

**MINUTES**

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT**

**JANUARY 7, 2015  
6PM**

**AXIS901  
901 MAIN ST.  
MANCHESTER, CT 06040**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Donald DuBaldo, Chair  
Stephen Carter, Vice Chair  
Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary  
William Bayer  
George R. Dorin  
Edward Firestone  
John Tunila, Esq.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER: Mark Pellegrini, Planning & Neighborhood Services  
April DiFalco, GMCC

STAFF PRESENT: Tana Parseliti, Downtown Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Steve Gates, Imagine Main Street  
Elaine Hadge, Landmark Restaurant  
Lynn Sottile, Schultz Design  
Robert Barker, Cruisin' on Main Street Committee  
Linda Barker, Cruisin' on Main Street Committee  
Paul Scappaticci, Cruisin' on Main Street Committee

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Mahoney

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS  
ABSENT: None

**Call to Order**

Mr. D. DuBaldo called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

**Roll Call**

Mr. D. DuBaldo conducted a roll call. Mr. Robert Mahoney was absent. Mr. Firestone is expected to arrive shortly.

Mr. Firestone arrived at approximately 6:05PM

## **Minutes**

December 2, 2014 – Mr. Tunila moved adoption of the Minutes of Dec. 2, 2014.

Mr. N. DuBaldo offered a friendly amendment to paragraph four of the section of the minutes entitled, “Review of Budget History”. The first sentence of the section would be changed to read: “Mr. Carter noted that the property assessments should be due next week.”

Mr. Bayer seconded the motion with the change. All voted in favor. 7-0-0.

December 10, 2014 – Mr. Tunila moved adoption of the minutes of Dec. 10, 2014. Mr. Bayer seconded the motion. All voted in favor. 7-0-0.

## **Public Comment**

Mr. Barker stated that he would like to see the donations proposed by the Cruisin’ on Main Street Committee for Cruisin’ 2014 approved by the Board of Commissioners so the committee can move forward planning for Cruisin’ 2015.

Ms. Barker stated that many people spend a lot of time as volunteers for Cruisin’ each year. There is a precedent for donations from the event. She is sure other people would like to see the donations made.

## **Officers and Committee Reports**

**Chair, Donald DuBaldo** – Mr. D. DuBaldo reported that he, Mr. Carter, Mr. Dorin and Ms. Parseliti all attended the Town Board of Directors meeting on Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Carter spoke about the commissioners’ request for increases in fines and request to retain the parking fines issued in the Downtown District. He noted that Ms. Parseliti was well-prepared and provided important information. It was Mr. D. DuBaldo’s opinion that the Board of Directors felt the fines requested were too high and there are other things the commission should address before fines are increased. He felt that we need to better explain our position and the history of how we arrived at the need for our request.

Mr. Dorin noted that although the directors expressed a variety of concerns, they did not shut us down. We will have the opportunity to come back before them. He further expressed his frustration about the amount of time spent discussing customer impact. We need to make our case that if there is no parking there will be no customers. Communications is not the issue. Parking scofflaws are holding back the growth of the Downtown. One business had over 100 tickets in one year. Another had 51 tickets. We need increased fines as tools to keep parking available for customers.

Mr. D. DuBaldo noted that there is always room for improved communications. He pointed to the need for improved signage.

Mr. Dorin stated that we need to make the point to the Directors that if anyone values the customer it is the businesses.

Mr. D. DuBaldo stated that we need stronger enforcement tools in order to be effective. We must make our needs clear to the Board of Directors and accept and address their concerns.

Mr. Bayer asked if both an increase in fines increases and retention of fines was requested. Mr. D. DuBaldo replied in the affirmative.

**Secretary and Marketing Committee Chair, Nicholas DuBaldo** – Mr. N. DuBaldo reported that as the Marketing Committee has not met recently, he does not have anything to report.

**Parking & Maintenance Chair, Robert Dorin** – Mr. Dorin noted that he had already offered his input on the Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> Town Board of Directors Meeting. He has already spoken informally about eliminating the \$20,000 for snow removal from the FY 15-16 budget, as it is not feasible this year.

Mr. Dorin said we had a great snow removal process so far this year.

### **Request to Board of Directors for Fine Increase and Sharing**

Mr. D. DuBaldo provided a report on this topic as part of this Chairman's Report.

*Note: The request to the Board of Directors for Fine Increase and Sharing was changed by the commission to a Request for Fine Increase and Retention.*

### **Other Reports**

**Cruisin' on Main Committee** – Mr. Firestone reported that the Cruisin' Committee met this morning and are working on Cruisin' 2015.

