

MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT

OCTOBER 4, 2017

6PM

AXIS901

901 MAIN STREET, MANCHESTER, CT 06040

MEMBERS PRESENT: Donald DuBaldo, Chair
Stephen Carter, Vice Chair
Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary
William Bayer
John Tunila, Esq.
Winfried Quast

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS
PRESENT: Gary Anderson, Director Planning and Development

ALSO PRESENT: Stacey Zackin, Work_Space

STAFF PRESENT: Tana Parseliti, Downtown Manager

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rebecca Gentile
Bob Sulick

EX OFFICIO ABSENT: April DiFalco, President, GMCC

STAFF ABSENT: None.

Call to Order

Mr. D. DuBaldo called the meeting to order at 6:04PM.

Roll Call

Mr. D. DuBaldo confirmed those present and absent.

Minutes

September 6, 2017 – Mr. Carter moved approval of the Minutes of September 6, 2017. Mr. Quast seconded the motion. All present voted in favor. (6-0-0)

Public Comment

None.

New Business

Introduction of Work_Space Coordinator, Stacey Zackin – Ms. Zackin began work on Sept. 6. Her mission is to create a collaborative work environment with co-working, meeting, conference and retreat space. She shared information on the re-branding of MCC on Main and Axis 901 as Work_Space. The building will be treated as a unified entity managed by Town staff. MCC will continue to curate the wall space in the Dehn Gallery. A strong emphasis will be placed on renting the gallery and classroom spaces for meetings and

gatherings. The current Axis 901 space will continue as a co-working space. A re-branding event will be held all day on Jan. 29th. Free co-working days will be offered.

All co-working offices but two are currently rented. There is a mix of business represented: long term insurance, digital media marketers, not for profits, clinical therapists and an artist.

A Business Seminar Calendar is being planned.

Downtown Community Police Report, Sgt. Marc Hughes

Main Street Video Camera Status – Sgt. Hughes reported that higher than expected bids were received for new video cameras. The cameras are being put back out to bid. Due to changes in technology they would like to replace the current cameras at Main & Pearl and at Main & Park. The new cameras will have a 360 degree view with pan, tilt and zoom capabilities. They will be able to do facial recognition and zoom to read a license plate. Their goal is to have the cameras in place prior to Thanksgiving.

Sgt. Hughes commented on current community policing issues noting that pan handling was the most frequent complaint. He noted that the panhandling ordinance has its limits. Commissioners suggested not allowing panhandling within 25 ft. of a ATM. Sgt. Hughes noted that constituents should call if panhandling is a problem even if it is not aggressive. Sgt. Hughes and his team want to know who the panhandlers are. He noted that there is an ongoing investigation in to massage parlors.

Old Business

Action on Request to Waiver Overtime Parking Tickets – Sgt. Hughes reported as a member of the Downtown Parking & Maintenance Committee. He noted that the committee was unanimous in their recommendation not to waiver the parking tickets submitted by Mr. Daniels and discussed at the September board of commissioners meeting. He noted that the Parking & Maintenance Committee makes every effort to remain consistent in their evaluations. The committee expressed concern with establishing a precedent of overruling a past decision and ensuring fairness to other waiver applicants whose waiver requests were denied. The commissioners discussed several reasons why they agreed with Sgt. Hughes analysis. All agreed that the waiver refusal determined by the Parking & Maintenance Committee should stand. Mr. D. DuBaldo asked Ms. Parseliti to send a written response to Mr. Daniels under his signature.

Action on Proposal to Fund Design Services Grant Program – Mr. Carter explained the grant program proposed by the Downtown Economic Development Committee as a part of a multi-faceted downtown economic incentives program. An overview of the Preliminary Design Assistance Grant Program was circulated to the commissioners.

The Downtown EDC understands that older properties are often more costly to renovate. This can be intimidating to prospective buyers and users. They felt it would be easier to attract buyers or potential tenants if cost and code related questions could be answered up front. The purpose of the program is to offer professional design assistance for the SSD and owners and potential owners of Downtown properties interested in making improvements to accommodate new uses. To that end they developed a Preliminary Design Assistance Grant Program. This program would provide one-time mini grants to provide high level code analysis and/or technical assistance with code-related structural or mechanical issues. Grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 would be awarded to current or potential owners or tenants with a viable re-use concept. The SSD would also be eligible to use the funds for buildings it deems to be priorities.

Mr. Carter noted that the SSD currently has a surplus of approximately \$150,000. The Downtown EDC suggests funding the proposed Preliminary Design Assistance Program at a level of \$20,000.00.

