



MINUTES

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Board of Directors Meeting

August 23, 2023

Members Present

Inga Arvin
Oliver Barber - Virtual
Marianne Butler - Virtual
Terri Connolly - Virtual
Kevin Fields
Chris Jones
Troy Miles
Susan Moss
Kerry Stemler
Kevin Trager – Mayor’s Designee
President Markus Winkler - Virtual

Members Absent

Ted Nixon
Purna Veer
Joshua Watkins

Staff Present

Deborah Bilitski
Cordell Lawrence
Catie Nelson
Gary Pepper
Kelley Runyon
Ashley Smith
Krista Snider
Alex Vega

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Jones at 4:00 p.m. on August 23, 2023. The meeting was held at Waterfront Development Corporation, 129 River Road, Louisville, Kentucky.

Approval of the Minutes

Minutes for the June 28, 2023 meeting were approved.

Chris Jones reminded the Board that Pig Beach BBQ is opening next week. They will be a great addition and partner to the park.

Closed Session

At 4:05pm the Board entered a closed session pursuant to KRS 61.810(f). Having taken no action during the session, the Board reentered open session at 4:39pm.

In open session, the Board of Directors voted to extend Deborah Bilitski's employment contract for three years.

Executive Director's Report:

Deborah announced two full-time maintenance employees, Nick May who started in July and William Thompson who began August 1. She also told the Board that Board Member Ollie Barber's family celebrated his 80th birthday and 30 years of service to Waterfront Park with a plaque and swing dedication.

The soft opening for Pig Beach BBQ is this upcoming weekend, August 27 – 29 with a grand opening with a ribbon cutting on August 31.

GLI requested Deborah attend the GLIDE trip to Boston, which will be a great opportunity for Waterfront Park to have an audience with local business executives.

Ted Nixon and Deborah recorded an interview with KET's Inside Louisville program to discuss Waterfront Park and the Phase IV expansion.

FY24-FY25 Summary of Objectives and Strategies

The summary document is attached to these minutes.

Financials

Cordell Lawrence provided a review and highlights of the FYE 2023 financials. He also presented a summary of the FY2024 operating budget.

Park Maintenance

Gary Pepper mentioned we are fortunate to have hired two new maintenance staff members. The crew has been understaffed for several years and the addition of these two employees will allow the crew to improve the level of park maintenance detail.

Waterfront Park Foundation Annual Distribution Request

Gary presented the Waterfront Park Foundation annual distribution request to the Board. This request of \$335,000 is the largest to date to fund park and landscaping improvements, new equipment, and electrical updates. The projects are managed in-house with using mostly staff labor. The Waterfront Park Foundation Board has approved the distribution and the WDC Board needs a vote to accept the funds. The Board voted unanimously to accept the distribution.

Events

Catie Nelson gave an update on events in Waterfront Park since the June Board meetings, as well as highlighted upcoming events such as the Pitbull concert and Big Four Arts Festival.

Development/ Fundraising

Ashley Smith presented an update on the FY2024 fundraising plan. She also talked to the Board about the Give for Good campaign coming up in September.

Phase IV Update

Construction for Phase IV is underway. Waterfront Park received a grant from the PNC Foundation to use for educational signage at PlayPort.

Belle of Louisville Riverboats

Krista Snider gave an update for Belle of Louisville Riverboats. Updates to the Belle of Louisville include the addition of a fully functioning bar on the Texas Deck and additional sales staff will start in September, along with some organizational structure changes. Highlights from fiscal year 2023 are that gross profit came in 5% over budget. There was also an 8% increase in passengers over 2022. Plans for 2024 include the Belle's 110th anniversary, interior redesign of the Mary M. Miller, and expanded educational and fundraising initiatives.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Waterfront Park

FY24-FY25 Summary of Objectives and Strategies

Objective: Financial Stability

Continue building a sustainable funding model with diversified revenue streams to increase organizational resilience.

- Pursue reinstatement of State operating funding and increased Metro operating funding.
- Expand events and programming to connect with the community and generate income to support park operations.
- Explore creative alternative government funding sources and opportunities.
- Explore adding new park amenities and attractions (temporary and permanent) that enhance visitor experience and increase earned revenue.
- Increase donor base, sponsorships, and partnerships with local businesses and nonprofit organizations to support park operations;
- Consider creating a signature fundraising event.
- Maximize earning potential of real estate holdings.
- Continue building the Waterfront Park Foundation corpus through conservative spending, strategic investments, and additional capital contributions; require all new park infrastructure and facilities to include endowment funding for long term maintenance.

Objective: Public Awareness/Support

Continue to raise public awareness and understanding of funding realities and develop broad-based public support for Waterfront Park.

- Develop an understanding and appreciation for the value of Waterfront Park in the minds of the community and public officials.
- Use communications and marketing to educate/inform the public of the critical need for donor support.
- Expand volunteer opportunities to increase public awareness/engagement and build a strong sense of community ownership and stewardship of the park.
- Engage and build relationships with west end businesses, organizations, and residents, particularly those in closest proximity to Waterfront Park Phase IV.
- Connect with and become more of an amenity for downtown businesses and residents.



Objective: Park Ops and Maintenance

Continue to present an exceptional image of Waterfront Park by providing clean, safe, well-maintained facilities and engaging events and programming to ensure it remains welcoming and accessible to everyone.

- Fill vacant maintenance crew positions and add new crew positions as funding allows to meet park maintenance needs and increase capacity for Phase IV.
- Expand administrative staff as funding allows to build organizational capacity and expertise in all strategic focus areas.
- Consistently cross-train employees to build organizational efficiency and resilience.
- Engage in succession planning with senior level employees to ensure expertise and institutional knowledge are not lost through retirements.
- Encourage training and professional development opportunities, particularly in key strategic focus areas.
- Continue working with community organizations, contractors, and vendors to promote and expand MWDBE participation in park construction and operations.

Objective: Park Expansion

- Complete first phase of construction of Waterfront Park Phase IV (PlayPort) and continue fundraising for future phases.
- Engage the community throughout all phases of design, development, and operation of Phase IV.