

**New Orleans Municipal Yacht Harbor Management Corporation
Economic Development Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 20, 2022 6:00 PM
New Orleans Yacht Club
403 North Roadway Street
New Orleans, LA 70124**

PRELIMINARIES

1. Meeting Called to Order 6:00 PM by Mr. McConnell

Attendance was taken by Timothy McConnell. Board Members Present:

Tim McConnell

Christopher Hammond

Mark Heck

Roger Watkins

Jessica Addison

ACTION ITEMS

1. To Discuss the Future Development of the West Parking Lot / Old Restaurant Site of the West End Area; and Receive Community /Input for the Development of the Site Including the Request for Qualifications and Request for Proposals.

Tim McConnell: There has been no official advertisement or RFQ published. There is an RFQ that is starting to develop. RFQ determines who is qualified to do a proposal. This institution/board has no money to develop something of that magnitude. Anything that happens; whether a park or something else, it will require someone to come in with a substantial amount of money for the investment.

Board Comment by J. Addison: I talked to Kerry Cuccia last time after the Board meeting and one thing I thought about of how to incorporate the residents' concerns. It is my understanding that it is going out for a developer design through construction. I am hoping that I'm wrong. My idea was that we separate it and put it for design for a local engineer, a local architect, a local urban planner with X number of years of work here in the city with a requirement for a resident needs incorporation period so that we could get all of the concerns addressed while it's being designed. It should not be by the person standing to make millions of dollars off of it but by the people that live here and work here. The reason that I came up with this concept is because as a Civil Engineer here in the city, our design process is specifically require that. When we design projects in the city, we have community meetings for years leading up to projects incorporating

designers, asks, putting different scenarios in and running all of that by the residents of the community before it's fully designed. By the time we get to the end of the design, the designers have incorporated as much of that as possible. The hard part of doing that is that you're not going to have the developer's money or you're going to have to get an approval from the developer's funding to fund that design process. With that, there's quite a bit of benefit that I think would address many concerns. I think that's something we could talk about that might really make a difference.

Board comment by M. Heck:

I think we need to be careful. In public work, there are design meetings where you'd meet with the community. There's a requirement that if your project is over a certain size, you need community input. What entity is going to pay for that design process without knowing if they have the ability to develop the project? If you don't put out an RFP for a developer who knows he's going to control the property, he's not going to put forth any funding to go through that design process. Additionally, if you tell this developer, "you can have this property but you have to wait four years while we run the process..." You're not going to have very many people interested and the people who are interested, are not going to be very good developers. We should be careful about coming up with ideas and promises or concepts that are new in private development, which this would fall under. I don't know the legal route or how we would achieve that.

J. Addison: I have been involved in many design-build contracts and typically you might have the contractor as well as the designer come together to complete the design process. I am interested in see what that options entails. I don't want to rule it out without taking a closer look.

M. Heck: That process costs a lot of money. Who's going to pay for it?

T. McConnell: The developers would need to fund the design project?

J. Addison: They usually do because they are designing it themselves.

T. McConnell: Are you saying we would have to select the developer and then tell them to fund the design process as opposed to being able to have a whole bunch of people put in to be developers and pick the one we think is best?

J. Addison: No. This would be a part of the process. If we go with our RFPs and we get our developers in, we can say "this is the process you're bidding on". There is a design process that we want you as a developer to work with. The developer can certainly partner with other companies here. There can be joint ventures. That could be the process that multiple developers bid on so they know going in, they are going to pay for the design. We're only saying, "this is how we want the design process to work".

M. Heck: Agreed. At first, I thought you wanted the design process to come before the developer was with the project. That's fine. The developer just needs to know that the design is in their control. I thought you were saying as an entity, hire a design firm, have them design something and then have developers say "yes, I want to develop that vision". I just want to clearly state that it's not realistic. But, putting a process in place that says you have to have a certain number of community meetings, follow these protocols as part of your design process – is something that is not uncommon. We can outline a roadmap of the design process and require certain things.

