

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

**June 3, 2020  
8AM**

**Due to COVID19 Pandemic June 3, 2020 meeting will be by online conference call.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Donald DuBaldo, Chair  
John Tunila, Vice Chair  
Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary  
Tammy Gerhard  
Robert Sulick  
Joseph Lipiner  
Daniel Mulligan

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS  
PRESENT: Gary Anderson, Director Planning and Development  
Robert Pagani, GMCC Representative  
Beth Stafford, MACC Downtown Churches Representative

ALSO PRESENT: Lynn Sottile  
Joy Press

STAFF PRESENT: Danuta Wolk-Laniewski, Downtown Manager

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rebecca Gentile  
William Bayer  
Winfried Quast

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: None

**Call to Order**

- Mr. D. DuBaldo calls the meeting to order at 8:03 AM

**Roll Call**

- Mr. D. DuBaldo noted those present and absent.

**Minutes**

- May 6, 2020; May 19,2020 – Mr. Tunila motions to accept, Mr. Sulick seconds. All approve.

**Public Comment**

- Ms. Press wanted to connect at the meeting about socially distant activities in the Downtown and how she could coordinate and help with those events. She would like to see local business participation in having a downtown scavenger hunt or a similar event to get people out, about and walking downtown. Mr. Sulick mentions that while we do have events as a downtown, Imagine Main Street is the primary organization hosting events like that. Ms. Gerhard notes that Imagine is hosting an art walk this Thursday in lieu of their previously planned event. Mr.

Tunila inquires as to whether Ms. Press is a business lessee or property owner in the Downtown - she replies that she is not but would like to help the community regardless. Mr. Sulick feels that anything we do now in the current health situation would be very unique and that Ms. Press' skills would likely be something we could support. He recommends getting in touch with Lynn Sottile. Ms. Press will get in touch with Ms. Sottile, Ms. Wolk-Laniewski, and Mr. N. DuBaldo to discuss further plans.

## **New Business**

- **Nominations for Chairman** - A call for nominations for chair brings Ms. Gerhard nominating Mr. Tunila. Mr. Sulick nominates Ms. Stafford. Ms. Stafford indicates that she would like to work with someone however she feels that with her inexperience on the Downtown Commission she would prefer to learn from someone for a while prior to acting as chair. There being no further nominations and Mr. Tunila being willing to serve in that position, all vote in favor of Mr. Tunila as Chairman.
- **Nominations for Vice Chairman** - Ms. Gerhard nominates Ms. Stafford as Vice Chairman. There being no further nominations and Ms. Stafford being willing to serve in that position, all vote in favor of Ms. Stafford as Vice Chairman.
- **Nominations for Secretary** - Ms. Stafford nominates Mr. N. DuBaldo. Mr. N. DuBaldo declines his nomination and nominates Ms. Gerhard. There being no further nominations and Ms. Gerhard being willing to serve in that position, all vote in favor of Ms. Gerhard as Secretary.
- **Nominations for Treasurer** - Mr. D. DuBaldo recalls that in the past we did not have an available treasurer position and would like to make sure that the Downtown can form a treasurer position. Mr. Tunila notes that the Commission does have that ability. However, that position would not have any financial powers attached to it. The role of the treasurer would be to oversee the books and to review the information from the Town and Downtown and be able to analyze that information and the present it to the Board. Ms. Stafford wonders if it would be better and more accurate to have a "Finance Chair" versus a "Treasurer". Mr. Mulligan would like more familiarity with the Downtown before taking on that responsibility. Ms. Stafford nominates Mr. Sulick for Finance Chair. There being no further nominations and Mr. Sulick being willing to serve in that position, all vote in favor of Mr. Sulick as Finance Chair.
- **Meeting Turnover** - At this point, Mr. D. DuBaldo turns the meeting over to the new Chairman, Mr. Tunila. Mr. Tunila thanks the members of the Board for their faith in him as chair. He would like to say that he doesn't see himself as contributing in this position beyond a two year term so that someone who has different strengths than his (which will be relevant for the coming years) can take over. He also expresses some concerns about the Wednesday morning meetings and would like the members of the board to assess whether the scheduled days and times work for the new members or would an evening meeting enable more participation?
- **Purnell Place Closure** - Mr. Anderson - There has been much disc about Purnell Place for a long time and long-term many have seen it as a unique asset to Downtown as a potential gathering space, art space... the impetus for the closure now was the outdoor dining executive order. We identified assets that other towns and cities don't have like bumpouts and other non-traditional

