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[lorainport.com](http://lorainport.com)

DATE: February 4, 2021  
TO: Board of Directors  
FROM: Carl Nielsen, Chairman, Marketing & Public Affairs Committee  
SUBJECT: Meeting Notice

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Please be advised that a Marketing & Public Affairs Committee Meeting has been scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

Location:  
Lorain Port and Finance Authority  
319 Black River Lane  
Lorain, OH 44052

cc: Mayor/Administration  
City Council  
Media

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

**AGENDA**

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- I. Roll Call
- II. Disposition of Meeting Minutes
  - A. March 9, 2021, Joint Marketing & Public Affairs and Strategic Development Plan Committee Meeting
  - B. May 11, 2021, Joint Marketing & Public Affairs and Strategic Development Plan Committee Meeting
  - C. June 2, 2021, Joint Marketing & Public Affairs and Strategic Development Plan Committee Meeting
- III. Report of Chairman
  - A. BRL Marketing Program
  - B. Water Taxi
- IV. Other Business
- V. Adjournment

**Lorain Port and Finance Authority**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Joint Committee Meeting**  
**Marketing and Public Affairs & Strategic Development Plan**  
**Port Office & Zoom Online**  
**Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.**

**Committee Members:** Messrs. Bansek, Kuszniir, Mullins (Zoom), Nielsen and Zgonc  
 (Marketing)  
 Messrs. Kuszniir, Bansek and Mullins (Strategic)

**Board of Directors:** Messrs. Scott, Sommers (Zoom) and Veard (Zoom)

**Staff:** Tom Brown, Executive Director  
 Tiffany McClelland, Assistant Director  
 Yvonne Smith, Accountant  
 Kelsey Leyva-Smith, Office Manager

**Guests:** None

#### I. Roll Call

**A.** The Joint Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Chairman Steven G. Bansek (marketing) and Chairman Matt Kuszniir (strategic). Roll call indicated a quorum present for the Marketing & Public Affairs and Strategic Development Plan Committees.

#### II. Disposition of Meeting minutes

- A.** January 9, 2018, Strategic Development Plan Committee: Mr. Bansek moved to approve the meeting minutes. Second by Mr. Kuszniir. Motion carried.
- B.** June 5, 2018, Strategic Development Plan Committee: Mr. Bansek moved to approve the meeting minutes. Second by Mr. Kuszniir. Motion carried.
- C.** August 14, 2018, Marketing and Public Affair Committee: Mr. Kuszniir moved to approve the meeting minutes. Second by Mr. Bansek. Motion carried.

#### III. Report of Chairman

**A.** Joint Discussion for Stage Improvement Project: Mr. Kuszniir turned the floor over to Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown said at the end of 2019, we reached out to a few architecture firms to do some long-range planning for the stage top. We recently did some repairs that will give us five or six more years on the existing vinal. He

said we have some decisions to make as far as how we intend to finance a new stage. A new shell would be between \$25-30,000, and we spend about \$15,000 annually to put it up, take it down, store it and clean it. When you look at those amounts, if we're creative as an organization and amortize that out and look for some sponsorship or grant dollars, are we better in the long run to make a better feature on our site. We have a good base. Mr. Brown said the three architecture firms he reached out to agree it's a good start. We could add on to the existing location because it has plenty of power and we think it makes sense here. Only board and committee leadership have seen the three proposals so far. Mr. Brown asked how the board would like to proceed? Do we want to send the proposals to a committee, which then makes them public? Do we create a subcommittee to start researching and vetting the architects? Mr. Brown said he sees this as: 1. Strategically, when does this make sense? 2. Financially, how do we do it? 3. Marketing is the third prong. How are we going to go out to get these dollars? He said we didn't receive capital budget dollars. We budgeted this year to get to get renditions once we pick an architect. Mr. Brown thinks a rendering will go a long way to helping us get sponsorships and grant dollars. People are going to want to see what we're going to build and what are marketing plan is going to be. Mr. Kuszniir said upon review, Mr. Ron Cocco with Clark & Post was the only firm to submit a rendering so far. Mr. Brown said they went above and beyond. They come up with tentative drawings and a budget. He said he went with Mr. Bob Earley to Mentor Stage, and they spent a lot more because they started from scratch, but to do it right he thinks we'll spend \$1 million pretty easily. The other two groups put together a basic package about who they are and a quote for a rendering. Mr. Brown said a subcommittee could be appointed to review the proposals, interview the firms and then decide. Mr. Bansek said he wanted it to be a separate committee to keep it more private initially. He wants to keep the unique look we have in a more permanent setting. He thinks generating a specific wish list and selecting a subcommittee is the way to handle the project moving forward. Mr. Bansek said permanent lighting and sound are very important. It would not only open our property for other uses, but it would also

