

**St. Tammany Parish Recreation District #4**  
**Board of Directors ZOOM Conference Meeting**  
(unofficial/draft) Minutes

January 20, 2021

**Present:** Chairman, Al Hamauei; Vice Chairman, Gerrin Narcisse; Wendy Batiste, Shannon Menard, Steve Muller, Antoinette Wright

**Absent:** Lucinda Roberts

**Counsel:** Laurie Pennison   **Staff:** Executive Director, Jordan Johnson; Board Secretary, Sharon DeLong

**Guests:** Chad Danos, Duplantis Design Group Architectural Firm

With the required quorum noted, Chairman Hamauei called the meeting to order at 6:37pm and led those present through the opening prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES**

With no corrections to the minutes, Gerrin Narcisse, seconded by Antoinette Wright, motioned to approve the minutes for the December 16 meeting. All were in favor. Motion passed.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Johnson stated there were no issues on the current financials, but he would like the board to consider creating a surplus fund to be used as emergency/contingency funds. Hamauei recapped by stating the need to know the amount of all expenses prior to moving forward.

**NEW BUSINESS ITEM #2 MOVED UP FOR DISCUSSION**

**Creating John Davis Park as a Cultural Park**

Wendy Batiste, seconded by Antoinette Wright, motioned to move New Business Item 2 up for presentation and discussion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Johnson introduced Chad Danos of DDG Architectural Firm, who specializes in landscape architecture and grant services in Louisiana to help organizations develop parks and green spaces within their community. They had spoken about several RD4 projects, and Danos emailed a proposal for \$30,000 to produce the following:

- Update/revise/change the Richard Lambert 2015 plan with a long-term vision
- Identify new projects/components in the plan, as well as costs associated with implementation
- Develop a strategy to get projects/components funded with assistance in obtaining private sector grants (*e.g., Blue Cross Blue Shield; Louisiana Wildlife Conservation Foundation*).

One caveat is DDG works only through 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations, so prior to engaging with DDG, a nonprofit (*e.g., Friends of John Davis Park*) would have to be established. Hamauei stated his assumption was that RD4 would go through the bidding process. With no further questions, Hamauei thanked Mr. Danos for his presentation, who then exited the meeting.

Hamauei noted Paul Dimitris of RCL Architecture had been asked to bid on a plan revision, and he wanted to honor that opportunity. Johnson noted the proposal was an introduction and example of the scope to work DDG can produce with regard to Native American and Chaqueta Indian culture and influence, as well as providing funding resources. It also provided an option to the RCL proposal. Narcisse recapped that DDG's proposal was for plans and grant writing and recommended obtaining other bids for the same type of service. Muller added his understanding of the DDG proposal included

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master plans, and project funding, and that each project would need a separate set of plans for implementation, which was not included in the proposal. Hamauei stated the need for the current plan to be revised. The Building Committee is to meet and discuss current needs and desires for the park, after which Johnson will contact RCL for a revised plan. Hamauei asked Board members for recommendations of other architectural firms for Johnson to contact as well.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Methodist Church Property**

Johnson detailed his research findings on the property which was in 1950, the school system transacted a quit claim deed for \$25 on the property, then donated the property to the Methodist Church of Baton Rouge. The United Methodist Church South-Central Division's authorized signees are William Drake, President of the Board; and Diane Shelmeyer, volunteer board member of UMCSC. Johnson indicated a representative of UMCSC said it would take some time to get back to him. Johnson reported he told the representative he wanted to be first on the list to contact regarding the vacated property. Johnson stated he hoped for of a duplication of the 1950 transaction. He thanked Shannon Menard for his assistance and information.

**Fountains**

Johnson reported a more professional background and cut-outs are soon to be installed, as well as plumbing needs completed.

**Fundraising**

Johnson reported on a Zoom meeting with Patrick McMath's team on ideas for Hoops of LA, an exhibition game between members of the Louisiana House & Senate, to raise funds to build a basketball courts throughout the state. Johnson's goal is to utilize this resource to build a court in the park.

**Ethics Training**

Johnson reminded the group about the 2021 Ethics training. He will email the link to everyone.

**Drainage Washout**

Johnson stated a drainage washout hole under the sidewalk on N 12<sup>th</sup> & St. Josephs Streets is in need of repair. Cones have been placed to deter foot traffic and avoid liability. Hamauei will take immediate action.