outdoor spaces for dining. We had to balance the needs of fire services, garbage removal, and outdoor dining. So, it will be closed for a few days per week to provide assistance to our restaurants. What's there now is temporary and not *the* permanent solution and does maintain emergency access. Mr. Anderson recognizes that change is hard for folks and he tries to manage change for the goal of long-term benefit. Mr. D. DuBaldo was not under the impression that people would lose all access from the Main Street side and it was a surprise to him and his tenants to suddenly see the street closed. He does want to be helpful to businesses in the area but also feels that there are other tenants who use Purnell Place who will have needs which will not be met. At this time, he does not know that he would be on-board with a long-term or indefinite closure of Purnell Place. Mr. Anderson explains that the main reason the closure happened the way it did is because the planters cannot be moved easily. The traffic division has parameters regarding whenever a road is closed, that a hardscape is necessary to ensure that people understand that the road is now closed rather than by closing it with cones or bollards which some people may not pay enough attention to. Mr. Sulick would like to strengthen the District's relationship with the Town departments to minimize future "surprises". Ms. Gerhard asks Mr. Anderson if the seating is open seating or designated to a specific restaurant? Mr. Anderson says that it is assigned to specific restaurants due to State regulations. While he personally doesn't have an issue if someone was to use the seating from a not-assigned restaurant, the State might have an issue.

- **Establish Reopen Committee** – Mr. N. DuBaldo sees the committee as a contact point for our constituents to assist in the ever-changing opening requirements as well as promoting the businesses that are open or will be opening. Mr. Lipiner volunteers to chair the committee. Mr. Mulligan and Mr. N. DuBaldo will also serve. Mr. Sulick wonders if Ms. Press would be interested in serving on that committee. Ms. Gerhard will contact Ms. Press to see if she would assist on that committee. Mr. Lipiner would like to know what the Board's objective would be for the committee. Mr. Tunila would like to see that develop between Ms. Wolk-Laniewski and the Marketing Committee. Ms. Gerhard asks if we should bridge the committee with Imagine Main Street? Mr. Lipiner would like to ensure that people have the resources to reopen whether it be turning people to the SBA or other means. Mr. Tunila notes that Ms. Parseliti has been doing a wonderful job getting information out to businesses about the economic opportunities that are out there and available but if the committee discovers any gaps in the information, to act to fill them.
- **Contractor Sidewalks Clearing of Snow** – Mr. Tunila- One thing we have previously debated about is a concept of the snow accumulations creating a barrier between the cars and businesses during the winter months. The Town doesn't have the resources or desire to handle that, we may not as well. He would like someone look at the logistics of that removal process and start acquiring quotes. Mr. Tunila feels that Mr. Mulligan would be a good asset for this task. Mr. Anderson recalls that there is money in the Downtown budget specifically for this. Mr. Tunila confirms but also feels that the District doesn't have to spend the money just to spend it, that we should be as diligent as possible to ensure that if we spend the money, it's effective and has the intent we envisioned.

- **St. James Parking Lot Lease** – Ms. Wolk-Laniewski has been acting as the liaison between the Downtown and the Church. Public Works did some research into the damage to the curbing in the parking lot. They are in also in negotiations with the Church about the parking lot lease and the conduct of repairs specifically. Mr. Anderson notes that the improvements to the parking lot may be intertwined with a larger access project the Town has been trying to move forward on for years. Mr. Tunila would like it known that the District does not have the financial ability to resurface that parking lot but would like to secure and maintain as much parking as possible.
- **Events and COVID-19** – Mr. N. DuBaldo informs the Board that the Beller's Summer Concert Series looks like it will be able to go forward. Ms. Wolk-Laniewski will look into the slew of recent executive orders to see whether or not outdoor concerts are covered. She indicates that there may be some insurance coverage issues due to the pandemic. Ms. Wolk-Laniewski has not been in contact with Wethersfield about the Showmobile for the Tree Lighting, they have not been reachable. There is no cost associated with reserving the showmobile so she will continue to attempt to reserve it for the Tree Lighting.
- **Plans to Accommodate Additional Outdoor Dining** – Mr. Anderson reports that restaurants are such a big part of Downtown and the Town has gone above and beyond to accommodate the executive order pertaining to outdoor dining. His department has had 35 applications for outdoor dining so far. He notes that some businesses are upset about the loss of parking but the landlords have been required to approve or deny any changes to the parking in/at their building rather than just a unilateral Town decision. Mr. Sulick inquires as to the duration of these temporary permits even if restaurants can open again. Mr. Anderson says that at this time they will be permitted through October, however if a restaurant doesn't need those spaces any more, they can be removed earlier.

