

# Agenda Memorandum

**Natchez-Adams county Economic Development Committee (NAEDC)**

**Prepared by: Riccardo Giani, City Planner**

**Date: January 7, 2019**

**Location:** 124 S. Pearl Street, City Hall, Mayor's Conference Room.

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Alderman Sarah Carter-Smith welcomed the Council, and wished everyone a Happy New Year. She asked everyone to observe a moment of silence.

Alderman Smith introduced New Members, Linda Mason of Von Drehle. Linda Mason was just recently promoted to a manger position within Von Drehle and looks to expand the community impact of the business.

Dan Gibson, representing Music Festival, presented a report on Margaret Martin from the sub-committee formed by the Music Festival organizers. Mr. Gibson stated that he is still relatively new to Natchez, however he got involved with the Festival of Music because of his passion for the piano. Mr. Gibson stated that the Festival is not only economic driver, it has a national pull of some of the country's star theatre performers. However the condition of Margaret Martin is not good. An architect was consulted and reported that the "bones" and foundation were good, however the HVAC, electrical, and especially the plumbing issues had to be mitigated. This sub-committee's vision included using a renovated Margaret Martin has a museum of fine arts, without duplicated or infringing on any other institution in Natchez. Dan Gibson explained all the members, supporters, and sponsors of this project and hopes that the City and maybe the County could all come together and fund the restoration vision of the Music Festival.

Lance Harris, of the Natchez Indian Village, stated that the Acadian Center of the Arts in Louisiana would be a good example for the Music Festival's vision, and that he could get Mr. Gibson in touch with the director.

Alderman Smith stated that the "creative economy" industry is on the rise and many municipalities in this state and others have received major appropriations to create art or cultural districts. Additionally, these districts are great techniques for downtown revitalization. Alderman Smith stated that the Mississippi Development Authority may have some resources worth investigating. Chesney Doyle, of FOR Natchez, gave the New York City Highline organizational structure as an example of a nonprofit entity running a

highly successful public space and now tourist attraction. With the support and organization of local groups MDA could potentially be encouraged to allocated funding for the creation of these districts in Natchez.

Debbie Hudson gave an update on bringing the C-Spire chess academy program to Natchez. She stated that Natchez will be hosting a chess tournament in June at the Convention Center. This will be a great chance for Natchez to gain the visibility needed for C-Spire to gain interest in a downtown location for their program.

Chesney Doyle reported that the project with the Stennis Institute regarding consolidation and efficiency strategies for Natchez-Adams County is moving forward. This project will entail multiple, engaging forums where city officials and residents will learn strategies in order to make government more efficient. In other news, Mrs. Doyle reported that the Request For Proposal (RFPs) for the Depot has been published and proposals are due at the beginning of March.