

**MINUTES**  
**HARRISON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**January 16, 2020**

A regular scheduled meeting of the Harrison County Development Commission was called to order at 8:24 am on Tuesday, Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at Harrison County Development Commission, Gulfport, Mississippi.

The Commissioners present were: President Jimmy Levens, Brian Gollott, Mike Leonard, Frankie Castiglia, Jennifer Burke, Frank Bordeaux, John "Shorty" Sneed, Warren Conway and Mark Schloegel. Commissioners absent: Sharon Bentz, Rip Daniels and Sam LaRosa.

The staff members present: Executive Director Bill Lavers, Marcia Crawford, Lori Frazier, Gia Blackwell and Michelle McGraw as recording secretary.

Consultants present: Legal Counsel Jim Simpson, Don Clark with DCC Consultants, and Ron Jenkins Engineering Consultant.

The media was notified of this meeting via the Sun Herald and our <http://mscoast.org> website.

**I. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE – OPEN MEETING & CALL TO ORDER**

After the Invocation and pledge, President Jim Levens opened the meeting and called to order at this time.

**II. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

President Jimmy Levens announced the following adjustments:

- Request to go into executive session was made for two items for the purpose of a prospective purchase, sale or leasing of lands.
- The Motion made by Commissioner Frankie Castiglia to amend the agenda for an executive session. It was seconded by Commissioner John "Shorty" Sneed. There being no discussion, the Motion received the affirmative vote of the Commissioners as follows:

Yeas: 9 - Jimmy Levens, Brian Gollott, Mike Leonard, Frankie Castiglia, Jennifer Burke, Frank Bordeaux, John "Shorty" Sneed, Warren Conway and Mark Schloegel

Nays: 0

**III. GUESTS / COMMENTS**

Sharon Nichols State Director SBDC, and Steve Brooks were present.

**IV. MEETING MINUTES**

- After review of Exhibit A, the Motion was made by Commissioner Jennifer Burke to approve the Dec 17, 2019 meeting minutes. Commissioner Warren Conway seconded the Motion. There being no discussion, the Motion received the affirmative vote of the Commissioners as follows:

Yeas: 9 - Jimmy Levens, Brian Gollott, Mike Leonard, Frankie Castiglia, Jennifer Burke, Frank Bordeaux, John "Shorty" Sneed, Warren Conway and Mark Schloegel

Nays: 0.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Cindy Lamb of Pickering Firm Inc., Tina Taylor with South MS Procurement Center, and Steve Brooks with Seymour Engineering were welcomed and introduced as our guests.

### V. *Vote Items*

- Election for Board of Commissioner President by the Nomination Committee to be Frankie Castiglia. Everything else stays the same.
  - The Motion was made by Commissioner Mark Schloegel to approve the new board President Frankie Castiglia and it was seconded by Commissioner John "Shorty" Sneed. There being no discussion, the Motion received the affirmative vote of the Commissioners as follows:

Yeas: 9 - Jimmy Levens, Brian Gollott, Mike Leonard, Frankie Castiglia, Jennifer Burke, Frank Bordeaux, John "Shorty" Sneed, Warren Conway and Mark Schloegel

Nays: 0

- Appointment of Brett Benso to the Foreign Trade Zone Board.
  - The Motion was made by Commissioner John "Shorty" Sneed to approve Brett Benso to the Foreign Trade Zone Board, and it was seconded by Commissioner Jennifer Burke. There being no discussion, the Motion received the affirmative vote of the Commissioners as follows:

Yeas: 9 - Jimmy Levens, Brian Gollott, Mike Leonard, Frankie Castiglia, Jennifer Burke, Frank Bordeaux, John "Shorty" Sneed, Warren Conway and Mark Schloegel

Nays: 0

- Executive Session.

Motion to go close the open meeting and go into executive session was made by Commissioner Jennifer Burke and seconded by Commissioner John "Shorty" Sneed. All members present voted in favor of the executive session. The executive session began at 8:30 am and ended at 9:04 am. No action was taken. President Jimmy Levens reopened the meeting at 9:04 am.

