Waterfront Park

MINUTES

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Board of Directors Meeting

June 3, 2026

Members Present

Chris Jones, Chair
Susan Moss, Vice Chair
Inga Arvin (Virtual)
Ollie Barber (Virtual)
Terri Connolly
Councilman Ken Herndon (Virtual)
Lt. Col. Brian Meurer
Ted Nixon

Members Absent

Secretary Lindy Casebier
Kevin Fields, Secretary
Kris Kiser
Troy Miles
Pat Miller
Kerry Stemler, Treasurer
Purna Veer

Staff Present

Deborah Bilitski
Alex Laughlin
Cordell Lawrence
Catie Nelson
Kelley Runyon
Barabara Sexton-Smith
Alex Vega

Others Present

John Campbell
Andy Watson

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Jones at 4:06 p.m. on June 3, 2026. The meeting was held at Waterfront Development Corporation, 129 River Road, Louisville, Kentucky.

Approval of the Minutes

Minutes from the April 1, 2026, meeting were approved.

WRO Review

Kelley Runyon reviewed with the Board a Waterfront Review Overlay (WRO) request governed by LMCO 162.40 – 162.48. The WRO is regarding new construction for an office/warehouse building at 2610 River Green Circle. Kelley presented renderings of the building and aerial views of the development, including building dimensions and proposed landscaping for the surrounding area. Parking is included in development as a part of the functional requirements criteria including existing parking in the area.

Kelley's recommendation is to approve the WRO permit to allow construction. Additionally, the applicant must apply for a WRO permit for signage once a tenant is secured (per staff review).

Motion was made by Board member Ted Nixon, seconded by Board member Susan Moss to approve the WRO.

Executive Director's Report:

Deborah Bilitski gave the following updates:

- Deborah congratulated Inga Arvin on the opening of the Inside Scoop ice cream parlor in the Portland neighborhood.
- The newly implemented LMPD Summer Task Force was discussed, which covers Waterfront Park along with a few other areas in the city. Catie Nelson noted a large presence of LMPD Officers at the May Waterfront Wednesday due to the task force.
- The Rehlko Guiness World Record achievement on May 16th was discussed, demonstrating how our partnership with the TurfMutt Foundation and Equip Expo continues to elevate the park.
- Deborah welcomed Barbara Sexton-Smith as the Interim CEO of the Belle of Louisville Riverboats. Barbara gave a brief introduction of herself and shared her excitement for joining the Belle of Louisville team. Chris Jones praised and thanked the former Belle of Louisville CEO, Krista Snider.

Financials

Cordell Lawrence presented the financials for projections for FY2026 and explained variances on the income statement and balance sheet. Current projections show net income at $81,580 with more accurate numbers as the FY ends. Deborah mentioned that the budget request Waterfront submitted to Louisville Metro is currently under review by Metro Council. Mayor Greenberg also contributed Waterfront additional funding for the America 250 Fourth of July event.

Events

Catie Nelson reported that the 2026 Kentucky Derby Festival was a success and enjoyed hosting Waterfront's Great Steamboat Race Party. Waterfront Wednesday has started and has been good, even after having to push the May concert to Thursday. Catie invited all Board members to Friends of the Waterfront's event, Sailing Into Summer, a benefit concert for the park.

A new event is coming to the park, the Cuba Mia Festival June 13th. Pride Festival will also be moving from the Big Four Lawn to the South TurfMutt Great Lawn on June 20th. Ted Nixon asked about the cruise ships that dock on the Wharf with Deborah stating we are in negotiations with American Cruise Lines for five-year contract. Susan Moss mentioned the Cinabus movies at the Brown Forman Amphitheater and how nice the event LDP produces.

Development/ Fundraising

Deborah reported on development and fundraising, stating that we are in the Community Foundation's annual report, giving great exposure that Waterfront is a donor-supported park. Give for Good will be on September 10th this year. Invitations for the hospitality tent for the Fourth of July event will be coming soon. Recent talks with a large donor about naming opportunities are occurring including multiple projects and areas.

Park Maintenance

Alex Laughlin reported that the park maintenance crew is in their busy season with events ongoing and the increase of park usage. Alex discussed he will be working on the 2026 Foundation request list and getting quotes for projects. We need to hire some additional maintenance staff members; Board members were asked to reach out to him if they have any leads. Alex mentioned that in the coming year the hillside to the west of the Big Four Bridge ramp will be covered in wildflowers after properly removing all invasive plant life.

Phase IV Update

Deborah Bilitski reported that Waterfront has finalized the subrecipient agreement with DLG for the $10 million ORLP grant. Ted Nixon and Deborah are still working on the land acquisition deal with Norfolk Southern. Waterfront is also working on an RFQ for a construction management company for the next subphase of development.

Friends of the Waterfront

Lt. Col. Brian Meurer reported that Friends is excited for the return of Sailing Into Summer on Friday June 5th. He also mentioned that merch sales are progressing smoothly.

Closed Session

At 5:11 p.m., a motion was made by Board member Lt. Col. Brian Meurer and seconded by Terri Connolly to enter closed session pursuant to KRS 61.810(b) and KRS 61.810(c) to discuss a prospective real estate transaction and pending litigation. The motion passed unanimously. The Board reentered open session at 5:19 p.m. and Chair Jones announced that no action was taken during the closed session.

Other Business

Deborah presented a one-page summary about PlayPort and the impact the space has had on the community in its first year of operation. She mentioned that more events can be hosted at Waterfront with the newly developed playground and event space building. Terri Connolly asked about the addition of added sail shades in the area, Deborah stating they are forthcoming and we will also be adding more cooling water misters to the playground.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:22 p.m.