

MINUTES

**ANNUAL MEETING
DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT**

**JANUARY 13, 2016
8AM
LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM
494 MAIN ST.
MANCHESTER, CT 06040**

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

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

PRESENT: Mark Pellegrini

STAFF PRESENT: Tana Parseliti, Downtown Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Justine Hayes
Vinni Quast
Leydh Quast
Tom Tomko
Lynn Sottile
Jim Spafford

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Mahoney

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

ABSENT: April DiFalco

Call to Order

Mr. D. DuBaldo called the meeting to order at 8:01AM.

Presentation of Proposed 2016-2017 Budget

Mr. Carter referenced the proposed budget document mailed to constituents and available at the meeting and noted that budget detail for the FY 16-17 budget is available at the meeting for those who wish it.

He noted that our proposed budget for FY 16-17 is in the far right column, the completed actuals for FY 14-15 on the left and current YTD in the middle. We did make an accounting change about a year ago to reflect the transition of Cruisin' on Main to the Town. Cruisin' straddled our fiscal years. We have adjusted our books for the remaining funds for this year so that all funds are posted in the fiscal year that the event took place. That is why there is a one-time shortfall in Cruisin revenue in FY 14-15.

We believe our permit revenue will go up a little bit. Parking violation revenue is something new to our budget. We are projecting roughly \$10k in revenue. In FY 16-17 we are looking at a reduction in income of roughly \$30,000 due to Cruisin' transition to the Town.

On the expenses side of the budget, salaries and parking enforcement increased due to the addition of one new parking constable and additional enforcement hours. We had a little rise in SSN/Flex Benefits. The cost of Holiday Lights should be roughly the same. Outside utilities are being changed over to LED, which should save a considerable amount of power resulting in an anticipated \$6,000 savings. Repairs and Maintenance should be roughly the same, as should street beautification.

There is no longer an expense for Cruisin. In the budget category, Print & Other Advertising, Mr. Carter pointed out that the Other Advertising monies are not restricted to print, but may be used for alternative advertising mediums.

The Snow Removal line item for the FY 16-17 Proposed Budget increased based on past experience.

Mr. Carter noted that the FY 16-17 Proposed Budget comes in at an expense of \$212,170 which is roughly a break-even budget.

We did have a small error in the print. The FY 15-16 Budget Surplus/(Deficit) should have been shown as a surplus of \$2,436, not \$712.

Mr. Tomko commented that he liked that the District was able to receive monies form parking violations. Mr. Carter credited Mr. D. DuBaldo and Mr. Dorin for their advocacy for this change. The commission felt it did not make sense for us to expense but not collect.

Priorities for the Upcoming Year

Mr. Bayer reviewed the list of priorities noted in the *2015 Year in Review* that was distributed at the meeting. They included:

Economic and Business Development

- Create a big vision for the Downtown District and communicate the vision.

- Continue to work on filling property vacancies.
- Work with parties to improve investment in properties. Investigate capital improvement incentives for private property.
- Work with appropriate parties to attract investment in targeted areas.

Relationship Building

- Regularly communicate the role of the Downtown District, its accomplishments and concerns to Town elected officials.
- Identify ways to establish mutually supportive interaction between MCC on Main, Axis901 and the Downtown District.
- Continue to work with Imagine Main Street.

Operations and Maintenance

- Continue to work on a new snow clearing and removal protocol to provide improved customer access along on street parking areas.
- Continue to explore approaches and technology that would improve parking operations.

Marketing and Special Events

- Monitor special events for positive impact.
- Provide staff consulting to Cruisin' 2016 as needed to insure a smooth transition to Town management.

Committee Development

- Continue to cultivate robust committees and charge them with specific jobs.
- Recruit more members for committees. This may include people from outside of the Downtown.

Highlights of Accomplishments of the Past Year

Mr. Nick DuBaldo provided an overview of the accomplishments of the past year, referencing the *2015 Year in Review* for a more detailed list. Over the past year the commission worked to:

- Transition Cruisin' to the Town of Manchester to insure it continues to be effective.
- Interface with the Town on creating a better system of snow removal.
- Investigate the feasibility of parking pay stations in the Downtown parking lots.
- Streamline means of communication with the Town.
- Welcome The Wall That Heals, The Traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum. The Wall brought thousands of visitors to the Downtown.

