

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LAFAYETTE TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE LAFAYETTE CONVENTION & VISITORS COMMISSION, STATE OF LOUISIANA, TAKEN AT A MEETING HELD JANUARY 30, 2025

The Lafayette Tourism Improvement District Advisory Committee of the Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission, State of Louisiana, met in person at the Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission boardroom, 1100 Lafayette St., Lafayette, LA at 10:00 am.

In attendance were the advisory board for the Lafayette Tourism Improvement District (LTID) as follows: Ben Berthelot, LCVC President & CEO, Chris Alack, LCVC Commissioner, Jim Doré, LCVC Commissioner, Ricky Patel, LCVC Commissioner, Anil Patel, AAA Hotel Management, and Neal Patel, AAA Hotel Management.

Henil Patel, Gap Management, was unable to attend the meeting due to prior obligations.

SPECIAL GUESTS: Michael Hebert, attorney, Becker & Hebert, LLC, Dr. Jessica Leger, UL Lafayette & LCVC Commissioner, Dr. Ramesh Kolluru, UL Lafayette Vice President of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development, and Steve Oubre, master architect of UL Lafayette Masterplan.

CALL TO ORDER

Ben Berthelot, President & CEO, called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 5, 2024 MINUTES

Commissioner Alack motioned to approve the **November 5, 2024**, LTID advisory committee meeting minutes as written. Commissioner R. Patel seconded the motion. There was no public comment. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation from Dr. Ramesh Kolluru, UL-Lafayette

Mr. Berthelot introduced Dr. Ramesh Kolluru, VP for Research, Innovation and Economic Development, and Steve Oubre, master architect of the UL Masterplan of 2013 from the University of Louisiana, to speak with the LTID Advisory Committee about updates to the UL Masterplan.

Dr. Kolluru presented the growth in research expenditures, economic impact, and return on investment of the University over the last ten years. He reported on numerous updates since the development of the 2013 UL Master and Strategic Plans, noting projects completed, in progress, or with funding secured, including several public-private partnership projects. Dr. Kolluru noted the new UL Economic Development District (EDD) and referenced studies that supported the creation of a mixed-use development space along Congress St. and Cajundome Blvd., and expansion of the Cajundome Convention Center with a full-service hotel located within the EDD boundaries. Dr. Kolluru reiterated the importance of market-based studies to determine the size and investment in the proposed full-service hotel and mixed-use development area containing retail and restaurant spaces.

Dr. Kolluru noted the indoor sports complex would act as a magnet to draw visitors and spur development in the frontage area of the EDD. He reported UL would construct a 700-space parking garage with connectivity to both the indoor sports complex and Cajundome Convention

Center, valued at approximately \$25 million. UL would lease the land to LCVC for \$1/year for 40 years with the option to extend the property lease up to 70 years, noting LCVC would provide a shared schedule and coordinate some use of the indoor sports facility for UL students and/or athletes. Dr. Kolluru reiterated UL would not be involved in booking events at the LCVC-owned facility.

Mr. Berthelot distributed copies of the LCVC strategic plan to the advisory board, focusing on two points within infrastructure for a growing travel industry which would be fulfilled by the proposed indoor facility; a sports facility to drive visitation in slower winter months, and to improve and expand the capacity to host large convention groups. He also noted the importance of building density in the urban core of Lafayette.

Mr. Berthelot also summarized the pros and cons of the properties proposed for purchase by the LTID Advisory Committee and the UL-Lafayette property. He focused on affordability, proximity to hotels and attractions, ease of transportation, LTID vs non-LTID options, and public relations perceptions.

Discussion ensued between the LTID Advisory Committee members and UL officials, specifically regarding additional investment by UL into the sports complex project, in addition to the land lease. Commissioner R. Patel stated that the hoteliers of the LTID Advisory Committee would request that UL invest \$20 million to build the facility, or Mr. Neal Patel suggested a 50-50 percent investment partnership.

Dr. Kolluru stated he was not prepared to answer the offer on behalf of the University but was open to exploring options within the public-private partnership framework. Mr. Berthelot noted that should the University offer significant financial investment, then LCVC would no longer retain full control of profits and facility scheduling. Additionally, he reiterated the importance of building the urban core and development of the UL master plan would help achieve that goal.

Further discussion continued around timelines and project priorities, particularly the request for proposal which combines the convention center expansion and a full-service hotel. This led to additional discussion regarding growth in areas outside the current core and spurring development within the area surrounding the University. Dr. Kolluru noted the role of UL in assisting in economic development within the parish and how development within the EDD would help achieve that. Mr. Oubre also noted the University plans and timeline would be readjusted if the sports complex were to be developed at the UL site.

Dr. Kolluru indicated the University may be able to offer a percentage of EDD tax revenue earned within the indoor sports facility itself to be returned to the facility. He noted this would require discussion with other University officials.

Dr. Kolluru and Mr. Oubre left the meeting.