J. Addison: I am understanding that we are going to put this RFP out and the City is not paying for it at all.

T. McConnell: We're going to do an RFQ first – people who's qualified to develop. They'll get selected (everyone who's qualified, not one individual). Then they will put in their proposal – an idea they think they can raise the funding for to be able to complete the development. This is just my understanding of the process. I am not on the City Council or Jefferson Parish Council. The City is not paying for any of this.

J. Addison: We're putting out a project saying we have no money. Who wants to pay to build this and make money off of it.

M. Heck: They are signing a 99-year ground lease.

K. Amacker: Will this be like the Six Flags development where different groups of people say “this is what we want to do with this park” and they would develop their proposal?

J. Addison: Yes.

M. Heck: With that, they will put together a preliminary package that would show people intent. Part of the RFP process, there would be feedback at that point to react to actual drawings that they have paid someone to produce. To Jessica's point, the City is not going to finance the project. The developer brings their own financing to the table and they control the design process. We can put in milestones they need to present and have community input. They will also finance the construction of it.

J. Addison: We could also put in requirements for local architects and engineers to be apart of it, yes?

T. McConnell: If agreed upon, that local hiring and DBE requirements would be done in the RFQ process.

J. Addison: Whoever responds to that RFQ, that is who we must choose from for the RFP. I don't think it's an impossible ask to have local architects and local presence be a part of the project.

M. Heck: I support local partnerships, but we must talk to City Attorneys to discuss if we can require the local presence.

T. McConnell: All of the RFQ's I have seen have required community meetings. We can ask that they have a certain percentage of their workforce be local, but we will also have to consider how that will limit the pool of applicants and is it worth it. That's a decision we'll have to make as a Board.

Board Comment by R. Watkins: For clarification purposes, the height change was established to match the Jefferson Parish height limits. No developer has requested it. They were just looking for uniformity for the development. There has comments regarding Orleans Parish side for parking restrictions. I looked at the City Council meeting and that was not mentioned. Jefferson parish has lowered their restrictions to match Orleans' side.

For the RFQ: We need to make sure the weighted scale is graded correctly, and it matches what we want to see. Grading is supposed to drive the importance. If we want to see local, then we need to make sure that that's weighted appropriately.

Public Comment: Who's making these decisions? The City Council? The Board? What authority do we have over that property?

T. McConnell: The RFQ will come from this Board. However, we are not all experts in RFQ's. That is why we have our Board do research and vote. We also rely on the City's economic development team. Jefferson Parish's economic development team along with our attorney's and whatever other help we may need. We want to make sure we are getting the best use of the property. The ultimate decision will be what this Board votes on. We will be including the legislative and executive body of Jefferson and Orleans Parish government.

B. Whited: The RFP has to be routed through the City's Chief Administrative Office and the Finance Office. It will also need to be approved by the State of Louisiana and Jefferson Parish.

Mark Heck: Who's writing the RFQ and RFP?

T. McConnell: Economic Development is spearheading it and we will review it. I spoke with Economic Development on yesterday and they are still months away from putting out the RFQ.

M. Heck: It is going to be impactful that we as an entity have these meetings once the RFQ is done so that we can get the people that are actually selected to come in and here what you have to say in that moment. We can make a list of what everyone wants but until people are at the table as actual players it's not going to have the same impact. Once we know when the RFQ is coming out, we need to schedule a series of public meetings where people can come out and have real discussions. We can then give all of those ideas to the developers and see how they respond to it. These meetings should happen between the RFQ and RFP process.

Has the CEA been executed between Jefferson and Orleans Parish and has there been an agreement on the tax split?

B. Whited: Yes, but no agreement on tax split.

M. Heck: This is why there has been no movement on this development. Orleans nor Jefferson parish is going to move this process forward without knowing how much they are going to make off of this project.

Public Comment from Rick Sinclair: Maybe there could be an online survey so that everyone could have their own input on the development. I would like to see a Wellness Center with a Pickleball court. Maybe a sports bar and volleyball court.

Re: T. McConnell: I have spoken to Bryan about putting out an online survey.

Public Comment from Eric Beier: What is the content of the Orleans and Jefferson Parish agreement?

Re: T. McConnell: We will post the CEA on the MYHMC's website. The agreement is to have some type of development at the specified location. It allows a lease agreement.

