

**Board Meeting**

**Meeting Date and Time: September 14, 2023 @ 8:30 am**  
**Meeting Place: 5367 I-49 S. Service Road, Opelousas LA**

**AGENDA**

- ❖ Welcome
- ❖ Pledge
- ❖ Roll Call
- ❖ CSLEDD Business Recognition Program – Brown’s Furniture
- ❖ Approval of the August 10, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes
- ❖ Financial Report
- ❖ New Business
  - CSLEDD CEA
- ❖ Old Business
  - Réserve Naturelle de la Paroisse de Saint Landry Update
  - Equine Sales Facility Consideration Update
  - Mural Update
  - Retail Strategies Monthly Update

The following members were present in person: Chairman Buddy Helton, Senic Batiste, Yvonne Normand, Rod Sias

The following members were absent: Tina Vidrine, Ammy Taylor, Dr. Derek Metoyer

The following non-voting members were present virtually:

The following non-voting members were present in person: Bill Rodier (SLED) Teresa Reaves (SLED), Brittany Cretchain (SLED),

The following non-voting members were absent: Jessie Bellard (Parish President), and Jerry Red Jr. (Parish Council Chairman)

The following guests were present in person: Mr. Bobby Ardoin (St Landry Now), Mr. Dale Marks, Ms. Jamie Speyrer (St Landry Parish Government), Mr. Anthony Daniels (City of Opelousas), Ms. Tisha Webb, and Mr. Ken Simeral (SLED Board)

The following guests were present virtually: None

It was determined that a quorum was present.

Chairman Helton recognized the guests, thanked everyone for their time, and opened the meeting at 8:45 AM.

CSLEDD Business of the Month – Browns Furniture: Chairman Helton introduced Ms. Tisha Webb, the General Manager of Brown's Furniture in Opelousas. They were originally in Downtown Opelousas and moved out to the Service Road years ago. Ms Webb noted that -they have survived Covid and other economic issues and business is now good. Ms. Webb was here to accept the recognition and encouraged everyone to shop locally, so that their prices won't be beat and that they are an official seller of the Lazy Boy brand.

Approval of the August 10, 2023, Minutes: Chairman Helton asked if anyone had any changes or corrections to the July minutes. A motion was made by Ms. Yvonne Normand to accept the August 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Senic Batiste. Motion carried without objection.

Financial Report: Chairman Helton presented the financial report in the absence of Treasurer Tina Vidrine. He said that everything was on target and looked normal. Chairman Helton reported that the tax revenue was up 34.3% from last year and the year to date is up 10.2% overall. He stated that we are making consistent gains.

#### **New Business:**

CSLEDD CEA: Chairman Buddy Helton reported that the CEA with SLED is to make SLED the pass through for the Capital Outlay Funds for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The State of Louisiana's original documents inadvertently named SLED as the recipient when they should have named CSLEDD. To eliminate any problems with securing the funds we, at the suggestion of the state, Bruce Gaudin was asked to put together a CEA and use SLED as a conduit. A motion was made by Ms. Yvonne Normand to allow Chairman Helton to sign the CEA and enter into the agreement with SLED. A second to the motion came from Mr. Senic Batiste. Motion carried without objection.

#### **Old Business:**

Réserve Naturelle de la Paroisse de Saint Landry – Update: Chairman Helton reminded the board that at the last meeting, Michael Cullen from Land Architecture was present and made a presentation and suggested that the next step in the viability process for the park is to have a public input meeting to get some ideas from the various entities that may use it. At the time of the last meeting there was no talk of a price for the public input meetings and the board was under the impression that there would be no charge so we, as a board, did not decide to do anything at that time. Since the last meeting, Michael Cullen and Land Architecture has put together a list of deliverables and a proposal for hosting the public input meeting. Discussion ensued. A motion was made by Ms. Yvonne Normand and seconded by Mr. Rod Sias to move into a contract with Land Architecture for \$3750.00 for their staff to put together the public input meeting. Motion carried without objection. Chairman Helton said that he will work with SLED staff to put together some proposed dates and move forward. Mr. Ken Simeral suggested that we have drone coverage of the potential park and grand level photos for the public to see the grounds. Chairman Helton said that he liked that idea and will investigate media companies that provide that service.