Imagine Main Street – Mr. Gates reported that the Imagine Committee is getting ramped-up for 2015. A small committee met today and agreed that they will focus on programming between the months of May and October. The First Thursday in May will serve as the kick-off. They will work with the District on Strollin' on Main in June.

The group is working on art and art-related programming. They want to do six more benches and initiate an Art Bike Rack Project. When those items become firmer, Mr. Gates will seek commission input on their impact on Main Street. Mr. Gates will be sure the Downtown District is fully engaged and informed about Imagine's plans and desires.

### **Cruisin' Transition Working Group**

Mr. D. DuBaldo reported that the committee met with the Director of Finance regarding the accounting aspect of Cruisin' transition. Although there are some complications the transition to the town can be accomplished. Most of the details have been worked through. The transition to the Town is still subject to review by the Town Board of Directors. The Downtown District will continue to keep Cruisin' as a part of its program of work for Cruisin' 2015. Pending approval by the Board of Directors, the event will transfer to the Town for Cruisin' 2016.

Mr. Firestone noted that the Manchester Parks and Recreation Dept. would take over the event beginning next year.

### **Administration**

**Manager's Report** – Ms. Parseliti provided a written report that was distributed at the meeting. She provided information on handheld ticketing devices (e-ticketing devices) that included specifications, features and costs. She suggested that the Parking Committee review and evaluate the information. If it is found to have merit then it should be referred to Chief Montminey for his input.

An event permit application was received from New Seasons. They would like to hold a Motorcycle Show on a Sunday in late August 2015 as a fundraiser.

Regarding Cruisin' transition efforts, Ms. Parseliti has met with Karen Gubbins of the Manchester Parks and Recreation Dept. to begin planning for the transfer of Cruisin' on Main information and to begin developing a collaborative working relationship.

Ms. Parseliti reported that a new business would open at 974 Main St. in Spring 2015. It is a custom uniform shop.

On the subject of new businesses, Mr. D. DuBaldo informed commissioner that his space at 44 Purnell Place has been rented to a transportation brokerage company. Mr. Dorin indicated that he has signed a lease for second floor space at 877 Main with Prime Mortgage, a company that has 20 full time and 10 part time employees.

Ms. Parseliti reported that the holiday decorations should be removed within the next two week.

**Staff** – Ms. Parseliti asked the commissioner how they intended to proceed to evaluate the status of the recently vacated administrative assistant position and how they see the 18 hours of work performed by the former assistant accomplished?

### **Old Business**

**Manchester Mile Road Race** – Ms. Parseliti provided additional information on a permit application by Bryan Colletti for a road race on June 4 or 11 of 2015. The race would begin on East Center St., proceed down Main St. and end at the Forest Street Parking Lot. The time listed on the application is from 7PM to 8PM. They would like to serve beer and food at a post race party in the Forest Street Lot.

Mr. Gates stated that he had been approached by Mr. Colletti regarding this proposed event and had directed him to speak with the commission.

The commission agreed that they need more information and would like to have Mr. Colletti attend a future meeting. It was also pointed out that Imagine Main Street and the Pride in Manchester Committees should be contacted as this may impact their events.

Action on the permit application was deferred to the next meeting.

### **Cruisin' 2014 Donation**

Mr. D. DuBaldo wished to mention that the commission had discussed our current budget hardships, losses for this year and possibly next year, and, as a result, the potential for providing less in donations from Cruisin' 2014. He asked that this be convened to the Cruisin' Committee and expressed his surprise when the donation request from Cruisin' came through with the same donation request as originally proposed.

Mr. Firestone stated that the committee members who work on the show would like to continue to “give back” to the community through the local charities. When he brought the idea of a reduced contribution to the committee they agreed to have the DMSSD retain an additional \$3,000.00. When the committee seeks donations and sponsors for the show they tell people that the money is going to the community as a whole.

Mr. D. DuBaldo noted that when staff time spent on the event is calculated, the board of commissioners feels that there is not really any “extra” money remaining after expenses. He recognized the amount of time and hard work put-in by the committee. His intent was to negotiate somewhat less in the way of donations.

Ms. Barker interjected that donors are giving to Cruisin', not to the Downtown District.

Mr. Dorin asked if Cruisin' is not covering its bills, is the Downtown taxpayer being called on to cover the bills?

Mr. Carter stated that a major issue is the District is administering the event. Revenue and expenses all come through the District. Over time, the accounting for the event did not account for the full personnel cost. Only \$5,000 of \$8,500 in personnel costs has been allocated. Mr. Carter felt that the real personnel cost of Cruisin' is more like \$20,000. He expressed the opinion that we think we are generating positive cash flow when we were not. When he spoke with the Town regarding the Cruisin' transition, he informed them that their expenses would be a lot more than \$5,000 and they should incorporate that into their assessment. In addition, there were services that were paid for provided by CERT and others.

