



Minutes

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

May 1, 2023

The Southside Economic Development District Board of Commissioners met in a legal and regular meeting on May 1, 2023, at the Benoit Recreation Center, 1700 Oaklawn Dr.

Members present were: Mr. Tony Little, Otis Jones, Roosevelt Wright, Jr, and Karl Dhaliwal.

Members absent were: Tyrone Goodin, Preston Hopkins, Rev. Marty Campbell

Among the visitors were: Christopher Lewis and a representative of the Ouachita Citizen Newspaper. Also in attendance were: Tim Brandon of TBA Studio and Mrs. Sonya Jacobs of JDS Consultants.

There was a quorum.

President's Report:

Tony Little, the president, urged all members to complete Ethics filings by May 15, 2023. He also gave an overview of the business collaboration event being held in conjunction with the Metropolitan Black Chamber on May 5, 2023, at the African-American Museum. He asked Mrs. Sonya Jacobs of the Black Chamber to review the activity which she said is designed to get minority businesses to collaborate and work together for future projects.

Mr. Little also noted that he has attempted to reach out to board members Campbell, Goodin and Hopkins unsuccessfully concerning their absences at board meeting. All three have missed all board meetings this year and the council districts they represent have no representation. He said he is willing to adjust board meeting times to accommodate them, but he does not want to change meeting times if they do not plan to attend. Mr. Little said if further attempts fail, he will notify the board's attorney to officially notify the city of their non-compliance.

Approval of minutes:

On motion of Mr. Wright seconded by Mr. Jones, the minutes of April 17, 2023, were unanimously approved.

Steps to Bonding:

Mr. Little distributed a short list of steps necessary to bond out the remaining 25 years of the SEDD hotel/motel tax. When completed, the bond sale is expected to generate \$900,000 for SEDD-approved projects encumbering 75 percent of SEDD's expected revenue over 25 years. A resolution to begin the process will be on the June agenda, pending clarification of whether city council approval is necessary.

Payment of Bills:

On motion of Mr. Wright and seconded by Mr. Little, the board voted to approve the treasurer's recommendation that we pay two invoices from JDS Consulting service totaling \$5,520.00 for DBE Consultant for February -March 2023. Amount to be paid from Hotel/Motel revenues for Approved DBE projects after a more detailed invoice is presented. Mr. Jones said he reluctantly supports payment but wants invoices to specify work done toward project completion. The Motion was approved unanimously.

Budget Public hearing

A public hearing was conducted to approve the 2023-24 SEDD Budget. 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. No one came forward to speak for or against the proposed budget, and the hearing was closed.

On the motion of Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Little, the board unanimously approved the 2023-24 budget, having met legal requirements.

Infrastructure Master Plan report

Mr. Wright reported that the final RFP document for developing an Infrastructure Master Plan for South Monroe has been formalized and will be given to the SEDD attorney for review. Afterward, it will be publicized and distributed to known vendors.

Housing Committee Merger

President Little said the Housing Committee, chaired by Mr. Goodin, has not held any meetings, so he plans to merge its functions into the three functioning committees. Board members will receive more information by SEDD email.

DBE Committee Report

Little, chairperson of the DBE Expansion committee, introduced Mrs. Jacobs, the consultant, to share an update on DBE Activities. She said although the board approved the bid of a contractor for the Arizona Street facility at its last meeting, that the process is being restarted because SEDD followed state bid procedures instead of the City of Monroe's bid thresholds and procedures. She said an engineer or architect would draw up the specs, and other steps, including advertisements and pre-bid conferences. Mr. Little, since the board has already authorized this action, it didn't need to be done again.

Mrs. Jacobs also reported on possible DBE activities that will help small businesses in the district in the future.

Safe Neighborhood and Crime Reduction Committee Report

Tim Brandon of TBA Studios presented the concept boards for the three selected model neighborhoods. He said three neighborhoods suggested were recommended by the committee after touring the neighborhoods and reviewing the maps. He said the concept is to use neighborhoods with primarily homeowner property that were visible and contained some adjudicated properties. The goal is to present a snapshot of what neighborhoods in the district will look like as future developers model new developments following the models included in the SEDD "Southside Dream." Mr. Brandon emphasized that the concepts need considerable community input from residents and city council members. Once all information has been received, SEDD must make a final neighborhood selection. Then the plan's mechanics will begin in coordination with the city engineering department.

Mr. Brandon answered questions about possible costs, funding sources, and how much of the plan can be done this year.

TBA Studios will make digital copies of the maps available for the SEDD website and present the concepts at community meetings before the City Council.

TBA will also provide SEDD with a checklist of steps to completion of the project, including possible sponsorships from major corporations such as ENTERGY, who may be interested in underwriting some of the costs of developing a modern neighborhood plan with futuristic energy-saving components.

Citizen Participation

There was a general discussion about DBE assistance prompted by Mr. Christopher Lewis. He thanks SEDD for the information given at the meeting.

Mr. Dhaliwal said his companies are seeking a minority HVAC and Electrician. Several people forwarded the names of known minority licensed HVAC and electricians.

After one hour and ten minutes of deliberation, the meeting adjourned to meet on June 5, 2023.

Tony Little, President

Roosevelt Wright, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer