



Minutes

**For the Legal and Regular Meeting
of the Southside Economic Development District
to be held at the Harvey Benoit Recreation Center on**

February 6, 2023

5:30 p.m.

The Southside Economic Development District met at the Benoit Recreation Center in a legal and regular session on Monday, February 6, 2023.

Present were: Tony Little, Otis Jones, Roosevelt Wright, Jr, and Karl Dhaliwal.

Absent were: Tyrone Goodin, Marty Campbell, Preston Hopkins

A representative of the Metro Black Chamber of Commerce, Kenya Roberson, and SEDD attorney Kevin Johnson were also in attendance.

There was a quorum.

The Board unanimously approved the recommendation of President Little to add a change of SEDD Meeting times to the agenda. After adding the item to the agenda, the Board unanimously changed its regular meeting times to 2 p.m. on the first Monday of each month.

President Little called on Atty. Kevin Johnson to provide the Board with his legal opinion about the legality of the January 9, 2023 meeting. Attorney Johnson said the January 9, 2023, meeting was a legal meeting because a quorum of members was present. He said since the SEDD bylaws require a written letter of resignation, that Mr. Karl Dhaliwal's participation in the January 9, 2023 meeting was legal for two reasons, 1) he has resigned or written a letter of resignation and 2) Even if he had resigned the bylaws allow any person who resigns to participate until their successor is seated. He said he forwarded a copy of his written opinion to the city attorney.

The Board unanimously adopted the minutes of the January 9, 2023, November 7, 2022, and August 9, 2022, meetings.

The Treasurer, Roosevelt Wright, Jr., reported all income and expenditures of SEDD from May 1, 2018, to December 31, 2022. He reported that the total received from all sources since May 1, 2018, is \$589,548.68, and the total disbursements from May 1, 2018, to December 22, 2022, were: \$391,457.07 of which \$213,327.85 spent on Staff wages and salaries, with no approved projects. He reported that SEDD financials indicate that 54 cents of each dollar were spent on the executive director and a staff member

for a few months. The remaining 46 cents of each dollar was spent on operating costs, including a luxury vehicle for the director, auto insurance, gasoline, a big screen TV, cell phones, Cablevision, dish TV, utilities, conferences, and other operating costs. He said none of the expenditures went toward a city council-approved project for South Monroe. The report noted that the new SEDD budget has attempted to reverse course by eliminating the executive director position and targeting all expenditures toward projects approved in the council-approved 25-year economic plan called the "Southside Dream."

The treasurer also reported that as of February 6, 2023, the SEDD has a total of \$398,769 on hand, of which \$68,900 is from an appropriation from the State of Louisiana by Senator Katrina Jackson.

The treasurer reported the following obligations: Delta Builds Enterprises (Grant Writer) \$3,600; Rebirth Designs (Web designer) \$7,895.00 Andric Harris (Lawn service) \$255.00 and TBA Studios (Consultant for Safe Neighborhoods) \$4,920.00. He noted that the pay to Harris was a carryover from last year and would not be paid from hotel/tax revenues because there was no approved project at the time. Instead, it will be paid from undedicated state appropriations.

The Board unanimously adopted the report and approved the expenditures.

The Board conducted a public hearing on the revision of the 2022-23 budget as advertised in the official journal and made available for public inspection for 15 days before the February 6, 2023 meeting. No one spoke for or against the adoption of the budget. The Board subsequently unanimously approved the budget revision.

The Board unanimously accepted the SEDD25.com website as substantially complete, authorized its use by the public, and approved payment of the final invoice from Rebirth Designs.

Mr. Wright noted that he received an email from commissioner Rev. Marty Campbell noting that he did not give permission for his photo to be used on the website. Mr. Wright said the web designer has requested direction and clarity. He said the website is photo driven with no avatars. He wanted clarification on whether to delete Rev. Campbell's image, email and District 5 contact information. President Little said SEDD members are public officials, and he doubts that the council member for District 5 intends her district not to be represented. He said the District 5 representation would remain on the site as long as Rev. Campbell is a commissioner.

In association with the website, official sedd25.com emails have been established for each Sedd member. Mr. Wright gave each member their SEDD email address and login information. He said no communications will be sent to private emails of SEDD members but to their official SEDD emails in keeping with the open meeting law. He noted that members might receive a group text with SEDD information, but no member should respond to informational texts to avoid conducting a meeting by text message.

President Little deferred a report from Steven Nosacka until a later date.

The Infrastructure committee did not meet and had no report. President Little said the committee is dysfunctional and replaced Rev. Marty Campbell with commission Otis Jones as chairperson.

The chairperson of the Housing expansion Committee, Tyrone Goodin, was absent. The committee had no meetings or report.

The DBE committee reported that it met last week and recommended the following: 1) SEDD take immediate steps to replace the roof on the Arizona Street Facility, 2) authorize the submission of a grant for \$3 million over four years for a DBE training program, and authorize submission of CDBG grant proposal for \$100,000 to repair the building. The committee's report and its recommendations were unanimously approved.

The Safe Neighborhood Committee reported that it met last week and began steps developing a master plan for crime reduction in South Monroe. Mr. Wright, chairperson, said the committee focused on using the City Marshal's office in its community policing plans. He said City Marshal Robert Cherry is developing plans to show how his office can participate and cost projections. Damin Coleman briefly addressed the Board on behalf of the committee about steps to help reduce offender recidivism. Mr. Wright said the committee will meet with coaches, youth leaders, and civic groups in the months ahead to develop a master plan designed to focus the community's attention on taking action to reduce crime in South Monroe.

During citizen's participation, Marie Brown expressed the need for safe houses and assistance to parolees once released from prison to reduce criminal acts of offenders who repeat offenses without help.

After 1:18 minutes of deliberation, the meeting adjourned to meet in regular session on March 6, 2023, at 2 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RW', written in a cursive style.

Roosevelt Wright, Jr./secretary-Treasurer