## GUEST PESENTATION

Sharon Nichols, State Director of the small business development center handed the presentation over to Mitch McDowell the regional director for the Biloxi area. He presented a packet with 3 sections of how they help small businesses get going. They are located in the Innovation Center. The presentation showed what they offer and the different stages of the program to get small businesses started. One of the main things they provide is training and information through the business 101 series. Mark Schloegel asked if all the organizations throughout the state were tied to universities or community colleges. Mitch stated yes, and Ms., Sharon stated there's one in Jackson that is actually a center now, it's in a city building owned by the city. Mark Schloegel stated well all know what we are struggling with in our facility, for example we have people who can't park a trailer with lawn equipment in front of their house, or take out Cadillac converters because not zoned industrial use. We are zoned industrial use, we are battling with the management of who pays what bill, etc. and we don't know who we want to manage it anymore. Our facility is way different from the others in the state. Ms. Sharon agreed our facility is different than any other. Executive Director Bill Lavers asked her to give her opinion of the Innovation Center. Sharon stated that throughout the state of Mississippi we have some fantastic professional facilities where we can provide an environment of professionalism. Since she came on board Oct. 2018, she has slowly seen the innovation center deteriorate to the point you go into the women's bathroom and it's not a place you feel comfortable or inviting. She doesn't want people to come to the Innovation Center and think ... eh, or we don't want to be there. When she walked into the building last time in October or November there were several ceiling tiles hanging down, and if you look up into the tiles you see black stuff. Bill said for the record the Air Quality Test showed no mold but cosmetic issues. Sharon said it's very troubling for the state that her staff cannot meet with their clients without putting a blanket on their lap because the building is sold cold. She isn't throwing anyone under the bus but the bottom line is she needs to have a good representation for her clients when they come in feel comfortable and get professional services from professional people. We spend a lot of money training our people to provide services as well as qualified buyer grants and for them to go into a building that does not give that appearance.... (she didn't finish her statement) but did end with she doesn't need to be Taj Mahal. Bill then asked her to give her vision for the coast. Commissioner Mike Leonard asked her if she would still have a workshop there once a month even if they were not present all the time. She said they are open to that she's not saying they are moving right now but October she was told the building was being sold and they were getting kicked out. Bill followed up with confirmation that was not true and did not come from us. Sharon stated that is why she came down here and started investigating and found out all the activity that is going on, the coast. They are currently in one building and they need to better serve the whole gulf coast. They went to a presentation by invitation of the mayor of Gulfport and learned all the economic impact the coast receives and ask if they are in a place to serve the coast or just the traffic it receives locally. After researching their representation since Katrina USM is the only representative they have. So, they are looking to expand representation with a hub for a central location somewhere off of I -10. Once the Aquarium opens there will be an increase in small business and they need to be in a better location and building to better serve the coast. Sharon then finished the presentation with the packet provided.

A. **Finance** (Sneed, Chairman)

- **Financial Statements and Claims for December 2019 Exhibit D & E**  
Commissioner John Shorty Sneed reviewed the financials and mentioned a few items and what purpose they were for just to clarify. Commissioner Mike Leonard asked a question regarding dredging capacity and pricing. Brief discussion took place and Consultant Don Clark stated we have a program in place to raise the levees so we have plenty of space.
- Commissioner John Shorty Sneed made a Motion to approve Exhibits D and E and Commissioner Jennifer Burk seconded the Motion. Commissioner Warren Conway asked who Zoe was since she was mentioned in the financial break down. Shorty stated she is our Pollution and Water Clarification expert. He also asked about a monthly variance and Jennifer explained it's because of the grant money we budgeted for. We put it in ahead of time in case we need it but at the end of the year we do the adjustment. There being no discussion, the Motion received the affirmative vote of the Commissioners as follows:

Yeas: 9 - Jimmy Levens, Brian Gollott, Mike Leonard, Frankie Castiglia, Jennifer Burke, Frank Bordeaux, John "Shorty" Sneed, Warren Conway and Mark Schloegel

Nays: 0

**COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

A. **Marketing & Industrial**

Commissioner Frankie Castiglia handed it over to Executive Director Bill Lavers to give the update. Bill asked Marcia Crawford to share the information she has on the Biloxi Shucker membership options. Discussion took place to look into more membership options and Marcia said she would follow up on the items requested. Marcia presented the new SEA Force logo and new website to come. Commissioner John Shorty Sneed commented on the logo and how he first thought it had something to do with the sea or water. Bill clarified what it stood for and everyone was on board. Marcia continued with the Rapiscan sponsorship and went into detail of the price and what we would receive if decided to go ahead with the sponsorship. Commissioner Frankie Castiglia stated the Committee recommendation was to approve the Rapiscan sponsorship.