save potential renters money when hosting an event. He wants to see a green room and restrooms included, too. Mr. Brown said operationally that is a must because we need to separate the office from the concerts. He said if Mentor gets up and running, he wants to schedule a visit for board members to see it in person. It will provide an idea of the feel of a green room and restrooms. They also did well integrating screens on the site. Mr. Bansek said we also have to be aware of the obstructed view if we expand up. Mr. Nielsen said he wants to approach the stage the same way as the marina selection process. He thinks the committee should include an expert. Mr. Kuszniir agreed with Mr. Nielsen. He added the lighting project also had a separate committee that worked well. Mr. Brown said that was the approach used with the office building, too. Once we decide on an architect and design, we can hit the ground running for sponsorships. We could have a tent at concerts and events throughout the year. Mr. Bansek said we've talked about a few ideas for marketing projects specific to Black River Landing. He said there will be an update on that next month. Mr. Nielsen asked if there was agreement in having an expert? Mr. Bansek said yes, having the expertise is important, especially for acoustics. Mr. Nielsen said experts may look at proposals differently than we do. Mr. Bansek said this is probably about a three-year project. Mr. Brown suggested Mr. Mullins invite those interested in being on the subcommittee to reach out to him and then we can start naming people to the subcommittee and start scheduling. All three firms know we had paused the process due to COVID-19. The immediate short-term goal has to be getting someone under contract, getting board approval of the contract and then taking that design to marketing and financial committees to continue moving it forward. Mr. Kuszniir asked about Ferry Terminal Building process and if there was an expert we used then? Mr. Brown said there was a staff wish list, and a subcommittee of board members met with the different firms for presentations. URS was the winning bid for the offices, but that was a little different because we had funding and went from design to building. For this project we will use renderings to fundraise. Mr. Kuszniir said the next step is to form a committee and invite the firms in for presentations. Mr. Brown said he will

send the link he has to all board members. It's a folder with all three proposals. It's public record, but please keep it internal. This is just the planning process. Mr. Brown thinks the companies will need a couple of months to refresh their proposals. It's good to get things started. Renderings will help immensely with the marketing campaign.

#### **IV. Other Business**

**A.** None

#### **V. Adjournment**

**A.** There being no further business to come before the Joint Committee, Mr. Bansek moved to adjourn the joint meeting. Second by Mr. Kuszniir. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

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Steven G. Bansek, Chairman (Marketing)

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Tom Brown, Executive Director

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Matthew Kuszniir, Chairman (Strategic)

**Lorain Port and Finance Authority**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Joint Committee Meeting**  
**Marketing and Public Affairs & Strategic Development Plan**  
**Port Office**  
**Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.**

**Committee Members:** Messrs. Kuszniir, Nielsen and Zgonc (Marketing)  
 Messrs. Kuszniir and Mullins (Strategic – No quorum)

**Board of Directors:** Messrs. Scott, Sommers, Veard Jr., Zellers

**Staff:** Tom Brown, Executive Director  
 Tiffany McClelland, Assistant Director  
 Yvonne Smith, Accountant  
 Kelsey Leyva-Smith, Office Manager  
 Lil, Goose Dog

**Guests:** Rick Payerchin, Morning Journal  
 Ron Cocco, Clark & Post Architects  
 Tari Rivera, Regency Construction Services

## I. Roll Call

A. The Marketing & Public Affairs Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Carl Nielsen. Roll call indicated a quorum present. There were not enough Strategic Development Plan Committee members in attendance to have a joint meeting.

## II. Report of Chairman

A. Presentations for Stage Top Project: Mr. Brown said this is a vision session. They have gathered thoughts and want to make a presentation. Today begins the process of the permanent stage top. Working to locate a third group.

1. Presentation 1: Mr. Ron Cocco said Clark and Post is a local Lorain firm. He is a principle and president of the business. They are here to discuss proposed improvements being considered for the Black River Stage. Osborn Engineering would be the structural engineers. He's worked with them over 25 years. Karpinski Engineering out of Cleveland, Mechanical Engineers, who he has worked with over 45 years, and Regency Construction would also be involved. Mrs. Tari Rivera is here today from Regency Construction. They put

