



Special Board Meeting

Meeting Date and Time: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 12:00 pm

Meeting Place: VIRTUAL

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87449172242?pwd=MHNUTk5aYzEzWkJWMDnFmdnVHaHhGQT09>

Meeting ID: 874 4917 2242 Passcode: 755172

AGENDA

- ❖ Welcome
- ❖ Pledge and Opening Prayer
- ❖ Roll Call
- ❖ **New Business**
 - Consideration of Donald Gardner Stadium Project - Sustainability Partners
 - Project Questions + Discussion
 - For Final Consideration
 - Opelousas Downtown Development District contribution of funds for the improvements to Donald Gardner Stadium
 - Opelousas Downtown Development District retainment of *project specific* counsel of record
- ❖ **Adjourn**

The following members were present in person: Pat Fontenot

The following members were present virtually: Chairwoman Lena Charles, Keith Broussard, Don D'Avy, Sarah Branton, Ogden Pitre and Rob Hillard

The following member was absent: none

The following SLED staff member was present in person: Bill Rodier/CEO and Taylor Lormand/E.D. Specialist

The following SLED staff members were absent: none

There were also present in person: Mayor Julius Alsandor

It was determined that a quorum was present and Chairwoman Lena Charles opened the meeting at 12:01 pm.

New Business:

- Consideration of Donald Gardner Stadium Project - Sustainability Partners
 - Project Questions + Discussion
 - Chairwoman Lena Charles opens the meeting by explaining the reason for calling the special meeting – the potential for a project, in partnership with the City of Opelousas, to upgrade the Donald Gardner stadium facilities. Ms. Charles then

introduced Bill Rodier and requested an update on the legal conversations pertaining to this project.

- Bill Rodier: explains that he spoke to the original attorney, David Wolfe, who is not available to represent the downtown development district at this time. Have now approached Eric LaFleur who is also highly experienced in representing government entities in Cooperative Agreements.
- Ms. Charles calls on board members to give their input, express concerns and ask questions.
- Pat Fontenot: Mr. Fontenot states that he is in full support of this project. Explains that he has done significant due diligence and encourages fellow board members to consider this project as a catalyst for economic growth, enhancing the corridor and providing support for the community.
- Don D’Avy: In support of the concept of the project, believes this project could be a great benefit for city, parish and community at large. Believes there are potential pitfalls without proper professional oversight. Recommends that the City of Opelousas engineer of record, Morgan Goudeau and Associates be considered as the oversight representative for the city during construction and maintenance. Does the city have the capability of managing this facility through bookings/scheduling and maintaining the bookings? We must ensure that the City of Opelousas dedicates funding to ensure that they can afford to cover the costs of the facility in the future.
- Lena Charles: Understands concerns, reminds the members that is why we need a strong Cooperative Endeavor Agreement. Our partner needs to understand that there are expectations for the management of the construction, maintenance and operations of this facility.
- Rob Hillard: Understands the complexity of the legalities but this is a necessity. Recommends that we potential reach out to other communities who have already done this. Our youth needs a project like this, from the most basic levels of appearance, this will bring our youth athletics to the same level as all surrounding areas. Turf fields are the norm at this point, we are behind the curve. If not now, when? There is no way I can’t be 100% go on this.
- Lena Charles: There is a list of facilities completed by Geo Surfaces in the document that has been shared.
- Keith Broussard: Is not going to be voting on this. Feels that the City of Opelousas has not done due diligence. We have not heard of other types of financing that can be put in place. Feels like they are asking us because they know we have money and are treating us as an ATM. Mr. Broussard states that he feels there are other funding opportunities and other ways to go about this that haven’t been explored. Because they fail to plan, this is not an emergency for us. What is the rush? Why is this necessary? Mr. Broussard states that he will not be voting on this matter. Objects because of fiduciary responsibility.
- Lena Charles: Thanks Mr. Broussard for his opinion. Clarifies that there are still many moving parts that must be addressed before we officially sign an agreement.

