

**Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the
French Quarter – Marigny Historic Area Management District**

Monday, January 5, 2009, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Palace Café, 605 Canal Street

New Orleans, LA

Minutes

I. Call to order and Roll Call:

Present: Darryl Berger, Nathan Chapman, Carol Greve, Steve Pettus, Kim Rosenberg, Bret Smith, Sal Sunseri, Lois Sutton, **Absent:** Chris Costello, Dr. Ralph LupinJude Marullo

Guests: Jim Funk, Louisiana Restaurant Association; Billy Guste, Attorney; Bill Langkoff, New Orleans Hotel & Lodging Association; Patrick Thompson, Public Safety Director, DDD; Sidney Torres, SDT; Betsy Kleinfelder, Assistant Director, VCPORA; Wendy Warren, Morris Kahn

Mr. Berger called the meeting to order and welcomed guests. He thanked Ms. deGersdorff and the Ritz Carlton for hosting the December Board meeting and Christmas Party.

II. Minutes of Regular Meeting, December 4, 2008

The Regular Meeting, December 4, 2008, Minutes were unanimously approved on a Motion by Ms. Rosenberg and a second by Ms. deGersdorff.

III. Special Presentation by Sidney Torres, SDT

Mr. Berger introduced Sidney Torres, owner of the waste management company now cleaning the French Quarter, to discuss questions regarding the 2009 city budget and the Mayor's proposal to cut funding for enhanced sanitation services in the French Quarter. Mr. Berger explained that this was the Board's opportunity to get behind advocating for maintaining the current level of service. He also added that he, Jim Funk and Ms. Rosenberg were to meet with Veronica White, Sanitation Director and City Council people later in the day. He suggested that the Board strongly support continued funding.

Mr. Torres reported on his meetings with the Mayor, Brenda Hatfield, and Veronica White in an attempt to learn if the money for the enhanced services was in the budget. The Mayor reported that he had the money but it would go to other departments. The Mayor explained that he was getting less than the 8% quoted by the City Council, contrary to reports from Jackie Clarkson.

Mr. Torres also discussed the view of the Mayor that everyone was not paying their fair share for sanitation services. There is a question as to whether or not buildings with more than four units are contracting for private pick-up as required by law. It seems that the number of these units has been difficult to determine. Another problem has been the difficulty of enforcing the four unit rule. Mr. Torres is now picking up all buildings everyday. He explains that what he is doing is above and beyond what he is required to do according to his contract. The Mayor says that the Quarter is "over cleaned" and if he does get his budget cut, he will continue twice daily pick-up but not pressure washing and street cleaning with brooms and dust pans.

A discussion ensued regarding the best way to determine how many units are being picked up. Nathan reviewed the history of the sanitation contract regarding the French Quarter. The need for a field audit was mentioned. Mr. Torres emphasized that the pick up is not the expense, but the pressure washing and street sweeping is the expense.

Mr. Funk also met with the Mayor and agreed with Mr. Torres assessment of the situation. Dr. Lupin suggested that the property assessment rolls be used to determine the number of units being picked up in the Quarter.

It was reported that the Mayor may feel that he has not gotten sufficient credit for the "Disney like" cleanliness of the Quarter. Accepting that there may be some truth to the Mayor's assertion, the Board decided to give accolades to the Mayor through some formal recognition for his innovation and ongoing commitment to the cleanliness of the Quarter. All agreed that the Quarter has never in its history looked as beautifully clean as it does now. Commissioners wanted to make the Mayor aware of how appreciative they are of the efforts being made by his administration to keep the Quarter looking and smelling its best.

III. Discussion of Funding Options for FZ/M district

Mr. Berger stated that our Board is at a crossroads and must decide what direction shall be taken. Based on the previous discussion, the Commissioners can function as an advocacy group, but also need funding, primarily for safety and security. Mr. Berger is firmly convinced that funding will not come from the state. Mr. Guste crafted a Discussion Draft on potential funding. The Discussion Draft was sent out attached to the current Agenda for today's meeting.

Mr. Guste discussed the process required for us to propose an increase in millage which would probably be possible by late 2009 or early 2010. This millage proposal would be voted on by the residents of the district. A millage appears to be the only realistic source of permanent funding.

It was emphasized that base line services provided by the city must be firmly established prior to adding additional services so as to determine what is provided by the city and what would be provided by the Board through the millage.

Also discussed was the need to fund a staff person dedicated to following the day to day work progress of the program. It was agreed that a major part of the funds would be dedicated to safety and security which is seen as the most pressing need of the District.

Included in the discussion was the practical aspects of presenting a millage increase to the voters of the District since they are the ones who must approve the proposed millage increase.

A motion was made by Ms. Rosenberg and seconded by Mr. Wilson and passed unanimously that the Board continue to have discussions regarding funding and that the Chairman select several people to work on a proposal and report back on various aspects of this issue at the next meeting. It was pointed out by Kim that bills must be advertised thirty days before being introduced. The next legislative session is April 28 to June 2.

It was suggested that Senator Murray be asked to hold a bill for us and that a basic working consensus would be needed within the next sixty days.

IV. Old Business

Ambassador Program

Mr. Patrick Thompson, Public Safety Manager, DDD, went over the specifics of the Ambassador Program in the city business district. He quoted figures regarding the cost of the Ambassador Program and the paid police details funded through the DDD. He also discussed some the problems encountered while working out the successful program that they have today.

Other

Mr. Wilson suggested regular meetings with Major Hosli to keep him updated on our plans.

V. Election of Officers

A motion was made by Kim and seconded by Nathan and passed by a unanimous vote that the current officers will continue until the next meeting.

VI. New Business

The next Special meeting is scheduled for February 2, 2009. Location TBA.

A motion was made to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Greve, Secretary