

FMIA Board Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2022

Meeting held by Zoom

Members Present: Allen Johnson, Phillip Lege, Robert Sonnier, Gary de Leumont, Bryan Harms, Jeffrey Seymour, Maurice Sholas, Lisa Faatland

President's Report: Allen Johnson

- 1) Winston Fiore working on homeless encampments and also on illegal party buses that go down Frenchman St. and through residential streets. Winston is trying to shut down illegal buses.
- 2) Royal Frenchman Hotel held controversial concerts during Covid. The two men calling themselves owners, are not, but would like to buy the hotel. Hugh Steel is the owner. Currently the Royal has been issued a temporary month to month permit under Council member King. The outdoor concerts were allowed under the Covid emergency declaration by Mayor Cantrell. As per CZO zoning the Royal is not allowed to have outdoor concerts. Special Events and Safety and Permits technically issue the permits.
- 3) Allen and Gary to meet with parade Krewes. Doc, Gary and Allen are on the committee. Gary to reach out to Chewbacca and Krewe du Vieux leadership then meet with the neighbours to determine parade routes. Where ball sites are located will determine the routes.
- 4) 1928 Dauphine, is a blighted and abandoned property near Horns. FMIA is working with HDLC and City Permits. Illegal demolition works started on the creole cottage; some construction work completed. Seems there will be a pool.
- 5) Elections this September. Need to have a nominating committee to nominate people. Allen will send a list out with open board positions. Allen will not run, Lisa has taken Donna's spot so she doesn't need to run. Need to have a meeting with the past presidents in order to have a past president on the Board.
- 6) Community Engagement: Lisa Faatland
The *Meet the Neighbors* will be held on June 16, 2022, from 6:00 - 7:30, at the Lanaux Mansion, corner of Chartres and Esplanade. The Lanaux Mansion, a bed and breakfast, is owned by Beth Odenheimer. Kip Hollar with Latter and Blum will be providing refreshments.

July *Meet the Neighbors* - tentatively would be held at Ayu Bakery, on Dauphine and Frenchmen St. Samantha and Kelly are very interested to host a Meet the Neighbors.

Let Lisa know of any ideas you may have.
- 7) Code Enforcement, Thomas Mulligan - the new director, will be coming to the general meeting on June 27. He has asked that we come up with some ideas to talk about so he can be prepared. Email Allen for some ideas. Allen will also ask the membership in an email blast for ideas. Gary suggested that we have different department directors come to our monthly meetings.

Treasurer's Report: Phillip Lege

- 1) Nothing has changed from last month's report. One odd item was a refund of \$5.00 from Amazon which will listed under "miscellaneous".
- 2) Philip brought up that switch boxes in the various neighbourhoods have murals painted on them throughout the city. We have a number of these boxes that could be painted. Phillip will reach out to CVU Nola groups and report back to the board. FMIA has the money.

3) The treasurer's report was approved by the Board.

Membership: Robert Sonnier

We are down by 10% from one year ago. Membership has been stable for the last six months at 175. Robert will follow up with Leslie to consider having a membership drive.

Committees: Gary de Leumont

No committee reports were sent to Gary. Ryan is not technically the communications person which is a board position. He can't be nominated to this position as he has not been a member for one year.

Lesley, liaison to the 5th district, has done a great job of mapping. Captain Nobel happy with her work. Her email: Lesley777@gmail.com

Land Use: Jeffrey Seymour

1) Parklet program approved by CPC. Next step - City Council will discuss parklets. The CPC put together a policy that parklets will not be permitted where there is residential zoning. The entire block needs to be commercial. There is no indication as yet whether existing parklets will be grandfathered in. Things could change with the City Council. There are supposed to be barriers blocking off parklets as well as follow ADA requirements, i.e., parklets need to be level with the sidewalk.

The French Quarter does not want any parklets.

2) Accessory dwelling units item was withdrawn from city council agenda's May 5th meeting. No one is sponsoring it at this time. Christen Palmer promoted this on her way out. If it went forward, it could essentially rezone the whole city as multi dwellings. CPC commissioners gave strong push back to this idea as they felt this would undo the master plan.

3) We are waiting for Little Horns to file application for a zoning change.

