

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE NEW ORLEANS CITY PARK IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the Board of Commissioners (the “Board”) of the New Orleans City Park Improvement Association (the “NOCPIA”) was called to order Tuesday, September 24, 2019 at 4 p.m. by President Larry Katz. The meeting was held in the Administration Building.

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Adkerson, Arata, Arnold, Batt, Cahn, Dale, Gardner, Giarrusso, Hess, Katz, LeCorgne, Lester, Lupo, Masinter, McNeil, Pate, Pettus, Powell, Savoie, Seamon, Sloss, Taylor, and Waller

**ABSENT:** Commissioners Baker, Banks, DeBlieux, Donovan, Fitzpatrick, Hollis, Leger, McCrossen, Messer, Navarre, Pineda, Spears, Thomas, and Tregre

**STAFF:** Bob Becker, Meg Adams, Amanda Frentz, Keith Hemel, Casie Duplechain, Sarah Olivier, and Denise Joubert

**COUNSEL:** Henry Kinney

**GUESTS:** Emily Mueller, Charles Marsala, Andrea Legrand, Rick Marksbury, Bernard Eble, James Brousse, Jean Brousse, Jane Batty, Susan Eble, James Tompson

Larry Katz, President of the NOCPIA Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order.

The minutes of the July board meeting were unanimously approved.

Anyone wishing to comment on any item on the agenda must sign the sign-in sheet, and indicate what item they wish to comment on.

Public Comment was then invited; Katz read the rules for receiving public comments; Katz asked all speakers not be repetitive with their comments. Richard Marksbury distributed, and reviewed documents pertaining to the P.T.Beauregard monument. Marksbury expressed the need for the Park to reach a resolution concerning the ownership of the monument. He suggested that the monument be turned over to the State of Louisiana. He stressed the importance of clearing up the confusion surrounding ownership of the monument. Bernard Eble thanked the Board for their service. He requested that the Board take action to exercise its custodial duties over City Park property, and get the monument back into State custody. Mr. Brousse noted that Beauregard was one of the first civil rights leaders, who advocated for blacks and whites to attend the same schools. He was also appointed Adjutant General of the Louisiana Militia. Charles Marsala, President of the American-Italian Federation of the Southeast compared our situation to that of the Daughters of the Confederacy in Caddo Parish. He is researching the issue further. Katz thanked everyone for their comments.

In the Management Report, Chief Executive Officer Becker reported that we ended the fiscal year with a loss of approximately \$270,000 of a total budget in excess of twenty million dollars. A portion of the deficit was a budgeting error related to the Voodoo contract. Extremely bad weather during the Scream Park and Celebration in the Oaks was also a factor. The rest of the loss was based on a decision to take some charges in the past fiscal year, rather than pushing them forward to the new fiscal year. July is off to a slow start, due to unfavorable weather conditions as well as Café Du Monde opening later than expected. Becker mentioned that the Park had a busy weekend that included Martini Madness, Brees' Flag Football League, cross country meet, and NOLA on Tap. He noted that the openings of both the Louisiana Children's Museum, and Café Du Monde were successful

Becker reported that the park is close to finalizing an agreement on the extension of the Voodoo contract. He noted that Voodoo has been in the park for twenty years. Although there are still minor issues to be resolved, we have reached an agreement with the promoter on the major points of the new contract. The new contract will provide a substantial increase in minimum rent. He noted that Voodoo is a unique cultural event that we are helping to provide for the citizens of the city and the state, and mentioned some positives in the new contract include the refinement of the concert site, and penalties for not moving out in time. Voodoo has agreed to spend \$25,000 a year for capital improvement on the site of the event, and that an agreement had been reached on an exclusivity clause of five months. He expressed confidence that the remaining minor issues would be resolved with Voodoo. Commissioner Paul Masinter recommended that the board authorize Becker to execute the contract subject to final approval from the Executive Committee.

