

Lorain Port and Finance Authority
Board of Directors
Marketing and Public Affairs Committee Meeting
Port Office
Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

Committee Members: Ms. Bonilla; Messrs. Nielsen, Veard and Zgonc (4)

Board of Directors: Messrs. Sommers and Zellers

Staff: Tom Brown, Executive Director
Tiffany McClelland, Assistant Director
Yvonne Smith, Accountant
Kelsey Leyva-Smith, Office Manager
Michael Brosky, Esq., Port Attorney (6:52 p.m.)

Guests: Rick Payerchin, The Morning Journal (6:43 p.m.)

I. Roll Call

A. The Marketing and Public Affairs Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Carl Nielsen with a roll call indicating a quorum present.

II. Disposition of Meeting Minutes

A. March 9, 2021, Joint Marketing & Public Affairs and Strategic Development Plan Committee Meeting: Mrs. Leyva-Smith said she fixed a typing error on page two. Mr. Veard moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Second by Mr. Zgonc. Motion carried.

B. May 11, 2021, Joint Marketing & Public Affairs and Strategic Development Plan Committee Meeting: Mr. Veard moved to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Second by Ms. Bonilla. Motion carried.

C. June 2, 2021, Joint Marketing & Public Affairs and Strategic Development Plan Committee Meeting: Mr. Veard moved to approve the meeting minutes. Second by Mr. Zgonc. Motion carried.

III. Report of Chairman

A. BRL Marketing Program: Mr. Nielsen said last year we started back up the campaign for BRL, Black River Landing. He wants to talk about what direction we want to take and where we want to go with BRL. Back before ROTR, he and Mr.

Steve Bansek wanted to brand the site to make it known as the Port's and a great place to visit. They presented to the board then but didn't get much traction. Last year, the idea was reenergized, and Mr. Brown allocated money for marketing items (T-Shirts). Staff and board members threw the t-shirts during intermission at concerts, and it was well received. Mr. Nielsen said his thought process is we have to pass a levy every five years. He said the decisions he makes are to ensure we continue passing levies. The public may not appreciate all we do, but they sure love going to concerts and seeing Black River Landing filled with people. He wants to make people more aware of Black River Landing, not just as the site of any one event. This is BRL, where people go to have fun and enjoy. We need to get creative and come up with the direction we want to push marketing Black River Landing. Mr. Nielsen said he thinks doing t-shirts again is a good idea. The people who pass our levy need to be excited about the stage project and what we do. What level of an ad campaign do we want to buy into to market BRL as a destination? Sort of like, Kelly's Island, Put-in Bay, or The Flats in Cleveland. Mr. Mullins said you need some type of draw. He thinks the facility is underutilized. We're active from Memorial Day to Labor Day, but there's so much more he thinks we can do. Maybe a website just for Black River Landing. Mr. Nielsen said the staff needs to buy into the ideas. His son suggested BRL having its own website, its own podcast on Wednesdays, and social media posts – something interns could do over the summer. Ms. Bonilla said she remembered an architect saying we needed a permanent draw year-round. Something like a water feature. Mr. Brown said a water feature is weather dependent, but the architect we chose is taking a holistic approach to the entire site. Mr. Nielsen said we have a lot of dog walkers. Do we look into having someone clean the trails during the winter months? What would the cost be? How would that factor into our budget? Mr. Mullins said Mr. Ralph Bruening used to maintain the sites for us. Do we need someone similar again? Mr. Nielsen said our real estate has grown, too. He can see as our fee structure gets more in line with where it should be, we could hire someone to be an event coordinator for our site, down the road. Mr. Kuszniir suggested maybe a snow hill for sledding.

He asked if there was money in the budget to hire a marketing firm to help formulate a five- or 10-year plan? He's interested in marketing our economic development as well. Mr. Nielsen suggested a work session in the future to lay out some of these things. He doesn't think we need to bring anyone in at this time. We need to solidify what we want before we bring someone in. (6:43 p.m. Rick Payerchin). Mr. Zellers said we need to get our name out there as much as we can. He suggested starting with the excitement of the stage. Mr. Nielsen said tonight's just to open everyone's mind. The next meeting can go over more specifics. Mr. Brown said ultimately this comes down to the budget and our strategic plan – who do we want to be? He remembers spending a lot of money and not a lot of return on investment from Maximum Velocity. You hire firms for specific things. He's hesitant on doing a retainer due to budgetary constraints. Mr. Zellers asked what it would cost? Mr. Brown said it varies. Mr. Mullins said \$25-30,000 to get a website. Mr. Brown said the staff gets pulled in a lot of different directions, and he would hate to spend that kind of money and not have fresh content regularly. He said he'd like the t-shirt and slogan to center around the permanent stage project. Mr. Nielsen said we want to sell our brand and new stage. We'll have a popup tent, and board members and staff will need to commit to concert dates they will attend to help promote the project. He suggested the committee recommending t-shirts again to the full board. It's within Mr. Brown's threshold. Mr. Mullins said what about hosting our own events? He sees an opportunity for Oktoberfest. Mr. Zellers said we also have boats. Mr. Nielsen said we should be partnering with people for events.

B. Water Taxi: Mr. Nielsen said the second item is the Water Taxi. He and Mr. Mullins are trying to get together with The Shipyards owners. He thinks we need to support the taxi whether we get funding or not. Last year was a learning experience for everyone. We made mistakes and did some things right. Mr. Mullins said by the end of the season people were asking for or about it. He thinks there needs to be better signage. Mr. Zellers asked if the loss was about \$14,000 last year? Mr. Nielsen said yes. Mr. Zellers said he's comfortable with that, and if we do get support then we'll be in an even better position. Ms. Bonilla

asked about the restaurants having a buy in? Mr. Nielsen said that's the plan to go to the business owners. The biggest benefiter of the taxi is The Shipyards. Mr. Nielsen said we don't have to decide tonight, but is everyone okay with the worst-case scenario? (Mr. Brosky 6:52 p.m.) Mr. Nielsen said if you factor in depreciation, it's about \$100 per hour including the captain. Mr. Kuszniir suggested sponsorships? Like tours sponsored by Mercy Health. Mr. Nielsen said by next month he hopes to have a more defined course of action for the summer. Mr. Brown said Rockin on the River opening night is May 27, 2022 and is the pour date for the Port. Mr. Nielsen suggested t-shirts for the volunteers.

IV. Other Business

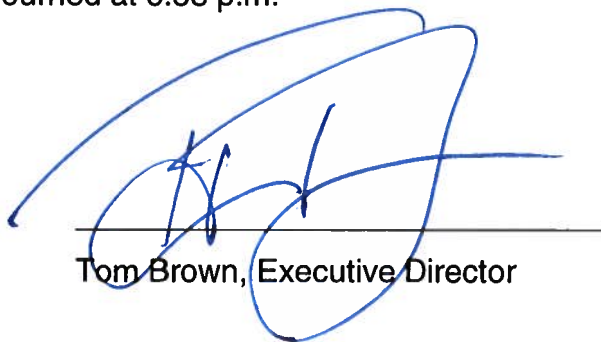
A. None.

V. Adjournment

A. There being no further business to come before the Marketing and Public Affairs Committee, Mr. Veard moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Mr. Zgonc. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.



Carl Nielsen, Chairman



Tom Brown, Executive Director