E. Beier: What does MHYMC stand to gain from this project?

Re: T. McConnell: Whatever goes there, we want to make sure it's some type of economic boost for the Yacht Harbor to conduct its business. The organization always needs additional things i.e. Grass cut, more security etc. We'd love to have some additional income from that development.

Public Comment from Liz McAlpine: What happened to the plans that was presented to us a few years ago at a board meeting.

Re: B. Whited: It's from the Regional Planning Commission. That's the only plans that was fully developed and presented.

T. McConnell: The RPC was hired to develop what they thought would be considered the best use. RPC then hired Dana Brown. There has been no action on it.

Public Comment from Troy Gilbert: Representing the newly formed West End & Bucktown Restaurant Association. We are in favor of smart development out here as long as it is neighborhood appropriate. Read mission statement. We are available to assist with ideas of potential restaurants being built having over 150 years of experience.

Public Comment from Charles Marsala: Created a website and is continuously uploading information regarding the development as it is being received. We should be asking Jefferson Parish to contribute to the upkeep of the park and the seawall should be repaired with FEMA money.

Public Comment from Kenneth Kuebel: You may be looking at a lawsuit if you develop housing of any kind because of the 1906 law requiring the area to be a park.

Public Comment from Stephen Doody: What does the MYHMC consider as 'best use'?

Re: T. McConnell: My opinion- best use would be to find someone with an expertise in this area. Someone with the financial background, who have done developments and who can do the research. It has to be economically feasible.

R. Watkins: At this point all we want is a responsible development. We are representing all stakeholders. You all are just one group of stakeholders. The rest of the city is another group. We have to take everyone into account.

T. McConnell: As it relates to parking, I can promise that we will not be doing anything illegal.

Public Comment from Sue Drinkert: Hoping that best use can somehow become two or three restaurants or put a bridge over to Jefferson Parish.

Public Comment from: Elliot Brett: Believes best use of space will be recreational. This area has not has a night life or social club since Katrina. Don't think volleyball developers should have to go up against condominium developers when it comes to qualifications.

Public Comment from Edward Brown: What criteria is being used to evaluate and measure best use.

Public Comment from Lee Henderson: The 1906 law referenced by Marsala should be researched before the development of the RFQ.

Re: T. McConnell: We have attorneys researching this.

Motion to allow constituents to speak a second time. Motion by Jessica Addison, seconded by Roger Watkins.

Public Comment from K. Kuebel: Has the Board considered applying for the 3:1 funds from Pontchartrain district that was set up by Senator Cassidy? This could help improve the park structure and get the fountain working. We need more police presence back here.

Re: T. McConnell: We have not applied but it is an action item.

Public Comment from Charles Marsala: Measured 2.2 acres, if the oak trees are saved. There's a lot of grant money available to keep an open space. What happened to Jefferson

Parish's FEMA money? Why didn't they fix their side of the sea wall. You could also ask the opinion of the Attorney General instead of going through an attorney.

Public Comment from S. Doody: Did you identify the lawyer researching the concerns?

Re: Mr. McConnell: I did not. We have asked the City's economic development to have someone to look into it legally. I do not know who the lawyer is.

J. Addison: We requested the City look at it with their attorney. They have not given us a response or told us what attorney is looking into the matter.

S. Doody: The Board has not been forthcoming with what they want.

R. Watkins: I'm concerned about a single-use facility going up and am going to advocate against it.

J. Addison: I am not comfortable with giving an opinion because we are all volunteers who have been appointed to this Board a few months ago. I don't have enough information to have an opinion.

C. Hammond: We don't have enough information. We don't want to distance ourselves from the people that we are here to serve. I think we have a lot to learn before we can take a stand.

Public Comment from Sue Drinkert: Need clarification on the land being referenced.

Re: West Parking lot, old restaurant site of the West End area.

J. Addison: The survey from 2020 is 2.9 acres. Also, the CEA already incorporates a community process. We can always expand to make it more robust.

Motion to adjourn by Chris Hammond, seconded by Mark Heck.

Adjourned: 7:20pm