Mr. Tunila stated that support of Cruisin' has been the mission of the Downtown District for a long time. To look at the allocation of staff time from a dollar for dollar standpoint may not be fair. The District devotes staff time to Imagine and the like. While he understands the fiscal responsibility, we have accepted the names of the charities for this event and made a commitment based on a course of action that has taken place over a long period of time. Cutting the donations would generate bad feelings and create negative publicity that would be more of a detriment than a savings.

Mr. Dorin commented that \$4,000 would not change our situation enough to make a difference. He noted he had asked years ago about the time spent on Cruisin'. While we can give, we should not strangle ourselves. This needs to be made clear going forward.

Mr. Bayer said that it is not good to cut-off the donations with no warning. He supports making the donations as requested.

Mr. Firestone reminded the commissioners that there is intrinsic value to the Downtown in having 20,000 to 30,000 people attend Cruisin' and be exposed to our businesses. This is not something you can put a value on.

Mr. Tunila moved to approve the donations as requested and shown on the list provided.

The Cruisin' Committee recommended charitable donations totaling \$8,700 allocated as follows:

- MARC - \$5,000
- MACC - \$1,500
- Explorers - \$200
- MHS Cheerleaders - \$500
- Thrall Scholarship Fund - \$1,000
- Manchester CERT - \$500

An additional allocation of funds to the DMSSD in the amount of \$3,021.03 from the remaining excess of revenue over expenses was also recommended.

Mr. Bayer seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried 6-1-0 with Mr. D.DuBaldo voting against.

Prior to beginning the budget review, Mr. Carter wished to convey to fellow commissioners that he learned from his presentation to the Town Board of Directors on Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>. He felt that the Board understood there is a problem with parking in the Downtown. We simply need to provide the answers.

Before leaving the meeting at 6:55PM, Mr. Gates expressed the sentiment that we all want Main Street to succeed. He would like to see parking fines be part of a holistic plan to address parking in the Downtown.

### **Budget Review**

**FY 15-16 Proposed** - A mill rate history for the District was prepared by Ms. Parseliti and distributed. It shows the DMSSD adopted budgets, total annual District assessments and annual SSD tax rates.

Mr. Carter conducted the review. A spreadsheet was prepared showing adopted budgets and actuals for FY 12-13 and FY 13-14 as well as the FY 14-15 adopted budget, actuals as of 10-31-14 and anticipated actuals. Also included were three different budget proposals for FY 15-16.

### **Income**

**Tax Revenue** – Last year we budgeted \$144,000. The three proposed budgets show \$144,000, \$142,000 and \$147,500.

**Parking Revenue** – We think it is safe to increase this as permit fees will increase and we are anticipating an increase in employees who will purchase permits. Mr. Carter expressed the sentiment that all business owners should pay for their employees parking permits. This idea will be reviewed at a future committee meeting.

**Violation Fees** – Mr. Carter suggested we remove these fees from the budget, as we cannot guarantee they will be received.

**Miscellaneous Income/Other Event Sponsorship/Income** – Dropped to \$450 as it was over budgeted.

**Print and Other Adv.** – Mr. Carter suggested we budget for \$4,900 as we can guarantee this number.

**Banner Program** – This will match the current year if we are able to resell all current banners.

### **Expenses**

#### **Marketing**

**Themed Events** – Will be budgeted significantly less than FY 14-15.

**Cruisin** - Cruisin' is higher to account for the costs of Cruisin' and the \$5,000 we "gained" from Cruisin' totaling \$34,700.

**Special Event Insurance** - Will likely go down, as we are not doing Visits with Santa.

**Print Co-Op Adv** – Have been reduced to be more accurate.

**Holiday Lights** – Are a contractual obligation and will stay the same.

#### **Parking**

**Parking Staff** – We expect to double the number of constables We will reassess when we see the current numbers.

Lights – Although the Parking Lot Improvement Project will mean an increase of the number of lights, the fact that they will be LED is expected to mitigate much of an increase.  
Lighting Repair – Only a slight increase due to participation in the Town contract.

#### Maintenance

Snow Plowing – We added a little due to changes to parking lot configurations with the Parking Lot Improvement Projects. Snow hauling was eliminated.

Parking Lot Purchase – We are taking a leap of faith that the fee will be waived. Mr. D. DuBaldo was told that the fee had been waived in the past. The budget will demonstrate that we can balance the budget without that expense.

District Repairs and Maintenance – Will be reduced a little as we should be able to cut something from flower watering. We may try to bid out the maintenance as a flat rate contract.

Street Beautification – Will be reduced by \$1,000.

