



MINUTES OF THE DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS COMMISSION

**Thursday, December 27, 2023, 11 AM
114 North Main Street**

Board Members Present: Benjamin Orgel (Chair), Williams Brack (Treasurer), Senator Raumesh Akbari, Ray Brown, John Zeanah (for Mayor Harris), Elizabeth Low (Secretary), Demar Roberts (Vice Chair), Victoria Young, Commissioner Mickell Lowery, Councilwoman Cheyenne Johnson, Ashley Cash (for Mayor Strickland), Surayyah Hasan, Ed Stephans III, and Lauren Stimac

Board Members Not Present: Janice Banks

Staff Present: Paul Young, Christine Taylor, Brett Roler, Penelope Huston, Penelope Springer, Eleslie Walker, Clint Burke, Lawrence Green, Sam Caldwell, Tori Haliburton, and Jon Shivers.

Guests: Austin Baker (HRO Partners), Chandell Ryan, Jason Bolton, Stephen MacLeod, Neil Strebis, Mike Humes, CW30, Kelli Cook (WMC Action News 5), Steffen Reals (ABC24), Porsha Hernandez, Keenon McCloy, Robert Knecht, Melvin Jamerson, Administrator, and Member of Public

Chairman Benjamin Orgel called the meeting to order at 11:07 AM. Christine Taylor called roll for board members present to confirm quorum.

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

Chairman Orgel thanked Diane Hyman (HRO Partners) who help run this process and a special thanks to Austin Baker, who helped and lead the process while donated most of his time for the search process. The committee had over 20 applicants that were reviewed and interviewed. A special thanks to committee members Ray Board, Tanja Mitchell, Eric Mathews, Michelle Ye, Elliot Embry, and Anton Mack who volunteered over 24 hours to review applicants. The committee has a unanimous recommendation of Chandell Ryan as the next DMC President. Ray Brown motion to approve the recommendation, and the motion was seconded by Ed Stephans, after roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chandell Ryan thanked the selection committee for their recommendation, she is excited to join the team and look forward to working with everyone. She is a native Memphian, a attorney by trade and most of her career has been spent being a public servant. She is passionate about Memphis, particularly Downtown and is excited to get started. She is looking forward to adding to the momentum that this team has already started.

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

Chairman Orgel had the pleasure of meeting Chandell Ryan through the selection and is excited for everyone to get to know you, and the committee was impressed by you and can't wait to see your leadership.

Chairman Orgel asked that our new Mayor, Paul Young say a few words before closing.

Paul Young congratulated Chandell and said that she is inheriting a gift, the DMC team is incredible, the staff mean so much to Downtown, they all are passionate and committed. He has worked with Chandell several times over the past 10 years, she is an incredible leader, passionate, extremely smart, and diligent and Downtown Memphis Commission is in great hands.

The DMC work and City government are interconnected, and effects the advancement of our whole region. A message that he will tout is that Downtown directly drives the economy of the entire Mid-South region. The next chapter of Downtown will be focused on getting the little things right, cleaning up Downtown on a higher level, addressing solid waste, continuing working on Blight, the team has done incredible work, but we need more. The building across the street (100 North Main) has a chance of new life, from the result of the work of DMC, I would like to acknowledge Brett Roler, who was recently promoted to Chief Operating Officer, he did a lot of work to ensure that the work on 100 North Main took place. He would like to give this team his commitment to ensure that Downtown continues to thrive as well as all the neighborhoods within the City of Memphis. Thanks for the honor of a lifetime, serving as the DMC President.

Before closing, Chairman Orgel congratulated Chandell Ryan and wished everyone happy holidays and happy new year.

Seeing no other business, the meeting was adjourned.