Comments and Questions

Mr. D. DuBaldo called for comments and questions.

Mr. Tomko suggested that monies be added to the advertising budget. He maintained that people do like Main Street. He recently met two women who are moving to Manchester from Hebron. Mr. Tomko believes we need a feel-good video, similar to Bangor, Maine's viral video, that reaches both a local and regional market. Perhaps budget funds could be allocated for that? We need to sell Main Street as a great place to go.

Mr. Tomko inquired if we have retired the parking lot debt? Mr. D. DuBaldo responded that we have asked for forgiveness on the balance of the parking lot debt and received it.

Mr. Tomko continued, offering comments on the recent meeting regarding parking kiosks (pay stations). He attended the meeting and left feeling it would not be a deficit to customers. Mr. D. DuBaldo clarified that the kiosks are intended for non-customer parking.

Mr. Tomko requested that the DMSSD put a discussion item on their agenda regarding acquisition of land around Gorman Place and possible finance through the Town. The Youth Center needs parking and could use the same lot. Could the District allocate \$1 from parking fees to the purchase of property for the lot since we are no longer encumbered by other lots?

Mr. Tomko stated that Main Street looks good . He asked if the District was working on having the Town plow to the center of Main Street. Mr. D. DuBaldo responded that the Town is not able to handle that change at this time but will modify the current practice. They will pile snow on the bump outs and are committed to removing it more quickly than in the past. They are setting aside some equipment and labor for that purpose.

Mr. Quast observed that his business has been here for one year and has just gotten a recycle bin. He asked if there is a group rate for Downtown District businesses. Mr. D. DuBaldo responded that this is handled individually by businesses at this time. The District can look into a group rate and see if that is a viable option.

Mr. Quast asked if Purnell Place will be converted to a two way street and if someone could speak to the Purnell Place Parking Lot redesign? Mr. D. DuBaldo responded that there will not be two way traffic on the stretch of Purnell entering from Main Street. There will be no traffic exiting onto Oak at the west end of the lot. Mr. Pellegrini noted that there will be two way traffic along the east end of the lot, along the current fence line.

Mr. Quast asked if there will be a reduction in parking spaces in that lot. Mr. D. DuBaldo responded that yes, there will be a slight reduction. The Parking Lot Improvement Plan includes wayfinding signs that will encourage use of the abutting lots as well.

Mr. Tomko offered that if the District would like to encourage employees to park in lots other than the Purnell Lot we might want to offer a discounted rate for underutilized spaces. Mr. D. DuBaldo noted that we currently offer free all day parking in the Cottage Street Lot which has seen increased use. Some thought has been given to increasing the cost of parking in the Purnell Lot but there are currently no plans to do that.

Ms. Hayes inquired as to the percentage of parking space lost with the parking lot redesign? There are currently many vacancies in the Watkins Building. When the bank was there the lot was packed. Mr.

Pellegrini responded that most of the spaces lost (approx. 30 spaces) are at the underutilized north end of the lot. He invited interested parties to come to the Town Planning Office to view the plans.

Ms. Hayes asked if there will still be designated customer parking spaces. Mr. D. DuBaldo responded that yes, that will not change.

Mr. Quast questioned the average cost of the parking pay station and how many we were considering? Mr. D. DuBaldo noted that the consultant recommended 5 pay stations with a cost in excess of \$60,000. The commission is struggling with that number. The issue we are trying to address is to provide a means for non-permit day parkers to legally park over the two limit. We are trying to determine if the cost is approachable.

Mr. Tomko suggested that the District remind people that the complaints of high parking costs are offset by the moderate rents that are available in the Downtown. There are inflationary costs in relation to parking. He suggested that the District increase permit costs by \$.25 to \$.50 per month.

Mr. Quast noted that working in Hartford, the cost for parking is \$80/month.

Adjourn

Mr. Bayer moved to adjourn. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. All voted in favor (7-0-0). The meeting adjourned at 8:33AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tana Parseliti". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "T".

Tana Parseliti, Downtown Manager
Recorder