together pricing for a preliminary design. Mrs. Rivera will touch on project delivery. With every project, they like to know the group they're working with and their mission. They want to maximize what we have and encourage waterfront activity. They think we have a good foundation. Mr. Cocco said the Lorain Port and Finance Authority is the key economic development driver in the region. In approximately August 2019, he met on the site with Mr. Brown to discuss potential ideas. Notes from that day included the aging fabric stage cover, operation and maintenance costs, the current need for rental of event equipment, an office for promotion, storage space and a green room. A manageable assigned capital budget would need to be in place. The budget is a key element of the project. A program of requirements is needed for improvements. There will need to be enhanced stage space which will enhance the performance and give space for permanent year-round storage, a green room, restrooms for performers, and a closable, secure storage area for permanent lighting and sound equipment. Mr. Cocco said they look to utilize the infrastructure already existing here. They want to create a distinct design essence, a community vision, and an event stage to elevate Back River Landing as a premier destination for outdoor live events. Black River Landing is strategically located. There are alternative ways of building. Approximately 15-19 years ago, different methods of building were utilized. Recently state laws and requirements have changed. Mrs. Rivera is the president of Regency Construction Services, which she founded 27 years ago in Brook Park, Ohio. Regency worked with Mr. Cocco on a service building in Lorain and several other projects. Mrs. Rivera said Design, Bid, Build is a common practice or building method. The first alternative is Design Build (DB). In this scenario, the contractor and designer are hired as a team. She said it's the best of both worlds. Designing, crunching numbers, scheduling, etc. are done by the team to provide a recommendation about contingency and is an open book process. Contingency goes back to the owner, which would include the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP). Mrs. Rivera said the other approach is Construction Manager at Risk, which is a three-entity team



- putting the project together. Mrs. Rivera recommended the Design Build (DB) process. Mr. Cocco said the site has numerous attributes that make it attractive. One is a focus on functionality. Second is a focus on form – the idea of movement, dance and music. Mr. Cocco provided a rendition with the gray area representing the current stage and the pink representing the expansion. He proposed hanger doors to close during the winter months. The right wing would be a green room with restroom and office space, too. The existing stage is about 2,200 square feet. They propose about 150% increase in size. Mr. Cocco said he has a very collaborative firm. It's a volatile time with pricing, so they think alternative methods of approach works well. Why chose their team? Mr. Cocco said number one he's local and has pretty good knowledge of the area. He said they are committed to projects and clients and have a proven design approach. He described his team as very interdisciplinary, inclusive and collaborative, and committed to design excellence. Principal involvement would be from start to finish. He said they listen, care and pay a lot of respect and attention to their clients. Mr. Brown said he thinks the team did a great job going over a quick wish list. Today is about the board members' questions. Mr. Cocco sees this as a catalytic project. Mr. Bob Earley had the insight to see the potential this space had. Between Cleveland and Sandusky, Black River Landing is what is available. The potential here is just waiting to happen, and not just as a music venue. Mr. Cocco said a bid package would be created toward the end of this year and he indicated the project would not start until September or October 2022 and be completed by 2023. Mr. Brown suggested the board members could make a trip to Mentor, Ohio to view their facility.
2. Presentation 2: Mr. Brown said Mr. Robert Maschke is the second firm proposing a design concept. Mr. Maschke said his presentation will be much different than the last. He doesn't want to presume anything. He wants to discuss ideas and establish budgets, then work from there. He approaches each project in a unique way. He thinks this is about making it an iconic stage. His offices are about 20 minutes from Lorain. Robert Maschke

Architects is an award-winning firm, earning hundreds of design awards. The firm built a home that jumpstarted a neighborhood, and a multi-arts room at Cuyahoga County Community College. Mr. Maschke said he works well with clients and in a creative way. He does not do his best work without guidance from the client. Mr. Mullins said a goal of our project is to make Lorain a destination. He is excited to see the design they came up with. Mr. Brown said a goal should be people taking pictures even when events are not happening. Mr. Nielsen said to him the roof sets the tone for the uniqueness of the project. Mr. Maschke agreed. Mr. Nielsen said the whole site changes when the stage top comes down. He said he would love to see something that blows him away as far as the roofline is concerned. Mr. Maschke said the scope needs to be refined. He does not think \$1 million will get us to where we want to be. Mr. Nielsen said a big challenge is not wanting to close during the summer season from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Mr. Maschke thinks we can accomplish the project during the offseason. Mr. Nielsen wants to start from scratch. He thinks what we have has worked well so far, but he does not want to limit the new design. Mr. Brown said one of the challenges is the setup and teardown for lighting and sound. He wants that to be permanent. People sometimes think we have it and we do not. Raising rates is also a consideration. Mr. Mullins said we could add larger acts, too. Mr. Maschke said the sky's the limit. It depends on what we want and what the estimations come back at. He indicated he has a pulse on prices for materials and subcontractors. Mr. Zellers asked what Mr. Maschke recommendation as an approach? Mr. Maschke recommended Design, Bid, Build. Mr. Maschke stated he only does three (3) projects a year. Mr. Zellers said it is then a more traditional approach. Mr. Brown asked about keeping skateboards and bicycles off the stage. Mr. Maschke indicated that is a hard condition to deter. Mr. Maschke said initial conceptual design sets the budget, which is what we really want. Mr. Zellers asked for an idea of the time frame – could we start after Labor Day in September? Mr. Zgonc asked about Mr. Maschke's previous stage projects. Mr. Maschke said he had some experience with

