced, not masked parties.
 - viii. Joe: City has given a lot of its enforcement resources to COVID, rightfully so, but will follow up on it and see if we can get a timeline for addressing
 - ix. Address of STR: 2864 Ponce de Leon
 - x. Questions about speeding in Zoom chat.
- b. Stephen Mosgrove – Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Engagement-(3 min)**

- i. Census - for our community census effort, there's competition between council districts, District A has consistently led, but District E is a close 2nd. Encourage others to ensure District A wins out!
 - c. **Representative Matthew Willard-(3 min) - Not in attendance**
 - d. **NOPD 1st District / Fair Grounds Patrol-(3 min)**
 - i. Capt Roberts - 1st District newsletter coming out this Friday, will go out to all neighborhood associations
 - e. 1pm District Max meetings every Tuesday on Facebook Live - will start in two weeks, will send all information in newsletter this Friday, will give all weekly and monthly stats as it relates to crime
 - f. Violent crime is down overall year to date in the 1st district, overall down 316 crimes from this time last year
 - g. Biggest nemesis is property crime, but auto burglaries have trended down, 544 this time last year, 320 YTD this year
 - h. Shoplifting is up, particularly at the dollar stores and Walgreens
 - i. Beaux: There were a rash of vehicle burglaries in the neighborhood a few weeks ago - any update?
 - j. Capt. Roberts: There was a total of 32 car break-ins, NOPH has made one arrest and have two warrants out. Assault rifle captured on video by Andy on DeSoto, no movement on that but sent it to the news media, not sure if they blasted it on the news, saturated the area with unmarked cars but only 1 arrest.
 - k. Contact info: Lroberts@nola.gov 504-658-8604
4. **Other Updates/Discussion Topics (25 mins)**
- a. Communication channels - Beaux - do FJSNA board members have thoughts on the best channels of communication? Nextdoor, Constant Contact - FSJNA Yahoo Group, emails?
 - i. George: A few years ago Conrad and I were going to purge the YahooGroup of those who were not paying dues, never got around to it and don't have plans to purge it anytime soon
 - ii. Beaux: I would like everyone to be a part of it, whether they're a paying member or not
 - iii. Jim Danner: Since Katrina we were the co-monitors on it, and you had to have your message approved, and there was a lot of controversy about what was being approved. One of the things that made it valuable was no advertisements, prefer to leave it the way it is until COVID is over
 - iv. Conrad: The only time that it's purged is if I know someone has moved out of the neighborhood. If someone new moves in, I send out an

invite to join FSJNA and it goes out 10-15 times per year. If I know that the person who sold the house moved out, I remove them from the Yahoo group. The thing about the Yahoo group is that we saw it was a valuable enticement to get people to join.

- v. Beaux: My proposal is that we'll continue to push out the Constant Contact as a newsletter, but also monitor the Yahoo group, the association does not post on NextDoor

b. Fortier Park 2.0 Update

- i. Brenda: Nancy, Vey and I are working on hardscaping, trying to plan to park so it will be to its best usage, the plan for different areas is developed, looking at planting that could be cut back, working with Parks and Parkway
- ii. Jeanie: Is there a plan to re-open the park?
- iii. Beaux: Yes, we're reaching out to Parks and Parkway - in that meeting they will discuss a plan, in between last meeting and this meeting wanted to develop a plan to do a socially distanced reopening, but the hurricanes got in the way. Meeting was pushed.
- iv. Brenda: We need to work on sprinklers, electrical, landscaping, and the best time to do it is while the park is closed
- v. Cleanup Costs
 - 1. Before the storms were coming, a bunch of the yard waste was sitting there and the city had not picked it up. Lionel Rivera picked it all up
 - 2. Beaux: Motion to take \$150 out of Fortier Park fund to pay Mr. Rivera. George makes the motion, Jim Danner seconds, passes without opposition

c. Candidate Forum October Meeting

- i. Beaux proposed making October meeting dedicated to a Candidate Forum
- ii. Cynthia: How many candidates are we talking about?
- iii. Beaux: 6 have reached out. If it proves to be 10-12 candidates, we'll have the candidates come at 6pm and meeting begin at 7pm so it doesn't take up the whole meeting.

d. 2803 St. Phillip Variance/Son of a Saint Discussion

- i. Beaux:
 - 1. Prior to July meeting, I received the NPP notification about the parking variance requested by Son of Saint and I sent SOS an email to invite them to the next neighborhood meeting, but that was not the NPP meeting.

2. SoS said they had only received positive comments from immediate neighbors, and upon their presentation to the board, FSJNA asked the applicant what would be helpful and they asked for a motion of support, which we did
 3. Between the July and August meeting, neighbors came forward and were clearly opposed, so with the new information we went back and forth, and there was a closure of the NPP process so the executive committee decided to do nothing, try to stay neutral, don't send a letter.
 4. Applicants got a copy of the meeting minutes and submitted that with their application, showing that the FSJNA voted to support the application
 5. Since then, the neighbors have expressed concerns about FSJNA's process
 6. The record on the St. Phillip variance request has both positive and negative comments, while FSJNA attempted to stay neutral, the application mentions 4 times that we support the variance
- ii. Karen and Bobby: We're hoping that the board will throw out or amend their approval, it's clearly very important to SoS that FSJNA's support. We're opposed to the parking variance and to the building expansion and we haven't known what's going on. I would like for the board to get out in front of it and go to the meetings and say we have new information, amend or rescind prior approval, and I have a whole slew of reasons why. There were errors in the application, we hadn't seen the application at the August meeting.
 - iii. Rocky: Hasn't the entire project morphed from a SoS project to resell to Ochsner? we were grossly misled.
 - iv. Beaux: It's my understanding that Ochsner gave a \$1M donation as a sponsor, will now be branded as the Ochsner SoS building. The question of a re-sell has not occurred, will be branded by Ochsner, and they'll be expanding their programming. Question we still have, how does the announcement comport with the application?
 - v. Karen: I received an email that says they can now double their participants by the end of 2021
 - vi. David: Susan and I were taken on a personal tour of the Ice House, and it was Sonny showing us what would be done. There is a large space being put on top of the building, which would look over our space, it has a beautiful view of downtown, it's a place for donors,