Equine Sales Facility Consideration Update: Chairman Helton gave a report of where things lie with the Equine Sales Facility. Mr. Helton said that he felt that this signed contract by the chair of equine sales would be the final revision of the contract. Chairman Helton asked for input on this project from each of the board members.

Board Member Senic Batiste said that based on the information that is available right now he feels that this is not a great business decision. Mr. Batiste then noted that he doesn't mind going through the due diligence period in order to get a better idea for the project.

Board Member Rod Sias said he looks at it as a good business decision looking at it like an investment for the future going forward for the Equine Distinction. Mr. Sias recognized the points made by Mr. Batiste but that he thinks the business can work if it follows the plan of being focused on being a asset component of the effort to promote and build capacity for The Equine Capital of Louisiana and said that he would support the purchase.

Board Member Yvonne Normand noted that she felt the facility could be an important part of growing the reputation of St Landry Parish as the Equine Parish Capital of Louisiana.

Mr. Ken Simeral added that the present investors in the building weren't using it to its full potential and that the current state of its failure shouldn't be a reason to not move forward. He mentioned that it would cost four times the amount to build it. He said that it could be something to purchase and get running well and then sell it for much higher. Mr. Simeral also mentioned that it is crucial for CSLEDD to know what the monthly fixed costs are, and what it will cost to run it for an entire year.

Mr. Bill Rodier stated that the Marketing, Maintaining and Management (MMM) of the facility will need to be addressed as part of a due diligence process. He said he envisions a twelve-to-eighteen-month plan to begin with, and then a longer one that could include looking at support components for the facility that would enhance its capacity. Mr. Rodier also confirmed with Ken Simeral that the facility would need to be appraised prior to a potential purchase. He said he would reach out to some appraisers to check their availability on a short turn around.

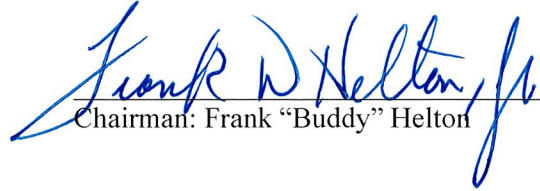
A motion was made by Ms. Yvonne Normand to enter into the contract for purchase of the Equine Sales Facility and to also create a committee consisting of Senic Batiste, Rod Sias and Tina Vidrine to meet regularly during the Due Diligence period. The motion was seconded by Senic Batiste. Motion carried without objection. Chairman Helton noted that he would present it to Ms. Vidrine and if she doesn't accept, he will offer it to Ms. Ammy Taylor.

Mural Update: Chairman Helton reported that the mural painted by Mr. Jerome Ford at the Hamilton Oak is complete and just waiting for the anti-graffiti topcoat as soon as the board has viewed it and gives the ok. Chairman Helton also mentioned that there will be a small get together later in the month for an unveiling. Mr. Rodier reported that the other mural painted by Mr. Jerome Ford, and created into a Sign by Bono Signs, has been finished and installed in the drive-through of new Love's Travel Center.

Retail Strategies: Due to illness, Retail Strategies was unable to attend the meeting today. Chairman Helton gave a report that there is work being done by Hobby Lobby in the old Stage building, and that they are projecting to open in Q1, but that is not set in stone. Chairman Helton also made mention that the Facebook posts regarding Hobby Lobby have gone into the thousands and that everyone is loving the fact that Opelousas is getting a Hobby Lobby.

**Adjourn:** A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Yvonne Normand and seconded by Mr. Rod Sias. The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 am.

  
Secretary: Yvonne Lognion Normand

  
Chairman: Frank "Buddy" Helton