#### **Finance Committee**

- **YTD Budget vs Actuals** – Ms. Wolk-Laniewski feels that the District may need to move some funds into beautification in order to compliment the outdoor dining spaces. All other line items look pretty much on target with the exception of the banner revenue which is still about half; there are 8-10 who haven't paid, some of that possibly due to shutdowns and delays related to the pandemic.

#### **Marketing Committee**

- **Marketing Committee** – Mr. N. DuBaldo mentions that the banner ad is expected to launch mid-month and that the other print ads are ready as reopening phases allow new businesses to open. Ms. Sottile points out that once businesses reopen, there will be different communication as it becomes relevant; people need to know that the Downtown has so much to offer.

#### **Parking & Maintenance Committee**

- **Parking Report** – Ms. Wolk-Laniewski states that with two constables there were a lot of tickets being written and the current process still necessitates lots of hands on a ticket which could

end up being waived. At this point, she feels, the fewer tickets to process, the better. There are aspects about the amount of time for tickets being written and the salary versus revenue that the District should really look at that. She also notes that it can be offputting for customers to receive a ticket on their car. Mr. Tunila concurs that the Downtown's parking system is antiquated and there is a need to strategize how to move forward with a more modern system. Mr. Anderson says that the Town would like to work parking issues out with the full support of the District. Ms. Wolk-Laniewski mentions that with the new spreadsheet, it's much easier to identify business owners who are submitting waivers for themselves.

### **Other Reports**

- Gary Anderson - Director of Planning and Development - 2-4 Pearl is going to be sold this or next week and will be rehabilitated. There are one or maybe two tenants still remaining in that building, but they will be the responsibility of the new owner. The Discovery Map has been completed and will be out to print shortly. Imagine Main Street has had a leadership change and Mr. Anderson feels that the District should have some representation there. Mr. Tunila inquires as to whether there are any business closures coming. Mr. Anderson knows that the bakery does not have plans to reopen.
- Ms. Stafford - MACC Downtown Churches Representative - Area churches have been successful with drive-by food drives. There is a support logo for businesses to place in their windows to show support during this time. She did identify a number of the missing banners and expects those to come through this month.
- Mr. Pagani - Chair GMCC - not present at this time

### **Administration**

- Manager's Report - Ms. Wolk-Laniewski was pleased to see that the planters and refuse containers are being painted. Also, Tarik from the Bayut Al Mamur is taking the effort to beautify his area, while it's not part of the District maintenance it looks great. There was some damage to a border fence in a parking lot due to a tree strike. Public Works swept the street before putting in the temporary dining barriers so Main Street can look as beautiful as possible. She would like to install some new planters and flowers to accent the outdoor dining. She was informed that there was some vandalism at a few Downtown bus stops and will recommend their thorough cleaning.

### **Public Comment**

- None at this time

**Executive Session** - Mr. Tunila invites Mr. Anderson to executive session regarding staff.

- A motion to enter executive session is made at 9:42 by Ms. Gerhard, seconded by Mr. Sulick. All approve.

- A motion to exit executive session with no other actions taken is made by Mr. Lipiner at 10:02, seconded by Ms. Gerhard. All approve.

### **Adjourn**

- There being no further business, a motion to adjourn is brought by Ms. Gerhard at 10:03, Mr. Sulick seconds. All approve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary DMSSD

Recorder