The purpose of this meeting is to decide if we are in support of the city moving forward with this project in concept.

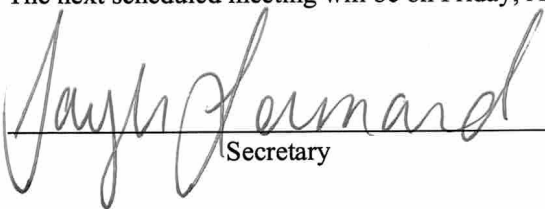
- Sarah Branton: Mrs. Branton expresses that she is extremely conflicted as she believes it is a great project and something that the city needs. We are paying a large amount of money to CPEX for our master plan and we need to ensure that this is in the direction of that plan. We would also like to see data on the potential economic impact of this project so that we can evaluate if this is a wise way to spend our money. Should we be spending this money on infrastructure instead? The timing is causing concern. Infrastructure is part of our responsibility, not only on the city. Mrs. Branton restates that she is in support of this project in concept but requests that more due diligence is done.
- Ogden Pitre: States that he is also a little conflicted. Loves the idea of turf field and track and the benefit of bringing it to Opelousas. There are still several questions. Does this fit into our legal framework? Can we invest this type of money into this project? Why are we spending this amount of money and we don't have the questions answered? What are we investing into? What will happen after the initial 8 years, will the city be ready to take over the financial cost of maintaining the facility. Mr. Pitre states that if the city feels that this is a benefit for the community, if the school board believes that this is a benefit and all of this fits within the framework, then conceptually he is in support of it.
- Lena Charles:
 - If we are in support of this, we will require due diligence. Chairwoman Charles summarizes the concerns and questions expressed thus far as:
 - The City will own this project, we are one of several funding entities and the City should secure an engineer to oversee the construction and maintenance of the facility.
 - The members would like to see that the City hires a dedicated management person or agency to oversee the day-to-day operations, marketing and booking of the facility to ensure that it is profitable and used to its full capacity.
 - The City shall dedicate funds in its budget so that it can cover the maintenance costs of the facility in the future, once the financial contribution from ODDD has expired. It is important to all of the members that the facility be maintained at the same level it will be maintained for the initial 8 years.
 - ODDD has legal authority to enter into this agreement and contribute these funds.
 - A yes vote says that all of these things are a requirement.
- For Final Consideration
 - Opelousas Downtown Development District contribution of funds for the improvements to Donald Gardner Stadium
 - Rob Hillard: States that he feels it is paramount that we do something progressive with the money that ODDD has as it is the taxpayers' money.

Mr. Hillard feels this is a great step in the right direction, while understanding that this is not the end all to be all but this is a project that will move things forward.

- A motion is made by Rob Hillard to move forward in support of the City of Opelousas and its agreement with Sustainability Partners. The Opelousas Downtown Development District will contribute a maximum of One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000.00) towards to upgrade of the Donald Gardner Stadium facility. This is contingent upon the St. Landry Parish School Board's decision to support this project as well as the City addressing the concerns expressed by the board members. This motion was seconded by Pat Fontenot.
- Chairwoman Charles called for a roll call vote.
 - Lena Charles – yes
 - Ogden Pitre – yes
 - Keith Broussard – refuses to vote
 - Don D'Avy – yes
 - Pat Fontenot – yes
 - Rob Hillard – yes
 - Sarah Branton – yes
- Opelousas Downtown Development District retainment of *project specific* counsel of record
 - Mr. Don D'Avy moves to give Bill Rodier authority to contact legal representation. This motion was seconded by Ogden Pitre. Motion carries without opposition.

There being no further business to come before the board, a motion was made by Pat Fontenot and seconded by Robert Hillard, and unanimously approved that the meeting is adjourned at 12:55 pm.

The next scheduled meeting will be on Friday, April 23, 2021, at 9:00 am at SLED.


Secretary


Chairman