

Notes from May, 2020 meeting over the internet via Zoom

Notes posted in June 1, 2020 FSJNA newsletter

Notes from May 5, 2020, 7pm, FSJNA Zoom Call

Board Members Present: Beaux Jones, George Bartlett, Jim Danner, Linda Landesberg, Brenda London, Sally Main, Rocky Seydel, Clark Thompson, JoanEllen Young, Antoine Pedeaux, Jeanie Donovan, Jenny Carey

Not Present: Bruce Hamilton, Andy Ryan, Aimee Kramer, Nancy Shepard,

1. **Call to Order (Beaux) 7pm**
2. **Opening Remarks (Beaux)**

- This is our second virtual meeting
- Appreciate everyone staying communicative and flexible
- A lot that's happened in last 24 hours that we need to talk about

1. Guests/Current Topics

Joe Giarrusso

- Not addressing Fortier Park and Moss St because will discuss later on agenda
- Council had a 2 hour long city budget discussion today, started to get initial information from administration about city's finances
 - There are some pieces the council wants to drill down on a little bit, and how money has been saved.
 - City has saved \$17M in personnel costs, city has exceeded its property tax collections expected
 - City has asked to draw down \$100M line of credit, city council wants to make sure money is well spent
- S&WB - quarterly and annual report was due May 1 to City Council but instead of asking them to produce all of that info asked for 12 questions, with 4 main topics:
 - Hurricane preparedness
 - Status of Employees
 - Finances
 - Covid response
 - Expect to go through that report at May 27 meeting, if S&WB doesn't make the report public, city council was
- Feel free to continue to ask about quality of life issues

Captain Lejon Roberts; 1st District

- back at full manpower in the district, everyone is back at work and in good spirits

- Crime
 - Violent crime down significantly
 - Calls for service have dwindled
 - Calls on the rise due to social distancing issues
 - Preparing for Mother's Day weekend for social distancing; and have been expressing to everyone the mayor's proclamation over the PA system
 - Don't leave weapons in the vehicle, have lost 16 guns in cars YTD
 - Made an apprehension on juveniles breaking into cars
 - Still dealing with property crimes, but auto burglaries and auto break ins are down almost 100 compared to last year at this time; have some new strategies involved
- Don't hesitate to reach out about gatherings, call 311 directly
- Email: LRoberts@nola.gov; 504-658-8604

Rep. Willard

- Resumed legislative session on Monday
- Legislators were only supposed to be hearing essential bills; interpretation of "essential" not clear
- There is a proposal to reduce the severance tax on Oil and Gas, equating to a \$150M shortfall in state budget in 5 years, would remove funding from our local governing entities; he has a problem with that
- He received an amended version of the capital outlay bill, many projects have been removed or pushed off and delayed
- He will be working with Jason Hughes to make sure New Orleans gets as much as it can, despite budget reductions expected
- Has a lot of updates on his social media for information

Q: Republicans want to get rid of the state of emergency order?

A: Some do, if you get a majority of members on both sides, they proposed a concurrent resolution, essentially a bill, it would remove the Governor's emergency declaration powers for 15 days, scheduled to be heard, the chair of the Republican House Caucus, it's still a big possibility that it can happen. They have the numbers.

Q: Can you discuss your paid sick leave bill?

A: Willard has authored that bill, in light of the pandemic, it's especially critical right now, that bill is scheduled to be heard in Labor and Industrial Committee on Thursday, companies with 20+ employees would offer 1 hours for every 30 hours work, companies with fewer than 20 employees would offer unpaid sick days.

His email address: hse097@legis.la.gov, cell 504-554-5555, any questions feel free to reach out.

Stephen Mosgrove, Mayor's Office

- Please don't be shy about reporting quality of life issues to Mayor's office and your neighborhood engagement officer (him)
- Moss street
 - Public Works, NO Health Department, and the Mayor's Office of Public Transportation have come up with a plan to make it more safe to be on the bayou by increasing the space that people have to use the bayou so they can social distance better.

- Temporary traffic modification through May 18 - the city will layout barriers, barricades and signage to limit traffic on Moss between Esplanade except for local traffic and deliveries and emergency vehicles.
- The goal is to make the space more friendly to those using the bayou; they are doing it on the downtown side only, because that space is more limited
- Budget
 - Mayor's priority is public health; so we can have a stronger recovery
 - Mayor indicated that of this year's \$725 million budget, \$218M has been spent.
 - Analysis on budget in preliminary, directors have provided some cost cutting measures and they're looking at a \$35-50M in budget reductions to address lack of revenue that city is facing.
 - This analysis assumes that there's no federal support, because the federal CARES act provided the state some dollars, but didn't provide the city a direct allotment because the city has less than 500,000 population.
 - More homework to be done to see what will need to be cut

