



MINUTES

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Board of Directors Meeting

December 7, 2022

Members Present

Inga Arvin
Oliver Barber
Terri Connolly
Kevin Fields
Mayor Greg Fischer
David James
Chris Jones
Troy Miles
Ted Nixon
Joshua Watkins
Gerina Whethers

Members Absent

Marianne Butler
Susan Moss
Kerry Stemler
Purna Veer

Others Present

Paul Toenjes

Staff Present

Deborah Bilitski
Emily Clayton
Ryan Johnson
David Karem
Alex Laughlin
Cordell Lawrence
Brian McKiernan
Catie Nelson
Kelley Runyon
Ashley Smith
Krista Snider

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Chris Jones at 4:03 p.m. on December 7, 2022. The meeting was held at Waterfront Development Corporation, 129 River Road, Louisville, Kentucky.

Approval of the Minutes

Minutes for the October 26, 2022 meeting were approved.

Executive Director's Report:

Deborah Bilitski thanked the staff and board for another successful year and mentioned it being the Mayor's last board meeting and appreciation for his involvement and engagement with Waterfront Park.

Deborah also discussed Victor Lovato's recent stroke, a former Maintenance staff member with Waterfront Park. David Karem spoke on Victor's previous involvement as one of the first maintenance staff members. Oliver Barber mentioned that he had spoken to Victor earlier that day and he had well wishes for the staff and board.

Ted Nixon's Business First op-ed about Phase IV was recently published and Deborah shared a copy with each board member.

Deborah also discussed the recent publication of the 2023 State Legislation Agenda and how Phase IV was mentioned twice. State funding was eliminated in 2014, Deborah and team have worked to get funding reinstated.

Capital Improvement Plan

Paul Toenjes with SWT Design, presented the Capital Improvement Plan. The Plan came from an 8-month review of the park including capital projects on the horizon and assessing needs for replacement and future liabilities. The assessment brought on the digitization of our inventory. The project also provided insight into the need to develop an endowment for future capital improvements and full replacement costs. Our current endowment covers about 1/10 of the need. Waterfront Park is already addressing immediate needs all while raising funds for the Phase IV expansion.

Paul recommends staff to conduct collective assessments and evaluate the need for replacement or innovation throughout the first three phases of the park. The presentation will be shared with the board.

Phase IV Update

Ted Nixon gave an update on Phase IV after mentioning progress on the opening of the K&I Bridge and his work with Kent Lannum on the project. This bridge is a major connector and involves the park.

The Phase IV committee is moving forward with strategies to raise the final \$24 million. Deborah and team are researching and working on a federal grant opportunity, Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program which will be submitted to the Department of Local Government in the spring.

This past week, Deborah submitted a \$200,000 request for ARPA funds to support PlayPort educational signage and accompanying educational videos.

Phase IV – PlayPort commencement of construction is slightly delayed due to the relocation out from under the interstate.

Happy Birthday Circle MOU

The board reviewed the current MOU between the Happy Birthday Park and WDC. WDC will own operations and revenue accrued at the Happy Birthday Circle. The Happy Birthday board is responsible for development and fundraising which includes a budget of \$3-5 million.

Board Secretary, Kevin Fields motioned for approval of the Happy Birthday Park MOU, which was seconded by Terri Connolly and the board voted unanimously to approve the agreement.

Belle of Louisville Riverboats

Krista Snider gave an update for the Belle of Louisville Riverboats; notes are attached to these minutes.

Development/ Fundraising

Ashley Smith gave an update on development and fundraising. We have sent out roughly 800+ End of Year letters to donors and prospects and have already started receiving year-end donations and pledge payments as a result. Ashley reminded the board of the ongoing Board Member Challenge Grant of \$25,000; we still have \$15,600 to raise by June 30, 2023.

Events

Catie Nelson gave an update on events from 2022, which totaled about 350 programming activities/events in the park. Forecastle will not return in 2023. Christmas Tree Lane has returned this year and the vendor still has trees available. The Mayor-elect will receive a request to support the July Fourth event. This year's July Fourth event will be presented in partnership with the Louisville Orchestra.

Park Maintenance

Alex Laughlin gave an update on park maintenance. The team is wrapping up their improvements to the Flock of Finns area and restroom renovations.

Friends of the Waterfront

Joshua Watkins gave an update for Friends of Waterfront Park, reflection of 2022. The Friends of Waterfront Park board welcomed new members this year, bringing the board to 17 members. The Hot Brown Showdown event netted about \$30,000 in its first year. Josh has urged the FOW board to make an annual contribution to support the park.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Belle of Louisville Report:

CRUISES

- In July, August & September 2022, we had the best public ticket revenue on the Belle and best bar and concession income overall of the past 10 years, as well as the 3rd highest gross profit of the past decade!
- Total attendance was 30% higher in the 2022 season than the 2019 season: 66,866 compared to 51,457
- Hosted 338 public cruises
- Hosted 252 groups & conducted 58 charter cruises (additional)

VESSELS

- Upgraded our onboard point-of-sale system for concession, bar and souvenirs on both the Belle & Mary, as well as concession equipment on the Belle
- Painted and re-covered 377 chairs for the Belle's ballroom
- Made improvements to the Belle's stage lighting and sound system

EDUCATION & PROGRAMS

- Developed and hosted a new fieldtrip program, "Black Life on the Ohio," that was very well received by teachers and students. First time we've had standards-based content.
- Premiered "Dream within a Dream," an Edgar Allan Poe theatrical experience, onboard the Belle
- Developed and hosted a new "Ghost Cruise" experience, complete with ghost effects and live actors
- Launched a new volunteer program! Volunteer opportunities include greeter, onboard assistant, floral assistant, docent
 - o 62 people attended volunteer training
 - o 50 volunteers worked at least one shift (81%)
 - o 284 total services out of 598 total slots (47%)
 - o \$25,517.40 worth of service (\$29.95/hour)
 - o 11 Volunteers worked 10 or more shifts

MISC.

- Added a new mural by Often Seen Rarely Spoken to the wharf area—art is inspired by the Belle