stages, but nothing outside like this. The biggest challenge would be geotechnical and wind threshold, but nothing is insurmountable. Mr. Zellers asked what about this project interests him? Mr. Maschke said it's an iconic structure and a unique opportunity. It's visible from many angles. These opportunities don't come around often. Mr. Mullins asked if the stage would move locations? Mr. Maschke said he would not take anything off the table right now.

### **III. Other Business**

**A.** None

### **IV. Adjournment**

**A.** There being no further business to come before the Marketing and Public Affairs Committee, Mr. Zgonc moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Mr. Kuszniir. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

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Carl Nielsen, Vice Chair (Marketing)

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Tom Brown, Executive Director

**Lorain Port and Finance Authority**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Joint Committee Meeting**  
**Marketing and Public Affairs & Strategic Development Plan**  
**Port Office**  
**Tuesday, June 2, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.**

**Committee Members:** Ms. Bonilla; Messrs. Nielsen, Scott, Veard & Zgonc (Marketing)  
 Ms. Bonilla; Messrs. Kusznr, Sommers & Zellers (Strategic)

**Board of Directors:** None

**Staff:** Tom Brown, Executive Director  
 Tiffany McClelland, Assistant Director  
 Yvonne Smith, Accountant  
 Kelsey Leyva-Smith, Office Manager

**Guests:** Todd Mayher, DLR Group  
 Mark Morris, DLR Group  
 Gary Fischer, Fischer & Associates

**I. Roll Call**

**A.** The Joint Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Carl Nielsen (marketing) and Chairman Matt Kusznr (strategic). Roll call indicated a quorum present for both the Marketing & Public Affairs and Strategic Development Plan Committees.

**II. Report of Chairman**

**A. Presentation for Stage Top Project:** Mr. Kusznr turned the floor over to the presenters. Mr. Gary Fischer introduced himself and his fellow architects. He said he wanted to talk about taking the stage to the next level. Bringing in a more permanent, weather-proof stage. Mr. Todd Mayher said this is a great opportunity and they're looking forward to the challenge, if selected. They've known about the project for a week. DLR has an integrated design team. The benefit to this is they can consult whoever they need throughout the process. Mr. Mayher said they have experience with the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame. Another iconic project is Blossom Music Center. It was the first amphitheater in the area and is the home to Cleveland Orchestra. They also designed an amphitheater on the water in

New York called Bethel Woods Center for the Arts. Case studies were discussed by Mr. Morris. He talked about the Murphy Arts District that built an amphitheater to attract people and keep people in the city. That project is about a 7,000-person capacity. Coastal Arts Pavilion at Freeman Park in Coastal Delaware is another project he's done. It holds a variable enclosure. Levitt Pavilion is in Dayton, which is like Downtown Lorain. Mr. Morris said residents noticed an uptick in business once complete. The Charlene and Charles Hinson Amphitheater in New Albany, Ohio is another project they had close to a downtown, main shopping area, but the seating is different than here in Lorain. That project included a dressing room, green room, stage manager's office, closet for equipment and a small janitor closet. Mr. Zellers asked what that project cost? Mr. Mayher said about \$6.8 million. Mr. Morris said they're going to go over a few ideas they have for Lorain and talk about rethinking how the entire site can work. Mr. Fischer said to keep an open mind. They thought outside of the box. Mr. Morris said the first idea is "The Ribbon." He said they would add to the back of the stage. It would feature an LED projection display in 360 degrees to broadcast what's happening on stage or offer advertising in the off season. It would accentuate the site and waterfront by incorporating lighting. Idea two is "The Slope." This idea considers where the audience is and how it's distributed on the site. It would shift the stage to the north, which could be a sledding hill during the winter months. This setup accentuates the bridge even more. The final idea is "The Grove," moving the stage to the east side, nearest the docks, for clear and unobstructed views. Mr. Fischer said all three are very different solutions. He said this is Lorain's time. The port has proved the site works, and it's a regional draw to people. He thinks his team can take it to the next level and allow flexibility for music, live theater, speeches and more. Mr. Nielsen asked if you set the budget first, or design and then figure out how to pay for it? Mr. Fischer said it can go either way. Mr. Zellers asked which idea Mr. Fischer liked? Mr. Fischer said he thinks "The Ribbon" is outstanding. Video moves or can be displayed on the screen. Mr. Zellers asked about elevation changes? Mr. Fischer said it could happen. He said he really likes all three ideas. Mr. Mayher said it's important to have back of house