Gerrin Narcisse, seconded by Antoinette Wright, motioned to accept the Director's Report. All were in favor. Motion passed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**2021 Budget**

Johnson stated business was covered in the Financial Report.

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**New Board Member**

Hamauei introduced Shannon Menard as a new board member and thanked him for his willingness to serve. Laurie Pennison was volunteered as a notary on Menard's paperwork from the Parish. Menard will take the Oath of Office at the February meeting. Hamauei also noted no resignation from Lucinda Roberts. Johnson reported in a conversation with Roberts, she indicated in her intention to resign.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Park & Community Events during COVID-19 Phase 2**

Johnson reported calls for utilization of the gym as an event venue had been received. Following LHSAA & CDC guidelines for capacity and ticketing, basketball games have been permitted. Pennison emailed the policy draft for contract tracing which states all CDC guidelines are followed. Pennison added that increased traffic to the gym imposes increased disinfection requirements before and after each event, as well as requiring event sponsors to sign off on social distancing and other requirements. Further burdening the staff, in the event someone is exposed, contract tracing will be labor intensive. Hamauei, Batiste, and Wright voiced their individual opposition to allowing public use of the gym. After members shared personal COVID-centered accounts and events, it was the consensus of the board to remain in Phase 2 with regard to use of the gym.

Johnson reminded the board of the Blood Center event slated for Jan 23 and had been advertised for the past month. DeLong suggested a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be drafted and signed by the Blood Center. Pennison will draft the document, including indemnification from liability, to be executed prior to Jan 23. Antoinette Wright, seconded by Steve Muller, motioned to allow the Blood Center to utilize the facility with a signed MOU. Narcisse questioned the difference between a basketball game and a small event, such as the Blood Center event. After discussion, the motion stood. *Narcisse abstained from the vote.* All other members were in favor. Motion passed.

Further, the fence located at the back of the park has been damaged again. With prices fluctuating, Johnson received a quote of \$3800 to \$4800 to make necessary repairs. The fence is not covered on the current property insurance policy. Prevention methods of barriers and cameras were suggested. Batiste will review policy to ensure 'other structures' was not covered in the insurance policy.

**Rec Desk Website Alternative**

Johnson gave a history of the current website and associated transaction and credit card fees. Additionally, customer service is in need of improvement. Research on alternatives is on-going, so no decision was made. Johnson stated Rec Desk was the best shopped solution so far.

**OPEN THE AGENDA TO INCLUDE LIBRARY UPDATE**

Gerrin Narcisse, seconded by Steve Muller, motioned to open the agenda to include an update on the Library. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Hamauei stated the Parish is spending \$4600 for the set-up process for mold remediation, which will be a slow process. Muller and Hamauei to speak with Jimmy @ the Parish later in the week.

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**OPEN THE AGENDA TO INCLUDE LAPORTE LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT**

Antoinette Wright, seconded by Wendy Batiste, motioned to open the agenda to include the Letter of Engagement from LaPorte CPAs, as well as the Board resolution for the engagement. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Hamauei read the resolution for Attestation and Engagement Letter from LaPorte CPAs. Antoinette Wright, seconded by Steve Muller, motioned to accept the resolution. The vote was as follows: Hamauei-YES; Narcisse-YES; Wright-YES; Batiste-YES; Muller-YES; Roberts-ABSENT. Motion passed.

**COVID Policy**

Pennison emailed a COVID policy that states monitoring and reporting of situations as they happen. Antoinette Wright, seconded Wendy Batiste, motioned to approve the policy. All were in favor. Motion passed.

**OPEN THE AGENDA TO INCLUDE KELLER FIELD UPDATE**

Steve Muller, seconded by Wendy Batiste, motioned to open the agenda to include the Keller Field update. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Muller stated Drake will have drawings ready next week. He will send to all members in an email, which will include Shannon Menard.

Johnson asked Hamauei to review the committee lists/volunteers. Hamauei to update by the February meeting.

Other Board notes: Sherry Marrero and Sharon DeLong are to work together on the next agenda; DeLong to resume responsibility of creating the agenda going forward.

Johnson to call a Special Called Meeting for 2021 Budget Review.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Sharon DeLong.*