Commissioner Paul Masinter commended Becker, along with President Katz, and the Executive Committee, for the job they did negotiating the new contract. He said that from a legal perspective this a much better agreement, with better protections for the park. Commissioner Adam McNeil agreed that from a liability and risk management perspective, the new agreement is much improved from the previous contract. Commissioner Lupo also agreed that this is the best agreement yet. President Katz stated that in any negotiation, you will never get everything you seek; but that in this agreement, we have gotten the majority, and the most important of the concessions were sought.

Pettus stated that he would like it noted for the record that the application of this Venue Agreement consider the rights of, and our relationship with, our current tenants. We have year-round relationships with Lessees such as NOMA, Christian Brother's School, Louisiana Children's Museum, Cafe Du Monte, Bayou District Foundation and Equest Farms. We should require Voodoo take all reasonable steps necessary to minimize their impact, both financially and operationally, on the Park, its guests and its tenants.

Commissioner Richard Cahn noted that the Park should not be excluded from hosting smaller multi-day events which could be prohibited by the Exclusivity clause in the contract. Becker stated that in the agreement there are examples of what would be considered similar multi-day events to Voodoo. He also stated that he did not believe two day events would be prohibited.

Commissioner Billy Arnold expressed concern about the length of the exclusivity clause. Becker noted that for twenty years Voodoo has had a four month clause. They asked for six month, and we agreed upon five months. Arnold stated that we may be limiting ourselves by agreeing to a flat amount per ticket, and not a percentage of the ticket price. Becker stated that we did a considerable amount of research, and the industry standard is to receive a flat amount per ticket. Councilmember Joe Giarrusso mentioned that the City is examining changes to the noise ordinance that would affect cultural events. He will keep the Park updated on the changes.

A resolution was adopted by the Board, with all present voting yea , and one nay as follows: Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer to execute a contract with Voodoo Music Experience (VME), Inc., to utilize New Orleans City Park (NOCPIA) property for a ten year period, with options at discretion of the Park. The contract is for the production of a music festival. The final contract must be approved by the Executive Committee of NOCPIA.

A Resolution was unanimously adopted that authorizes the Chief Executive Officer to execute agreements for the Harrison Avenue Trailhead project. The project was included in the Transportation Alternatives Program through DOTD, in the amount of \$230,000.

#### *Committee Reports:*

P, A&E – Commissioner Robert Lupo reported that the City has asked the Park to install an inclusive playground in the park, paid for by the City. The Park has selected a site that was presented to the City for approval. The City will begin work on Marconi from City Park Avenue to the underpass to repair the street. They will install one driving lane, one bike lane, and one parking lane. The plans for the Maintenance Complex will go out for bid in October. The RFP for the beer and wine garden is under consideration, and will be presented to the Executive Committee for review.

CITO/Special Events – Commissioner Chenier Taylor reviewed past and upcoming events. She reported that Scream Fest will be open on September 27, and run through November 2. Work continues on sponsorships for Celebration in the Oaks. Taylor mentioned that the Celebration in the Oaks Preview Party is scheduled for November 22, and that the committee is still seeking restaurants to participate at the event. Boos and Brews will take place on October 25. Media night is scheduled for November 26.

Development – Casie Duplechain reported that sponsorship packets for Celebration in the Oaks were mailed. Year to date we have received \$25,000. She thanked Commissioners Katz and Masinter for their donation. Becker mentioned that sponsorships were once a major revenue source of Celebration in excess of \$300,000 per year. However, we are down to roughly \$75,000 annually. Becker stressed the importance of increasing sponsorships for the event. Lois Pendergrass a member of the business community is working with City Park to create the Lois Pendergrass Memorial Oak Tree Fund. The fund has raised \$35,000 with a goal of \$40,000 to create a place within Couturie Forest with a named tree and two benches. Duplechain reviewed the sponsorships pledged to date, as well as remaining sponsorship opportunities. We received a

\$75,000 sponsorship from Henry Shane for Hey Diddle Diddle. The total pledged donations to date is \$1.3 million with \$480,000, projected endowment. Katz thanked everyone for their work on the Storyland project.