Moss Street

- Beaux:
 - DPW called him today and it's his understanding that this is part of COVID response; street closures have been seen in several other cities.
 - The plan is similar to what was talked about for Jazz Fest, but this is not an actual street closure; there will be plastic bollards that will not be manned, volunteers will be checking on them and in communication with DPW, will be signage to discourage through traffic.
 - When he talked to DPW, asked whether it was a potential permanent feature, they said it will term out in 14 days on May 15
 - If the city wants to take a step long-term, we would expect that there will be a robust public process taking lessons learned from Marconi and looking at the process that we did with Purple Way.
- Joe Giarusso
 - When there are matters involving a road diet, there needs to be something akin to a zoning process to make decisions long term.
 - Sensitivity to that fact that people don't like change, don't like something being foisted on them.
 - Have asked the police for people who are concerned about social distancing on the bayou, to get the total 311, 911 and other calls come in to see to get some data to see if the diminished traffic helped
- Questions:
 - Stephanie on Moss: We've seen the crowds that have gathered in response to the Lakefront being closed down. It doesn't make sense to me to close East Moss because there are hardly any people there. It's on West Moss where there are tons of people. Police cruisers come through from time to time, but it's usually during the day during the week when few people are there. Also, concerned about people swimming the bayou. If parking is not allowed on West Moss, that might make a difference but it doesn't make any sense on the other side.

- Answer: Stephen Mosgrove - It's understandable that there's more activity on the other side because there's more of an embankment. For those who use the other side where there's less space, including a number of people who bike on the trail and on the street, it allows a little more safety. City will absolutely have community meetings if we consider a longer term change. It's temporary, doesn't include lane dieting, not meant to be a test case for lane diets. Has heard a concern from another neighborhood that the city is looking to lane diet - he is not aware of such a plan. If there are issues, please email roadwork@nola.gov
- Question: Beaux - We confirm that there's no lane direction change?
- Answer: Stephen M - No it will not be one way in a certain direction, it will just be limited traffic.
- Question from Beaux - Is the intent to allow those who are there to socially distance?
- Answer: Stephen - Yes.
- Beaux will forward the chat to Stephen and DPW; feel free to send Beaux an email to share issues - **president@fsjna.org**
- Question: Capt Roberts - what time are they setting up?
- Answer: Stephen M- Weather permitting; likely sometime in the morning. When they do set up, Capt. Roberts can send units over to support

1. Board Business

- Linda was able to get some N95 masks for NOPD, Linda has made a motion to approve \$678 dollars out of the discretionary budget. Linda motions to approve, second from George Bartlett. Motion passes with no opposition.
- March minutes - no comments or opposition. Linda motions to approve the March minutes, seconded by Sally Main. Motion passes with no opposition.
- 3101 Esplanade (Beaux)
 - The former Circle K, former Half Shell, that property is now under contract for purchase.
 - When the Half Shell was attempting to open, it was under a prior zoning ordinance which required a Conditional Use Agreement and a Good Neighbor Agreement, which we executed and set up provisions about the sale of alcohol.
 - That good neighbor agreement was with the lessee, but they made the agreement continue with the property even though it never was signed by the property owner, but it's still on the books, and in order to close on the property, the buyer would like to execute a cancellation agreement.
 - The good thing, in getting the CUA for 3101, the provisos remain in place, not only do they remain in place, but there is a new zoning overlay that governs how the property can be used. Beaux will circulate the null and void Good Neighbor Agreement
- Fortier Park (Beaux)
 - It's been fenced off - how did this happen?
 - At the last meeting we discussed with Capt. Roberts, he was having a police unit go by every shift to break up social distancing particularly among a group of folks that frequent the park during the day and have been causing a lot of problems, with fighting, weapons, etc..

- Beaux suggested to Parks and Parkway that the park be closed, so P&P put up some tape, but it lasted about 7 hours.
- Andy went out and secured the metal fencing and received \$500 in donations for it.
- FSJNA did a motion via email to use \$1500 of the Fortier Park fund, which would be a loan, with 2 sources of potential funding: donations flowing in and FEMA or city funding.
- That's how the fence got put there. We contracted to get the fence, but Parks and Parkway has ordered the park closed. Don't have a date on when it will report, but imagine that we will reassess when stay at home order is lifted.
- This has raised another question about banning alcohol in the park.

- Discussion:
 - Vey - I live directly across from the park; not sure an alcohol ban will solve the issue. If police are actually coming by as often as they say, they are dispersing the people causing trouble in the park. I think the only people that follow the new proposal are the surrounding neighbors, as an aside I know they're very frustrated with the fences and as soon as the fences come down they're going to throw a party and we'll never get them to leave. We should look at other parks that don't have this problem and see what they're doing. Don't think an alcohol ban will impact the people that we're attempting to impact.
 - Joe G- I have heard all ends of the spectrum on alcohol ban. Some folks have talked about having a permit to have alcohol out there. The parks location and size make it different from other parks. I also think that when you're home you're going to notice it a lot more. It's not a new issue, stay at home has made it more of a catalyst.
 - Beaux - my suggestion is set up a committee to take advantage of the closure of the park and figure out how to fix the issue in the meantime. If you're interested in helping to figure out a solution, send Beaux an email, we have two weeks to gather ideas and vet them.
- FSJNA budget (Beaux)
 - We don't know if Boogaloo is going to happen. Typically FSJNA earns in \$6-10K from daiquiri stand. We're considering applying for a loan to replace those funds.
 - If we zero out anticipated Boogaloo funds, we would be running at \$2,500 deficit.

1. Next Meeting - Tuesday, June 2, 2020
2. Motion to Adjourn - 8:01pm; Motion made by Brenda London, 2nd by Linda Landesberg, passes with no opposition.