sponsors and kids to hang out. He can do what he needs to in the space provided.

- vii. Conrad: My advice is that the board take a position that we will request of SoS that they postpone the hearing if they can. If they refuse to attempt that, they should be put on notice that we will oppose their plan. By postponing it, we give them a chance to come back to our meeting and level with us about their future plans. We have a hard enough time with parking as it is, don't need a big organization like SoS inviting donors into the neighborhood. Given the history of where we've been, they have to be put on notice that it's not delayed there will be opposition.
- viii. Cynthia: There is precedent for the board reversing its opinion - Susan G. Komen race, if there's more information that's surfaced you have every right to rescind your decision
- ix. Karen: SoS agreed to a proviso that would sunset the parking variance if they sold the building, but we don't know what would happen if they sublet the building. My fear is that once they start expanding, what will stop them from continuing to expand? They're grandfathered in at 13,000 sq. ft and they have plans to expand to 16,000 sq feet.
- x. Conrad: The bottom line is that if they can take care of their core business they shouldn't be allowed to expand. As I see it, it's all about fundraising, but when they bought the building they knew the building was good for their core business. We need to know exactly what the space is going to be used for and what is the justification for it?
- xi. Jim Danner makes a motion that FJSNA ask SoS delay or postpone the hearing and if not then let them know that we're going to go against it. Clark Thompson seconds motion
- xii. Weenta: I want to agree with what others have been said, have skepticism about the project, we're finding out from other sources different plans for expansion that come by surprise, we have not been able to talk to them and check in with them to figure out what's going on.
- xiii. Bobby: In the SoS office I saw checks from Chevron
- xiv. Beaux: Procedural comment on the motion, the hearing has already been extended to October
- xv. Jim Danner: If it's been pushed to October, we may not need to ask them to postpone, if they get all of the information to the board by Sept date

- xvi. Conrad: This should be discussed in a separate meeting, shouldn't wait until a regular meeting. We're not used to be railroaded, we have to let them know that this is serious.
- xvii. Beaux: It has been proposed that FJSNA is in support, but we voted that we would send a letter, which we never sent. Let's send a letter to the BZA, removing the position in support because there is more information and go back on paper to a position of neutrality to demand a meeting to answer all of these new questions. If we remove our support from BZA, we go to a position of neutrality, between this and the actual BZA hearing, we demand a fuller process to answer neighbors questions and arrive at a strong position.
- xviii. Conrad: I think it's important for neighbors to tour the building
- xix. Rocky: We also need to figure out what their present and future plans are, we need a document from them in writing, so if plans change we can hold accountable
- xx. Paula: There are some online sources of information that weren't included in the application, Ochsner would be providing services, this totally changes their initial plans of being a community center, brings us back to the July meeting when Conrad asked if you'll be the sole user and Sonny Lee said yes, so I think they're plans have changed.
- xxi. Mike Harris: I live right across the street, I think the board should move to oppose the project and oppose the application that's been filed, there is an application that misrepresented the board. Wreaks of misrepresentation, you've been bamboozled.
- xxii. Beaux: I propose an amendment to Jim's motion, I want to give SoS an opportunity to come before us and ask questions, we write a letter to the BZA, clarifying that the position of July was taken out of context and the board is not in a position to support and we request a delay of the hearing.
- xxiii. Clark: Our next meeting is Oct 6, the deadline for the submission is Oct 5.
- xxiv. Beaux: It's much more complicated now, not in a position now to vote
- xxv. Mike Harris: The position needs to be stronger, what is the threshold for opposition if all of the neighbors are opposed
- xxvi. Jeanie: I would like to second Beaux's amendment to Jim's motion
- xxvii. Conrad: I think we need to ask for a postponement, the fact that he submitted minutes that were not approved is underhanded, he's earned distrust as far as I'm concerned.
- xxviii. Mike: We're asking FSJNA to oppose the project

- xxix. Rocky: We need put the ball back in their court, we have grounds to oppose because they used unapproved minutes.
- xxx. Jim Danner: I'll amend my motion, to signify a letter in opposition and request a postponement of hearing. George seconds.
 - 1. Those in favor: George, Clark, Jim danner, Sally Main, Brenda, Antoine, Rocky, Beaux, Nancy shepard.
 - 2. Abstain: Greg Jeanfreau, Jeanie Donovan

5. Questions from Membership - None

6. Next meeting: Membership & Board meeting – Tuesday, October 6, 7 pm, Zoom or Haus

7. Motion to Adjourn - Motion to adjourn: George Bartlett, Second by Jeanie, passes without opposition