Mr. Quast moved to approve a supplemental appropriation from the SSD fund balance of \$20,000.00 to fund the proposed Preliminary Design Assistance Program. Mr. Bayer seconded the motion. Commissioners discussed additional program features such as application evaluation criteria and ownership of design assistance reports. The vote was called by Mr. D. DuBaldo. All voted in favor. (6-6-0)

Mr. Carter noted that we have an appropriate use of the newly approved Preliminary Design Assistance Program before us at this time. An older downtown property is currently under consideration for sale or lease. The potential cost of elevator repair is a stumbling block to progress on this potential transaction. The Downtown EDC recommends use of funds from the Preliminary Design Assistance Program to fund a professional assessment of the cost of elevator repair. Mr. Anderson noted that this is a perfect fit for the program as it will help the current owner, potential owner and future owner to have this information.

Mr. Bayer moved that the Downtown District Board of Commissioners appropriate \$1,800 from the \$20,000 Preliminary Design Assistance Program for assessment of elevator repair, said quote to be the property of the Downtown District. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried (5-0-1) with Mr. Tunila abstaining.

Strategic Planning Meeting Report Status, Gary Anderson – Mr. Anderson distributed draft copy of the Strategic Planning Meeting Report for review by the commissioners. The final report will be forwarded to the Strategic Planning Committee and their recommendations will be brought to the commission for review.

Wayfinding Signs Status, Gary Anderson – Mr. Anderson reported that a contractor is in place to fabricate the signs. The Town Highway Dept. will install the signs in approximately three weeks.

Officers and Committee Reports

Report of Officers

Donald DuBaldo, Chair – None.

Stephen Carter, Vice Chair – Mr. Carter deferred his report to the Finance Committee agenda item.

Nick DuBaldo, Secretary – Mr. N. DuBaldo deferred his report to the Marketing Committee agenda item.

Finance Committee, Steve Carter

Budget Report

FY 17-18 – Mr. Carter reported that work will begin on the FY 18-19 budget. A preliminary draft will be presented at the November meeting.

Marketing Committee, Nick DuBaldo – Mr. N. DuBaldo reviewed upcoming events.

- Scarecrow Festival, Oct. 14-18
- Safe Trick-or-Treat, Oct. 28
- Road Race Saturday, Nov. 18
- Downtown Tree Lighting, Nov. 30.

He reported that the Marketing Committee is working with the Road Race Committee to create a Downtown Road Race Saturday event for Nov. 18th. Mr. Jim Balcome, Race Director, recommended concentrating on a small but quality event. A draft copy of proposed activities was distributed.

New Commercial, Vinnie Quast – Mr. Quast reported that the new commercial is on hold due to a change in Comcast rates. The committee is looking to boost the existing commercial. It was suggested that we ask if the commercial could air on CH 16. Mr. Quast suggested we revisit the budget for a second commercial.

Parking & Maintenance

Report from Sept. 25, 2017 Committee Meeting

A copy of the report was included in the meeting packet.

Monthly Parking Violations Report - Ms. Parselitti provided the most recent Parking Violations and Wavier statistics.

Downtown Economic Development Committee, Don DuBaldo

Mr. D. DuBaldo expressed an interest in revisiting the placement of signs on Main St. at Purnell & Main and Oak & Main directing visitors to side street businesses. He suggested that these might be broadly considered municipal signs. Mr. D. DuBaldo suggested that other towns might serve as an example for use of this type of sign. He feels strongly that we need to do something to help our businesses.

Mr. D. DuBaldo, Mr. Anderson and Ms. Parseliti will explore the viability of this idea.

Other Reports

President, GMCC, April DiFalco – Absent.

Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and Development – Mr. Anderson reported on a tour of the Watkins Building condos that have recently been placed on the market by Key Bank. They range in size from 500 to 5,000 sf with a range of costs. The building offers many amenities and energy efficiency upgrades.

Administration

Manager's Report- Ms. Parseliti attended the Cheney Historic District Joint Meeting convened by the Planning Dept. where the challenges of preserving historic architecture and environment while meeting changing housing and development needs were discussed.


Ms. Parseliti also attended a social media workshop entitled "Drive New Business with Social Media" held by Peter Helms of Ideal Consulting. She found the content valuable and would like to explore offering the workshop to Downtown businesses.

Public Comment – None.

Adjourn

Mr. Bayer moved to adjourn. Mr. Tunila seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried (6-0-0). The meeting adjourned at 7:29PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Tana Parseliti, Downtown Manager
Recorder