Street Banner Program – Expenses will be less. The only cost will be for new sponsor slices if needed.

#### Administration

Admin. Asst. PT – Mr. Carter proposed that the assistant position not be filled for the FY 15-16 budget. He feels that if Cruisin' is transitioned that should offset the assistant role.

Ms. Parseliti suggested that the commission look at the assistant's job description and consider how the basic clerical functions of the office will be met. We have had an administrative assistant for the past nine years.

Mr. Carter noted that the Town Accounting Dept. is already doing the accounting and we will be able to cut out some of the finance work.

Mr. Pellegrini asked how much of the assistant's time was spent on Imagine Main Street and Cruisin'?

Mr. Tunila would like to have the position remain unfilled with the condition that Ms Parseliti not absorbs the duties of that position.

Mr. Dorin noted that the way we do business has changed.

Mr. D. DuBaldo suggested we do less hard copy mailing and more digital distribution. We should take the next six months and try to incorporate the position responsibilities. Ms. Parseliti was asked to come-up with a plan.

Office Rent – Should remain fixed.

Office Utilities – Cable/Phone – Should stay about the same.

Office Equipment Purchase – Budgeted for a new computer for Ms. Parseliti.

Office Supplies – Slight reduction.

Printing, Binding, Advertising – Stays the same as FY 14-15.

Legal Ads – Slightly reduced.

Rebate – A slight reduction.

The commission looked at the overall budget and decided to drop the line item for Parking Staff from \$27,300 to \$24,000 with a drop in the position SSI from \$2,050 to \$1,800. Along with the removal of Parking Violation Income of \$4,000, this should leave us with a surplus of \$721.00.

Mr. Dorin moved to accept Budget Proposal #3 with the changes agreed upon – deletion of the \$4,000 in violation fees and reduction of the Parking Staff from \$27,300 to \$24,000 with the equivalent SSI reduction.

Mr. Tunila seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried 7-0-0.

Ms. Parseliti asked the commission to review the Annual Meeting material to be sent to the Downtown business and property owners. A draft meeting notice and agenda were provided.

Mr. D. DuBaldo strongly felt that two previous budget years should be shown along with the proposed budget: FY13-14 Actuals, FY 14-15 Anticipated and FY 15-16 Proposed.

Ms. Parseliti asked that a commissioner proof the budget material before mailing. Mr. Carter agreed to do so.

All agreed that Presentation of the Budget should be moved to the second item on the agenda.

#### **Review of DMSSD Sponsored Events**

Deferred to a future meeting.

#### **BOC Action Items Review**

Not reviewed due to the late hour.

#### **New Business**

**Parking Lots Improvement Plan** – Mr. Pellegrini reported that plans for the North and South lots are going to the Planning Commission shortly. Agreements are ready and they will soon be going out. Mr. Pellegrini is still in meetings regarding the Purnell Place Lot.

The Planning Dept would like to invite members of the commission to a meeting to review the plans, prior to holding a Public Information Meeting on the plans. Mr. Pellegrini is looking for suggested meeting times. He would like to hold these meetings within the next several weeks.

Mr. Carter suggested that bright lights are needed in the lots and that widening the back entrance to the ally walkway between MCC on Main and First Niagara that leads from Purnell Place Parking Lot to Main Street should be incorporated into the project. Connectivity between the rear lot and Main St. is important.

**Thank You Letter** – Mr. Tunila moved that a letter be prepared and sent to Ms. Wilson thanking her for her seven years of dedicated efforts on behalf of the District Board of Commissioners and the Downtown. Mr. N. DuBaldo seconded the motion. There being no discussion, the motion passed 7-0-0.

**Public Comment**

Ms. Hadge suggested that new signage created as part of the Parking Lot Improvement Project inform people that there is parking in the rear. Mr. Pellegrini noted that wayfinding signs have been incorporated into the program.

Ms. Hadge said that many people do not know there is a two-hour limit. Police will not enforce the parking limits.

Mr. Dorin said we have spoken about booting or towing and it is possible.

Mr. D. DuBaldo asked Ms. Hadge to attend the Town Board of Directors Meeting to share her experience with chronic overtime parkers.

Ms. Hadge noted that she is happy the commission voted to fund the Cruisin' 2014 donations. Landmark Café does get repeat business from Cruisin' attendees.

Ms. Sottile commented that he commission should have communicated with constituents before going to the Town Board of Directors with their request for fine increases and retention.

Ms. Parseliti reported that Chief Montminey would like to work with the commission on the issue of fines.

**Adjourn**

Mr. Firestone moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15PM. Mr. Carter seconded the motion that passed 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Tana Parseliti, Downtown Manager  
Recorder