4) Small, multi family, affordable dwelling units was passed by City Council with the problematic appeal provision. The regulation is that you're not allowed to use any units for STR unless you need to. (hmmmm)

5) Nothing new on Aquatic Gardens on Elysian Fields. Nothing has been filed.

6) Dan's Bar will be a pottery studio not a restaurant/bar.

7) North Rampart and Burgundy between Frenchman and Elysian Fields - commercial on both sides of the street except for commercial blocks on Frenchman St.

8) 502 Frenchman St.: Allen Johnson

This is where Vaso was located. It is currently STR's; the owner, Motwani, wants to create a hotel. The architects have proposed a penthouse with terrace on the roof by flattening out the pitched roof at the back. 502 is one of the more historically significant structures on Frenchman. It was built in 1838 by a freeman of color; it was a mercantile business. The HDLC and ARC have twice denied adding the penthouse with terrace. As proposed, the penthouse would be seen from Elysian and Esplanade. Freddie King denied the architect's appeal and told them to go back through the process with HDLC. He is hoping for a compromise in which the penthouse could be set back far enough that it wouldn't be seen from the street. This does not seem viable. Mike Sherman is representing the owner. Note: HDLC is adamantly opposed to the roof addition. The building is graded a significant building which is the highest rating in the historic areas. PRC is also opposed.

9) The Trash Palace at the corner of Elysian and Chartres: Allen Johnson
Allen and Jeffrey met with the owners (Walter Anton and wife) and went with them to a property they own, 201 Rampart. Previously it was a woodworking shop that they turned into a Saunder run hotel, quite nice. In front, there is a bar, Dovetail - referencing previous use of building. The owners want to come to the July Board meeting and present new plans for the Trash Palace which are different. It will be smaller, no third floor, swimming pool in back, bar up front. Owners were discussing whether or not to have a restaurant as well as bar. There are some three and four bedroom suites. Owners will send updated drawings.

Probably the biggest push back will be the parking waiver. Currently no parking on site. They would need a waiver for 47 parking places and probably will not be able to use lot across the street which is owned by Frenchman Market but managed by Premium Parking. With Premium, there is no guaranteed spot, price is variable, spots cannot be reserved. The owners were not aware of this.

FMIA's biggest response in the past was to 621 Elysian as people are tired of STR's and hotels in the neighborhood.

Big Freeda's boutique hotel will be located on other side of parking lot, on Decatur. There will be only four rooms, with main business, a restaurant.

Live Entertainment: Allen Johnson

Study came out last year with no neighborhood participation, just input from musicians and MACNO. The study was very permissive for live music whereas the CPC department study was more restrictive. For our neighbourhood, a venue could have live music: three times a week but only HMC2 properties; could not be within 600 feet of residential property; could have temporary permit which allows for eight temporary events for up to 3 day duration (or 24 days a year - including wedding events, etc); could get an accessory use permit would which allow anybody with 15 foot buffer to have live music once a week as long as food and beverage provided (food truck counts?) For example it would allow commercial St. Claude properties to have live music once a week. The biggest pushback from CDC commissioners was the accessory use permit and also the 15 foot buffer being insufficient.

The CPC commissioners could not send a recommendation to City Council as there weren't sufficient votes for one proposal or another. Also, the discussion of live entertainment had been deferred so many times that the deadline was up. City planning commission staff had the study about one and a half years but, the broad ideas were already present in December 2020. CPC will send it to City Council with no recommendation for live music.

Hopefully FMIA will go with VCPORA to speak with some of the city council members.

Illegal encampments - located along North Peters, river wall, standard coffee building - A lot of the property is owned by Riley Foods.

Winston Fiore mapped out the illegal campers, buses, etc. but got no help from the city dept of public works who requested other departments to step in so they would feel safe. Winston got the requested assistance from health dept, 5th district, but parking force said they would not go forward even with help. Encampments will continue to grow.

Parking

Resident who requested possible parking permits in the rectangle at last board meeting understands that it can't happen where he lives as there is commercial.

Proposal by Gary - suggested FMIA get gift certificates from various businesses in the neighbourhood for general meetings to liven things up. The board unanimously agreed to spend up to \$25 on a door prize per meeting to the end of 2022.