



Minutes

**of the Legal and Regular Meeting
of the Southside Economic Development District
held at the Benoit Recreation Center, 1700 Oaklawn Drive, Monroe, La.**

April 17, 2023

The Southside Economic Development District met in a legal session on April 17, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. at Benoit Recreation Center, 1700 Oaklawn Drive.

Present were: Tony Little, Roosevelt Wright, Jr., Karl Dhaliwal, and Otis Jones. Absent were Preston Hopkins, Rev. Marty Campbell, and Tyrone Goodin.

Also in attendance were: Minister Verbon Muhammad, Betty Ward Cooper, a city school board member, Donna Cathey of TBA Studios, and a reporter for the Ouachita Citizen.

There was a quorum.

Mr. Wright offered an invocation.

President's Report

President Little reported on SEDD's progress toward target goals for 2023, the May 15, 2023, deadline for Ethics filings, and contacts with absentee commissioners. He said he had completed his Ethics Filings and Tier 2.1 filings. Mr. Wright, Jones, and Dhaliwal also said they had completed their ethics training.

Mr. Little also said he had reached out to two of the board members who are repeatedly absent to no avail. He said the board has never received a phone number for Mr. Hopkins, who has missed every meeting since he was appointed in December 2022.

Approval of Minutes

On motion of Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Jones, the March 6, 2023, minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Little said the board is taking steps to sell bonds on the projected hotel/motel tax revenues. A decision on whether SEDD will need city council approval to see bonds is being investigated. The funds will be used to partially fund its six approved projects.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Wright, the treasurer, gave the following report:

"During March, the SEDD received \$7,607.34 from the hotel/hotel tax fund. There were \$5,617.18 in expenses. The expenses involved:

- Legal services.
- Insurance renewals on the Arizona Street Facility.
- An invoice for lock changing on the Arizona Street facility.

We have two invoices for Harris Lawn service for the Arizona Street facility totaling \$240.00. They represent our only expenses for April 2023.

As of March 31, 2023, the SEDD has received \$178,998.41 from motel tax and state sources. It has spent \$65,086.12. Our net revenues after expenses as of March 31, 2023, are \$113,912.29.

The 2023-24 Budget will be on the April 17, 2023, agenda for introduction. It will be approved after a public hearing on May 1, 2023.

As of March 31, 2023, we have an unreconciled balance of \$331,860.04 in cash on hand, which will be carried over into our new fiscal year beginning May 1, 2023. Of this amount, \$165,055 will be used to partially fund the six approved SEDD projects, along with \$120,00 we expect to receive from hotel/motel taxes.

Next fiscal year, we expect to spend \$285,055 executing the research and planning for the six approved Southside Projects:

1. Model Neighborhood Master Plan
2. DBE Resource Center
3. Infrastructure Master Plan for special entertainment, health care, postal and retail additions
4. DBE Expansion
5. Promotion and Support of Southside Businesses
6. Crime Reduction and Safe Neighborhoods

On motion by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Jones, the board approved the treasurer's report and payment of two invoices from Harris Lawn service, a total of \$240.00, for grounds maintenance of the Arizona Street facility from the DBE Expansion budget. The motion passed unanimously.

2023-24 Budget Introduction

Mr. Wright, the treasurer, presented the 2023-24 SEDD Budget. He said a hearing will be finally adopted and effective at the May 1, 2023, SEDD meeting. The budget projects a Hotel Motel Tax income of 120,000. It projects using \$165,055 of fund balance revenues along with hotel/tax receipts to fund total expenditures of \$285,000 on SEDD's Southside Projects in 2023-24. Each item in the budget was explained, and questions were answered from Mrs. Betty Ward Cooper, a visiting member of the public.

On motion of Mr. Wright and seconded by Mr. Jones, the 2023-24 budget was introduced. It was unanimously approved.

Infrastructure Committee Report

Mr. Jones, chairman of the Infrastructure Committee, said the committee met on April 13 and recommended authorizing an RFP for developing a master plan for infrastructure needs for the district.

On motion of Mr. Jones and seconded by Mr. Wright, the board approved the recommendation of the infrastructure committee to authorize an RFP for developing a master plan for infrastructure needs for the district. The approved verbiage would be incorporated into a final legal document circulated to possible vendors. The motion was approved unanimously.

Housing Committee Report

The Housing Committee, Mr. Tyrone Goodin, chairperson, had no report.

DBE Expansion Committee Report

Mr. Little said the DBE Expansion committee met on April 13. He said a May 5, 2023, social event is being planned at the African-American museum to get acquainted with Southside businesses. It is being staged with the Metro Black Chamber, which is absorbing the cost. He also said his committee received several bids for reroofing the 1711 Arizona Street facility, but only one was recommended by JDS, the SEDD consultant. The bid cost is \$48,399 for a pitched roof with a maximum of six weeks turnaround if there is bad weather, but shorter if weather permits.

On motion of Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Little board approved the DBE committee's recommendation of the bid of R.K. Construction for \$48,3999 for the reroofing of the 1711 Arizona Street facility with half the amount paid upfront and the remainder paid when it is completed. The JDS Consulting, the SEDD consultant, is managing the project. The motion passed unanimously.

Safe Neighborhood Committee Report

Donna Cathy of TBA Studios gave an update on the safe neighborhood master plan that is being developed. She said TBA has gathered the necessary information and is on target for presentation at the May SEDD meeting. Mr. Wright, committee chairman, explained that once the master plan is presented, the committee will seek input from council members who represent each district and residents in proposed model neighborhoods before making a final selection of the model neighborhoods for each district. He said the objective is to begin some work in each of the target neighborhoods this year to the extent available funds will allow.

On motion of Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Jones, the board approved a request by the Safe Neighborhood committee to authorize payment of its next contract installment when the invoice is received. The motion was approved unanimously.

Citizen's Participation

During citizen participation, Minister Verbon Muhammad expressed concern that three SEDD board members: Rev. Marty Campbell, Tyrone Goodin, and Preston Hopkins, have missed all meetings this year, and one, Mr. Hopkins, has never attended any meetings since he was appointed in December of last year. Minister Muhammad said while SEDD is operating with a quorum, his concern is that decisions are being made about Districts 4 and 5, and their representatives are consistently absent.

Mr. Jones asked the President to notify the board attorney to write them a letter informing them that SEDD bylaws only allow three consecutive unexcused absences before requesting the city council to replace them.

After 1 hour and 1 minute, the meeting adjourned to meet on May 1, 2023, in regular session.

Tony Little, President

Roosevelt Wright, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer