

Minutes: Meeting of the Metropolitan Government Board of Fair Commissioners

Date: February 8, 2022 8:00 a.m.

On the above referenced date, the February meeting for the Board of Fair Commissioners was held in Expo 2 at the Fairgrounds. Those in attendance were Chair Sheri Weiner, Vice-Chair Jason Bergeron, Commissioner Caleb Hemmer, Commissioner Jasper Hendricks, and Commissioner Mario Avila. Also, present were Fairgrounds Executive Director Laura Womack and Finance and Administrative Manager Satrice Allen. Metro Attorney Alex Dickerson was in attendance. Ed Henley with Pillars Development was present, as well as Ron Gobbell with Gobbell Hays Partners (GHP). Mary Cavarra with Nashville Soccer Club (and the Ownership Group) was also in attendance.

Chair Weiner read the legal notice and called the meeting to order. She then moved to the approval of the January meeting minutes. Commissioner Hendricks made a motion to approve, and Vice-Chair Bergeron seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were passed. She then moved to Public Comment Time.

There were no public comments. Chair Weiner then moved to the Financial Report.

Ms. Allen gave a brief financial report. Chair Weiner then moved to the Executive Director's Report.

Director Womack gave an update about the Public Arts Project and stated that there would be a community input meeting (virtual) on February 17th at 5:30. She added that she would send out the link to the Board. Commissioner Hemmer asked for an update on the status and implementation of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) for the Flea Market. Director Womack stated that this was approved by Metro Council to help the small businesses of the Flea Market. She reported that they would try to reach as many vendors as possible and it would be based on vendor classification prior to the Pandemic. She then went over some more details of the plan and implementation. Commissioner Hendricks asked when this would start and asked also if there was a plan to reach out to these new vendors. Director Womack answered that the start date was still unknown, but they were hoping to start at the April market. She stated that they would be using social media, open networks and personal contact to outreach for new vendors and that there was a lot of interest out there. She added that they had produced a flyer to send around also. Chair Weiner then moved to the Events Update item on the agenda.

Director Womack reported that the new Event Services Manager, Carla Miller, would be starting soon and would be at the next board meeting. She stated that the weekends were filling up quickly with events and that they were already booking legacy events and new events for 2023. Chair Weiner then moved to Old Business and the Fairgrounds Improvement Project, Stadium, Mixed Use, and Infrastructure Update item on the agenda.

Mr. Henley gave a financial update on each project at the Fairgrounds. Mr. Gobbell also gave an update on some of the Fairground's projects. Several of the Board Members had some questions concerning fencing, the bridge, and updates to the original Fair Park phase 2. Ms. Cavarra gave a brief update on the stadium progress and stated that all was on schedule, as well as the budget. She reported that she would share the DBE/MBE spend that week which they were very pleased with. She stated that they were working on parking ideas and alternative options and plans and that they were doing all they could to discourage street parking in the neighborhood. There were a few questions and some suggestions concerning parking and transportation from the Board. Vice-Chair Bergeron asked if Ms. Cavarra could attend the next NIAC (Neighborhood Impact Association Committee) meeting to talk about this issue. Ms. Cavarra then gave a brief update concerning the Mixed-Use Project. She reported that they had started prep work on block C and added that they hoped to have a ground breaking ceremony in early spring. Vice-Chair Bergeron and Commissioner Avila expressed their concerns about Fair Park staying open as much as possible during soccer events. Mr. Gobbell stated that everything was progressing nicely on the Infrastructure Project, and all should be done by late summer or early fall. Director Womack added that they had received the 22 million dollar funding for the Infrastructure Project Part 2. Chair Weiner then moved to the Bristol Motor Speedway Update.

Director Womack stated that they were just waiting on documents/the draft lease and analysis. Chair Weiner then moved to the Community Impact/Speedway Policy Discussion and Consideration item on the agenda.

Vice-Chair Bergeron stated that the Board did receive a community benefits commitment but that they did not have much detail yet and were still waiting for a hard commitment on funding. He stated there were still lots of questions to be answered. Commissioner Hendricks agreed and stated that he still had lots of questions and concerns and he also felt that Bristol could do better. Vice-Chair Bergeron stated his monthly reminder about the importance of decreasing track rentals and also honoring the other current limitations. Chair Weiner then moved to New Business and the FY23 Budget Submission Presentation item on the agenda.

Director Womack stated that they would soon be turning in the FY23 budget and wanted to bring a snapshot of the budget draft to the Board. Ms. Allen then went over the budget presentation. Vice-Chair Bergeron had some questions about the fair budget, the 2% reduction, a parking structure, and the racing season budget. He also stated that he would like to see an RFP done for the next local racing season since it would be a while before the Bristol deal would be decided and/or started. Commissioner Hemmer had some questions and comments about the shuttle for transporting customers, the salary study for employees, the divisional fair's expenses and revenue, the Flea Market reduction and the ARP that would hopefully start soon and event space pricing. Ms. Allen went over some subsidy information that Commissioner Hemmer had previously asked about. And Chair Weiner asked about security expenses which Director Womack explained were due to staffing issues with the security company that Metro was contracted with. She stated that they were looking into getting their own security contract since the Fairgrounds had special needs that needed to be accommodated.

Commissioner Hemmer then announced that he would be retiring from the Board. Several members of the Board and Director Womack expressed their appreciation for his service and time and stated that he would be greatly missed.

Commissioner Hemmer then made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hendricks seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was dismissed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chair, Sheri Weiner

Executive Director, Laura Womack