Environmental Stewardship – Commissioner Carro Gardner reported that the Park had 42 volunteers that participated in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation Beach Sweep. Gardner mentioned that Martini Madness was a zero waste event. Meg Adams and Lindsey Kirsch are part of a steering committee of New Orleans Environmental Education Collaborative, and are hosting a focus group to ascertain how the organization can better support the science educators in the area. The New Orleans Town Gardeners will work with the Native Plant initiative on the installation of the native plants at Big Lake Louisiana Trail. The Park is hosting a phenology workshop on September 28. Lunch and Learn is scheduled for October 9. The subject is “How U.S. Fish and Wildlife is Conserving the Nature of America.”

Finance & Audit – Chief Financial Officer Keith Hemel mentioned that the Auditors are scheduled for Monday, September 30.

Friends – Commissioner Larry Dale reported that Friends currently has more than 5000 members, compared to 4,993 last year. Dale strongly encouraged all Commissioners to consider becoming a member. Martini Madness was well attended, and should net \$40,000. The funds will benefit City Park technology improvements. Ghost in the Oaks is scheduled for October 17 October 20. All four nights are sold out. The event should net \$105,000; which will benefit Amusement Park improvements. President Katz stated that Martini Madness was an outstanding event.

H&G Committee/Dog Park – Commissioner Liz Sloss reported that we are moving forward with the Sundial project. The Park is examining conducting a tree survey, all trees over 4” will be documented and placed on a map. The survey will take approximately three years to complete. Two garden clubs will volunteer, twice a month at the Park. Sloss mentioned that City Bark currently has 1800 members. City Park employees have begun to maintain the Dog Park. On December 14, City Bark will host the Parade of Paws.

Legal & Risk Management – No Report

NOMA – Commissioner Robert Lupo mentioned that “Love in the Garden” is scheduled for Friday, September 27.

Wisner Tract – Commissioner Bill LeCorgne reported that several staff and board members visited the Arboretum in Houston, Texas. He noted that the public meetings went well and was very innovative. Attendees were give a button to vote on various options presented to the group. Sarah Olivier mentioned that she continues to receive questions about the plan, and will create a survey monkey. Oliver said to let her know if anyone is interested in receiving the analysis from the meeting. Commissioner Paul Masinter mentioned that he also visited the Arboretum in Houston, and was very impressed by the design. He also thanked Commissionr Bill LeCorge, Sarah Olivier, the Committee, and the Designers for their great work. Masinter encouraged all board members to visit the Wisner Tract site.

Public Relations – No Report

Nominating – Commissioner Liz Sloss reported that the Committee met, and discussed upcoming vacancies, as well as potential candidates to serve on the Board. The candidates will be presented at the October board meeting, and voted on at the November meeting. She asked all Commissioners to contact herself or Katz if they wish to nominate potential candidates.

Sports – Commissioner Adam McNeil reported that our sports fields continue to be at maximum capacity. Last weekend there were 2600 kids at a cross country meet, nine hundred kids on Friday night at the Quad for the Brees' flag football league. Golf is ahead of budget for the year. The Committee is focusing on finding an operator for the concessions stand at the Savoie Soccer Complex.

Tennis – No Report

Botanical Garden Foundation – Commissioner Rebecca Lester reported that the outdoor kitchen in the Botanical Garden is having an event tonight for Board members and donors. However the grand opening is at the Fall Garden Festival when cooking demonstrations will take place throughout the weekend. Magic in the Moonlight is scheduled for October 11. A chef dinner series and cooking demonstrations are scheduled in October and November.

OTHER REPORTS:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 22, 2019 at 4 p.m.

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Denise Joubert  
Recording Secretary

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Elizabeth Sloss