Review of Draft Bylaws

Mr. Berthelot shared copies of the draft bylaws for the LTID developed by Mr. Michael Hebert, attorney for LCVC. Mr. Berthelot noted the LTID Advisory Committee selection was taken directly from the Lafayette Tourism Improvement District Plan section VII. LTID Management which states a seven-member committee comprised of the President & CEO of LCVC, the

Acadiana Hotel/Motel Lodging Association (AHMLA) appointee to the LCVC Board, two members of the Executive Committee of LCVC or two members chosen by the board of directors of LCVC, and three local hoteliers nominated by the AHMLA. The three hoteliers nominated by the AHMLA will serve a three-year term and are eligible for reappointment for a second term. Mr. Berthelot noted that the two members chosen by the board of directors of LCVC will serve a one-year term and during the December 16, 2024 LCVC Board meeting Commissioners Chris Alack and Jim Doré were reappointed to the LTID Advisory Committee.

Commissioner R. Patel suggested that to maintain continuity, the same LCVC Board member appointees should continue serving on the LTID Advisory Committee. Mr. Berthelot noted that was the intent, and appointees may continue to serve in the role as appointed by the LCVC Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Berthelot suggested removing the Secretary officer position because LCVC staff will assume the duties of Secretary, including keeping an accurate account of proceedings, issuing notices, preparing minutes, retaining records, and preparing the agenda for the LTID Advisory Committee. There was general agreement to remove this position.

Commissioner Doré noted the use of Executive Director throughout the document and suggested updating the wording to reflect Mr. Berthelot's title of President & CEO. Commissioner Doré also noted the blank portion regarding meeting notice in Article 3. Meetings and Voting, Section 1. Schedule. The group agreed that this sentence could be removed.

Mr. Berthelot suggested to the committee that a yearly budget indicating revenue and expenses for the LTID be presented to both the LCVC Board of Commissioners and the LTID advisory committee. He stated this was best practice but it may not be necessary to include in the LTID Advisory Committee bylaws because the LCVC Commissioners vote to approve the budget.

Nominations and Election of 2025 LCVC LTID Advisory Board Officers

Discussion continued regarding nominations for the Chair and Vice-chair positions of the LTID Advisory Committee. It was agreed that nominations and voting would take place during the next advisory committee meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Indoor Sports Facility updates

Mr. Berthelot reported he and Mr. Mike Hebert had conversations with the bond attorney, and the legal requirement to also meet with a financial advisor. Mr. Berthelot requested a proposal from the financial advisor recommended by the bond attorney to bring to the LCVC Board for review.

Mr. Berthelot stated he and Dr. Kolluru met with Kip Schumacher, who approved of the project but does not do naming rights deals.

Mr. Berthelot stated he has not pursued land a purchase because the LCVC Board of Commissioners have not voted to grant that authority, but he has made inquiries into available land. He also reported on a conversation with Joey Durel who is no longer the real estate agent for the Rue Louis property of interest. Mr. Berthelot noted one offer with contingencies was rejected, and currently the property acreage has increased. Mr. Neal Patel confirmed he had a

similar conversation with Mr. Durel, noting that a lower priced offer with fewer contingencies may be accepted. Discussion of financial resources to purchase property continued, including LCVC bonding money, LCVC loaning money to the LTID, and interest from the lender in naming rights or financing. Commissioner R. Patel also suggested the committee vet companies to build and manage the facility.

Mr. Berthelot sought guidance from the hoteliers regarding the deal necessary to locate the facility on UL property. Mr. Neal Patel suggested the LTID Advisory Committee send a formal offer to UL requesting a \$18-20 million financial investment by UL. Commissioner R. Patel agreed with Mr. Neal Patel, and noted business would directly benefit UL and per the agreement UL students would utilize the facility, therefore UL should serve as an equal investment partner. Mr. Berthelot reiterated that the agreement with UL confirmed use of the facility was in coordination with LCVC. He also emphasized the agreement with the management company would be clear about contracting profitable business for the facility.

Commissioner R. Patel made a motion to add an item to the agenda to recommend a response to the University of Louisiana's proposal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neal Patel. There was no public comment. The vote was unanimous, motion carried.

Discussion continued about what financial investment should be asked of UL, \$18-20 million, 50/50 partnership, 100% of the 1% tax from the Economic Development District generated within the facility to be returned to facility, or an undefined dollar amount. Mr. Berthelot suggested requesting 100% of the 1% tax from the EDD and a dollar amount UL would be willing to put toward the project. Mr. Berthelot requested the hoteliers consider if there was any way the LTID could remain in effect at the UL location. The hoteliers on the LTID committee agreed to consider the options and would follow up.

Mr. Berthelot suggested a follow-up phone call with Dr. Kolluru to ask if UL had put forth their best offer to the LTID Advisory Committee regarding financial investment in the project. Mr. Neal Patel noted the current offer was insufficient. Mr. Berthelot then revised the statement to indicate the current offer was not sufficient and the hoteliers are firm on the \$20 million project investment, and UL should provide their best project investment offer.

Mr. Neal Patel made a motion to defer the current agenda item to the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anil Patel. There was no public comment. The motion carried.

Commissioner Doré suggested that for transparency purposes that another LTID Advisory Committee member join Mr. Berthelot on the call to Dr. Kolluru regarding the best project investment offer. Commissioner Doré was selected to join Mr. Berthelot on the call.

Commissioner R. Patel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Alack seconded the motion. There was no public comment. Motion carried.
There was no other business. Mr. Berthelot adjourned the meeting.



Benjamin J. Berthelot
President & CEO