



MINUTES OF THE DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS COMMISSION

**Thursday, August 24, 2023, 9 AM
114 North Main Street**

Board Members Present: Benjamin Orgel (Chair), Demar Roberts (Vice Chair), Elizabeth Low (Secretary), Williams Brack (Treasurer), Senator Raumesh Akbari, Commissioner Mickell Lowery, Ray Brown, Janice Banks, Surayah Hasan, Councilwoman Cheyenne Johnson, and Lauren Stimac

Board Members Not Present: John Zeanah (for Mayor Harris), Ashley Cash (for Mayor Strickland), Victoria Young, and Ed Stephans III

Staff Present: Paul Young, Christine Taylor, and Penelope Huston

Guests: Rob Moore, Stacey Jones, Joann Massey, Neil Strebig, Mike Humes, Ken Welch, and Isaac Fisher

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. Christine Taylor called roll for board members present to confirm quorum. Chairman Orgel called for approval of the August 24, 2023, minutes. Ray Brown motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Demar Roberts seconded the motion, after roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Before moving to the next agenda item, a public comment was heard from former Groove-On-Demand employee, Isaac Fisher. He stated that he felt he was terminated unfairly due to filing multiply complaints. He believes a lot of Downtown crime is associated with VIA and would like to address this issue with the New York office. Paul Young responded to the comment and the issue has been addressed with VIA.

Public comment was also heard from Ken Welch regarding the nomination of Willie Brooks to the DMC board. He is concerned that it is a conflict to have an elected official nominated to the board and also feels that the selection committee of the next DMC President is being keep a secret. Paul Young agreed to discuss the nomination of Willie Brooks with the county and the President selection will be discussed later in the meeting.

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called for agenda item III: Chair's Report

Chairman Orgel gave a brief update on the selection committee and the committee has had the first initial meeting with HRO Partners. He asked board members to please spread the word about the search for the next DMC President and all interest candidates should apply.

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called for agenda item IV: Financial Update

Penelope Springer reported that the DMC Audit process has begun.

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called for agenda item V: MLG&W Update

Doug McGowen, MLG&W President updated the board on various ongoing MLGW projects, including upcoming infrastructure updates, modernizing the grid, tree trimming (most outages are tree related) and LED lighting. Before closing he answered board member questions.

Chairman Orgel thanked Mr. McGowen for the update.

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called for agenda item VI: President's Report

Paul Young gave a brief update on the President search. The job was posted on December 10th, and we are now accepting resumes for the position. Downtown Dining week starts November 6th, please plan to dine Downtown. The Planning Department is attending the APA conference that is held here in Memphis.

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called for agenda item VII: New Business/ Adjournment

Chairman Orgel made brief closing remarks, seeing no other business, the meeting was adjourned.