connected to the stage. Mr. Nielsen said he and Mr. Brown talked about enclosing the stage between performances. Is there a way to seal it? It would save resources. Mr. Fischer said “The Ribbon” idea allows for covered seating. Mr. Nielsen asked about the inspiration behind the current stage? Mr. Fischer said sails and the company who made the tent influenced it’s appearance. Mr. Nielsen said we really need to get the shape right. Mr. Zellers asked about the fundraising aspect? Mr. Morris said they help the organization create a nonprofit, such as “The Friends of The High Lines.” Christina Cruz leads the firm's community engagement that are accomplished in working with Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). Mr. Scott said if we “think big,” what would “The Ribbon” cost and what would the timeline be? Mr. Morris said it’s a complicated answer. If we look at a recent project of a similar scale, maybe \$6.8 million. That is the one in New Albany. Mr. Morris said the construction period would likely be at least 12 months. Mr. Fischer said the ideas are to stimulate conversation. The port isn’t locked into anything. Mr. Brown said he’s talked with Mr. Fischer over the years and applauded them for putting a presentation together so quickly. He said they had great ideas. Mr. Fischer said at this point nothing is off the table. He asked which idea is the favorite? Mr. Zellers said he does not like “The Slope.” Mr. Fischer said he appreciated the project and was grateful for the opportunity. He said the city deserves this.

### **III. Other Business**

- A.** Two weeks from yesterday, board and staff will travel to see the Mentor setup. Mr. Brown will arrange transportation. Their show is until about dark. Mr. Kuszniir asked if any of the architects who presented worked on Mentor? Mr. Brown said no. Mr. Veard said he won’t be at next week’s meeting. Mr. Nielsen asked who he thought would do the best job? Mr. Zellers said DLR is the real deal. Certainly, looking at the presentations, to get us excited they surpassed everyone. He likes the fundraising part of DLR Group. He likes that Mr. Fischer is from Lorain. He thinks Mr. Robert Maschke would do a great job, but he doesn’t have the same vested interest not being from Lorain. Mr. Nielsen said Mr. Maschke and tonight’s presentation were his favorite. He thinks Mr. Maschke would be the most

creative, out-of-the-box person with DLR not far behind. Mr. Zellers said Mr. Maschke wasn't as prepared as DLR Group. Mr. Sommers thought Mr. Fischer did well. Mr. Zgonc clarified Mr. Fischer was involved in the hotel project. Mr. Nielsen said there may be interest in funding with the county. They like Mr. Maschke. Mr. Brown said if we're down to two, we can have them both come in and dial in. His question is, if our budget is \$3 million, can they reign it in? We need to be realistic. With BRL being an open site, Mr. Brown wants to cater to the promoters. Mr. Zellers wonders if we scale down, will DLR Group still be interested? Mr. Brown said we don't want to overbuild. Mr. Scott wondered if Clark and Post would be a better fit for our budget? Mr. Zellers said Mr. Maschke could likely create something eye grabbing that fits our budget. Mr. Kuznir liked Mr. Cocco's passion, but his presentation wasn't as passionate as the others. Mr. Brown said Mr. Maschke has pursued this project since they met. He really wants the project and only takes three (3) a year. Mr. Fischer has always been in tune with our operation. Mr. Veard said acoustics are important. Mr. Nielsen said he believed all three architecture firms would consult an expert. Mr. Brown said Clark and Post has theatre background. Mr. Nielsen said one downside is we'd eliminate the parking. Mr. Brown said a major question is the construction schedule. We do not want to lose an entire season. Mr. Veard said New Albany was not inexpensive. Mr. Nielsen said to please send specific questions or concerns to Mr. Brown and Ms. McClelland. Mr. Zgonc said he thinks we should. Mr. Sommers agreed.

- B.** The board congratulated Mr. Kuznir on getting married.

#### IV. Adjournment

- A. There being no further business to come before the Joint Committee, Mr. Sommers moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Mr. Scott. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

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Carl Nielsen (Marketing)

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Tom Brown, Executive Director

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Matthew Kuszniir, Chairman (Strategic)