- Commissioner Frankie Castiglia made the Motion to approve the Rapiscan sponsorship and it was seconded by John Shorty Sneed. There being no discussion, the Motion received the affirmative vote of the Commissioners as follows:

Yeas: 9 - Jimmy Levens, Brian Gollott, Mike Leonard, Frankie Castiglia, Jennifer Burke, Frank Bordeaux, John "Shorty" Sneed, Warren Conway and Mark Schloegel

Nays: 0

Frankie Castiglia brought up the Batman and Robin discussion and Rail update. Simpson said he's working on a letter agreement and Bill stated he thinks he can get a 90-day deferment on it. The power company has 60 days to say they don't want it, and then there is a 90-day period after that. We are working on the agreement because the Railroad is turning over personal property, the power company will be providing us the leases and the old leases are with the Board of Supervisors. Now 50 to 60 years later there are new legal entities in place and the Board of Supervisors do not do leases anymore so we need new leases. We have a lot to figure out. Bill updates newest Commissioner Mike Leonard on the topic and history of this topic.

#### **B. Administrative, Engineering & Maintenance**

Jimmy Levens stated we put bid out for the painting of the tanks. Gia Blackwell, the Commissions Project Manager, gave update on the bid stated it will close Feb 13<sup>th</sup>; 2020 and it would be for inside and outside painting of the tanks as needed.

Ron Jenkins, our Engineering Consultant introduced himself and gave a quick version of his background and said he was thrilled to be in Mississippi after 23 years of service in the military.

### **VI. Directors Report**

Executive Director Bill Lavers gave his report.

He showed a digital presentation of a project we have been working on with the Colombians and Kiln Shine. The video of the Distillery, Kiln Shine in the Kiln, MS was shown and Bill stated they will be partnering with our friends in Colombia to produce the rum and tequila in their distillery. They have an LOI in place and we are excited they do not have to wait 2 years to get a permit. They will be doing a test run to see how it goes.

Sea Force is making progress, we have 25 kids enrolled into the program and we have more kids coming and more business signing up for internships.

The HCDC won an award with the school district with our partnership with Education last week

Water and Sewer is progressing forward with more than 10% of our customer base signed up online and paying online thanks to Michelle McGraw.

Bill gave his last update on a few potential business deals in the works for the BBIP. He stated we closed on the Ray Wesson Land Sale last week and looking to close 3 land sales that were approved by the Board of Supervisors this coming week.

#### VII. Old/New Business

Commissioner Jimmy Levens asked Bill for an update on Jeff Register. Bill said he was still waiting, he met with him and he is fighting with the county on some other issues.

#### VIII. Legal

Legal Counsel, Jim Simpson updated the board on a question that has come up about where Dr. Mullens property ends. The tax collector says it ends up closer to his house and the marsh belongs to us. The tier he has built is said to be on our property. Jim wanted the board to be aware of this and if there is anything that he needs to do he will update the board.

#### IX. **Announcements/Notices**

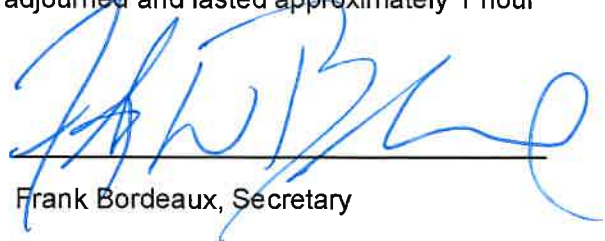
- **Office closed in January for the following holiday:**
  - January 20, 2020 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
- **30th Annual State of the City Address Luncheon: Jan. 30 @ 11:00 a.m.** (Beau Rivage, Magnolia Ballroom)
  - *Contact Marcia by Jan. 28 if you'd like to attend*
- **Mississippi Coast Foreign Trade Zone: Jan. 29 @ 11:00 a.m.** (Morton's The Steakhouse, Golden Nugget Biloxi)
  - *Contact Marcia no later than Jan. 24 if you'd like to attend as a headcount is needed*
- **Next Board of Commission Meeting: Feb. 18, 2020 @ 8:15 a.m.**

#### X. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Frankie Castiglia made a Motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Commissioner John Shorty Sneed. The meeting was adjourned and lasted approximately 1 hour and 5 min.



Frankie Castiglia, President



Frank Bordeaux, Secretary