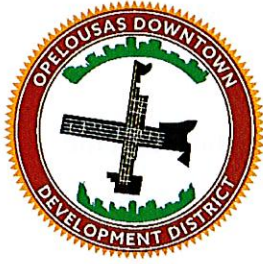


Minutes of March 20th, 2026

ODDD Board Meeting



Board Meeting

Date and Time: March 20, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Place: 5367 I-49 S. Service Road
Opelousas, LA 70570

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Pledge and Opening Prayer
3. Roll Call
4. ODDD Business Recognition Program: Healthy Family Counseling
5. Public Comments – Limit to 3 Minutes
6. Approval of February 20, 2026, Meeting Minutes
7. Monthly Financial Report
 - a) CD Renewal
8. Executive Report
9. **Old Business:**
 - a) Vacant Structures Ordinance Update- Lance Ned
 - b) M&M Associates –ConnecLA/South Park Community Center Update
 - c) Catalyst Committee Update
 - d) South Park Project Update- Chris Rideau and Mayor Julius Alsandor
 - e) Brownfield Coalition Update – Brittany Cretchain
 - f) Community Foundation of Acadiana
10. New Business
 - a) Selection of Official Journal
11. Board Member Comments
12. Adjourn

The following members were present in person: Lena Charles, Don D’Avy, Pat Fontenot, Sarah Branton, Stephen Daste, Rob Hillard

The following members were absent: Ogden Pitre

The following SLED members were present: Brittany Cretchain, Janece Riser, Victoria Mott

Minutes of March 20th, 2026

ODDD Board Meeting

The following guests were present: Grasshopper Mendoza, Julia Darbonne, Marcus Bruno, Herman Fuselier, Steve Picou, Melanie LeBouef

Chairwoman Lena Charles welcomed the board and guests, opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, and prayer at 9:07 AM.

It was determined that a quorum was present.

ODDD Business Recognition Program: Chairwoman Lena recognized Mae Ann's taste of Soul as the ODDD Business of the Month for February 2026.

Public Comments:

Approval of February 20, 2026, Meeting Minutes: Sarah Branton noted that the attendance was not listed. Sarah Branton made a motion to accept the February 20th, 2026, meeting minutes with the necessary corrections. Rob Hillard seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Monthly Financial Report: Janece Riser presented the financial update, including a review of the balance sheet and revenues and expenditures through January. Pat Fontenot made a motion to approve the financial report as presented. Rob Hillard seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

American Bank CD Renewal: Sarah Branton made a motion to authorize Lena Charles and Don D'Avy to renew the CD at American Bank at a rate of 4% or better. Pat Fontenot seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Executive Director Report: Bill Rodier highlighted the successful installation and initial full use of the new audiovisual and microphone system in the meeting room, noting that the upgraded cameras and audio capabilities track speakers and significantly enhance the quality of hybrid meetings. He explained that the technology upgrade was funded through a combination of a state LDED grant and SLED contributions.

Mr. Rodier also presented an opportunity for ODDD representatives to participate in One Acadiana's upcoming leadership exchange trip. He referenced previous exchange visits to cities such as Charleston, Pensacola, Grand Rapids, and Greenville, emphasizing that a common factor in their success was a strong, collaborative focus on downtown development. He outlined details of the proposed 2024 trip to Chattanooga, Tennessee, including the September 18–20 dates, the all-inclusive nature of the private charter package, and the early-bird registration deadline and cost. Mr. Rodier recommended that the Board consider authorizing one or two representatives to attend in order to bring back best

Minutes of March 20th, 2026

ODDD Board Meeting

practices and ideas applicable to downtown Opelousas. Pat Fontenot made a motion to authorize two representatives of ODDD to attend the Leadership Exchange. Rob Hillard seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

OLD BUSINESS

Vacant Structure Ordinance Update: Lance Ned provided an update on enforcement of the vacant structure ordinance within the downtown district. He reported that, year-to-date, the City has collected \$4,500 in registration fees and has recently issued approximately 30 additional registration notices. He further noted that \$40,109 in fines have been assessed to date, and that property owners are demonstrating less resistance as enforcement efforts continue consistently and without negotiation of fines. Mr. Ned indicated that the current total of assessed fines, approximately \$48,000, could potentially double within the next three to four months as enforcement progresses.

Mr. Ned also discussed increased interest from prospective businesses seeking downtown space and agreed to assist by serving as a point of contact and resource for identifying suitable buildings for new commercial tenants within the corridor.

Community Center Update- M&M Associates: Marcus Bruno of M&M Associates reported that the South Park Community Center project is progressing on schedule. He noted that initial reimbursement processes are underway, with two payment requests submitted to and approved by Connect LA and now advancing to the U.S. Treasury for reimbursement to the City of Opelousas.

On the construction side, Mr. Bruno stated that the contractor is scheduled to begin concrete forming the following week and will simultaneously place orders for prefabricated building components. These steps will allow the project architects to finalize their report and maintain the project timeline for completion by the federal deadline of December 31, 2026.

Mr. Bruno further reported that M&M Associates is in active discussions with three potential partner organizations to fulfill the required five years of programming at the facility, with a focus on education, workforce development, and healthcare, in accordance with federal funding requirements.

Catalyst Committee Update: the Board discussed the establishment of a dedicated nonprofit fund through the Community Foundation of Acadiana to support current and future South

Minutes of March 20th, 2026

ODDD Board Meeting

Park-related projects. It was noted that the Foundation requires an initial deposit, and the Pat Fontenot made a motion to authorize the Opelousas Downtown Development District to contribute up to \$10,000 to establish the account upon finalization of the nonprofit structure. Stephen Datse seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

The fund will be administered through the Community Foundation, rather than through City or ODDD operating accounts, and will be overseen by a nonprofit board that includes representation from both ODDD and the City. This structure is intended to provide transparency, ensure appropriate donor recognition, and safeguard funds designated for South Park improvements over the long term.

South Park Project Update: Lena Charles recognized the success of the inaugural track meet at Rodney Milburn Stadium, noting strong participation, smooth operations, and highly positive feedback from professional meet officials, who praised the quality of the facility and its potential to attract regional events. Board members emphasized that external organizers and officials view the stadium as a significant asset for future track and field and youth sports activities, with the potential to generate ongoing economic and community benefits.

Chris Rideau reported that additional events are already scheduled, including a South Louisiana Christian Schools junior high championship meet, parish high school meets, and a full slate of high school football games for the upcoming season, with schedules coordinated among the three local schools. The Board noted that this early utilization validates the investment in South Park and underscores the importance of continued collaboration among ODDD, the City, and school partners.

Brownfield Coalition Update: Lena Charles reported that the City of Opelousas has been designated as the lead community in a multi-jurisdictional brownfield assessment grant administered by the Acadiana Planning Commission, with Abbeville, Eunice, and Ville Platte included in the coalition area. A formal letter from the Mayor has been executed authorizing the Opelousas Downtown Development District to represent the City as lead, ensuring proper documentation and alignment with APC's grant management requirements.

It was noted that the grant will fund environmental assessments of prioritized sites, with the Acadiana Planning Commission responsible for all financial management and required reporting; as such, no brownfield funds will flow through City or ODDD operating accounts.

Minutes of March 20th, 2026

ODDD Board Meeting

Ms. Charles further reported that the Chateau de Maison project is advancing under a separate, later-phase brownfield coalition (Homer coalition), which is anticipated to provide approximately \$300,000 for initial environmental cleanup and DEQ compliance. This funding is expected to reduce the local financial burden and support ongoing downtown revitalization efforts.

Brittany Cretchain informed the Board that she will be attending an upcoming Brownfields Conference in Baton Rouge. She noted that registration for the conference is free due to sponsorships and extended the opportunity to any Board members who may be interested in attending. Don D’Avy made a motion to authorize Brittany to attend this conference at a cost of \$159.78 for lodging. Stephen Daste seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Community Foundation of Acadiana: Brittany Cretchain reported that the Community Foundation of Acadiana has opened its current grant cycle and recently hosted a webinar, which she and Janece Riser attended, to review available funding opportunities and the online application process. She noted that the Foundation is offering several competitive grants with varying maximum award amounts, including two grants of up to \$5,000 and one larger funding opportunity, each with specific eligible uses such as building, interior, and exterior improvements.

Applicants are currently required to submit Letters of Intent prior to full applications, and staff will distribute detailed guidance to the Board. Ms. Cretchain added that this information will also assist ODDD and its partners in strategically positioning future downtown and South Park-related projects for potential Community Foundation support.

New Business:

Selection of Official Journal: As the Eunice News is the only eligible journal option, Sara Branton made a motion to select it as the official journal for ODDD. Pat Fontenot seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Board Member Comments: Sarah Branton proposed the creation of a one-time “Catalyst” building rehabilitation grant, aimed at supporting a single major downtown project, separate from the existing BIG grant program. The proposal would utilize approximately \$67,053.85 in previously allocated but unused BIG grant funds to provide up to \$50,000 toward substantial rehabilitation of a key vacant or underutilized downtown building.

Unlike the standard BIG grant, which is a dollar-for-dollar match up to \$10,000, the Catalyst grant could require a smaller owner match (e.g., \$10,000 or another amount

Minutes of March 20th, 2026

ODDD Board Meeting

determined by the Board) and would prioritize projects where the funding would help push the project to completion and active commercial use.

The Board discussed safeguards to ensure that buildings are returned to productive use, including potential reimbursement structures and timelines to protect ODDD's investment. No formal action was taken at this meeting; Sarah requested feedback on match level, timing, and program criteria prior to drafting a formal proposal.

Adjournment: With no further business to bring before the board, a motion to adjourn was made by Rob Hillard and seconded by Pat Fontenot. The motion carried without objection and the meeting adjourned at 10:40 AM.



Secretary Stephen Daste



Chairperson Lena Charles