

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
July 8, 2020 8AM

Due to COVID19 Pandemic July 8, 2020 meeting was held by online Zoom meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Tunila Tunila, Chair
Beth Stafford, Vice Chair
Ms. Tammy Gerhard, Secretary
Robert Sulick, Finance Chair
Nicholas DuBaldo
Joseph Lipiner
Daniel Mulligan

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Pagani, GMCC Representative
Gary Anderson, Director Planning and Development

ALSO PRESENT: Lynn Sottile

STAFF PRESENT: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Call to Order

Mr. Tunila calls the meeting to order at 8:04 AM

Roll Call

Ms. Gerhard noted those present and absent.

Minutes

June 3, 2020–Ms. Stafford motions to accept, Mr. Mulligan seconds. All approve.

Public Comment - Not at this time

Report of Chairperson – Mr. Tunila declares that it has been an interesting couple of weeks. On Thursday, Ms. Stafford, Tricia Catania and he met with Ms. Wolk-Laniewski whereupon she resigned, effective immediately. If board members have specific questions, he requests that those be made via phone call. As a result of the meeting, Ms. Stafford was kind enough to go through the office to "triage" the issues. There were checks for the banner program which hadn't been deposited. The concert in the park is looking to go forward but the insurance for those events had not been put in place, that is now in-process. There were also a number of waiver requests strewn across the office, Mr. Sulick will assemble those with the constable. Mr. Tunila would like our first task to be a resumption of office hours and "business", Ms. Sottile will assist with that. He notes that we have access to the phone, cell phone, modified the email access, but we will need to do postings on the website. We will look to fill the position both on a temporary (immediate) and permanent position.

He recognizes that the 8AM Wednesday meeting seems to be best for more people than evening meetings, so until another consensus shows, we will continue the meetings as such. He hopes our next meeting is in person, but we need a slightly larger venue to accommodate social distancing guidelines. The board room in Lincoln Center should be fine with us seated every other seat and he will talk to Mr. Anderson about that. If anyone has other ideas about where to hold the meeting, Mr. Tunila would appreciate input.

Report of Vice Chairperson – Ms. Stafford also changed the voicemail so we can monitor and respond to inquiries at the District office. She would like to get the parking tickets over to Mr. Sulick for processing. Additionally, she would like to have MACC purchase the insurance for the summer concerts due to the timeline of how long it takes Manchester to process checks for payment - then MACC could be reimbursed later.

Report of Secretary - None at this time.

Report of Finance Chair - Mr. Tunila shared that there are some things we will need to work on with the Town like getting the processes for information on payments. Mr. Sulick said he would reach out and get things straightened out.

New Business –

Holiday Lights – The Board received an email with an updated version of projected ideas for holiday lighting. The decorating committee had a desire to get away from a traditional hanging snowflake saying it gets washed out in the lighting. They have a desire to move to pole wraps with lights and bows. A number of ideas are presented in the email for review. Mr. Sulick asked if with the change, we would be left with decorations in storage. Ms. Sottile explained that the company we have worked with in the past rents the decorations to us, care for them all season and remove them to their storage. The Board shared input on decorations – Ms. Gerhard shared that she likes the wrap and bow with lights. As to whether or not there is a price difference, Mr. DuBaldo said there is but won't know how significant until it goes out to bid. Mr. Mulligan asked, with bringing the decorations down to where they're reachable if they will be sturdy enough to not have people able to unwrap them. Mr. DuBaldo answered that he would check. People shared thoughts, consensus with the first picture (lighted wraps with big red bows) as favorite.

Motion to obtain a quote for the first version – garland wrap with bow and lights. Mr. Lipiner motioned, Ms. Stafford seconded, all approve.

Old Business –

Reopen Committee

Mr. Lipiner had a lengthy conversation with Mr. Anderson about where the voids are that we as the committee could fill. He would like us to hit the marketing end, the other being a series of webcasts/seminars of people who provide services like IRS, CDC, where people can call and ask questions. Mr. Lipiner also spoke with Ms. Parseliti and it seems like most areas of concern are being covered, the Chamber and Ms. Parseliti are doing a great job of getting information out to the people and doing so promptly. Maybe having a panel of different business owners to have a discussion about things like what do you do when someone comes into your business and refuses to wear a mask. Mr. Tunila doesn't want the district to be silent at this time even if it's just to echo the others' information. What's open, how they're open... he would like to look at using the website, email and social media to share information on these things – open businesses etc. Ms. Gerhard asked who had access to these accounts. Mr. Tunila expressed that there was a concern related to if Ms.

Wolk-Laniewski used personal accounts vs. town accounts to create the downtown social media and now we need to look into accessing those accounts. When we do, we'd like to focus on businesses in the district sharing who's open and hours in addition to any regular information shared. Ms. Gerhard offered to coordinate with Mr. DuBaldo and try to figure this out.

Contractor Sidewalks Clearing of Snow

The contractors Mr. Mulligan spoke with lead him to believe that quotes will be a bit difficult because sidewalks are such a low priority for them. Mr. Tunila recommends connecting with Ms. Parseliti to research who to connect with to get quotes.

Finance Committee

YTD Budget vs Actuals – Ms. Stafford informs the Board that there isn't much data right now. There are about 4 banners not being renewed so she feels that we're looking like that program being down about \$1000. Mr. Tunila says next month's report will be much more detailed.

Marketing Committee

Banners – Previously discussed.

Shop and Eat Downtown - Mr. DuBaldo explained program. He had just under 50 entries for week one and selected winners. The program will run for a total of 4 weeks. Businesses and town/downtown social media are helping advertise this program.

Parking & Maintenance Committee

Mr. Sulick reported that their team reviewed all last month's tickets but haven't received a report for this month. Mr. Sulick asked what our tracking should entail. Mr. Tunila shared that the constable formats a report each week which he could compile or modify to suit your tracking needs. Mr. Sulick offered to meet with Constable Rick about this.

Parking Report

Mr. Sulick reported that he was in the process of meeting with Ms. Wolk-Laniewski about this when she resigned, and he would like to know how to move forward. Mr. Tunila encouraged him to meet with the constable and work through agreeing on a format to move forward. Mr. Sulick asked about chain of command for who oversees the constable. Mr. Tunila shared that parking and parking enforcement issues should be overseen by Mr. Sulick and changes in policies and time sheet should be overseen by Mr. Tunila at this time.

Parking Permits

Mr. Tunila mentioned that we have had a few requests for refunds on parking permits. Mr. Sulick said he would like to investigate further and will notify the group of what he finds in the next few days. Mr. Sulick asked if we do a rebate how we process that. Mr. Tunila encouraged him to connect with Mr. Anderson for information.

Ticketing

The constable is currently enforcing regulations related to Main St. but is not ticketing the back parking lots. We need to decide at what point we start ticketing again. Ms. Stafford and Ms. Gerhard explained how the current process of getting passes is working as they both purchased them for their workers recently not knowing the constable isn't ticketing. Ms. Stafford encouraged the restarting of passes to honor businesses who purchase passes and to avoid additional refund request.

Ms. Stafford made a motion to restart parking lot ticketing, Mr. Mulligan seconds, all approve.

Other Reports

Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and Development - 2-4 Pearl sale has gone through and is finalized. He believes that they will be requesting a loan through the Downtown loan program, perhaps a dumpster location as well. There has been some interest in the former Great Harvest spot but the owner has not been amenable to sale yet. Mr. Anderson is planning to call and encourage the owner to sell now with the incentives available for a buyer to improve the lot. The bakery has closed and the space is available for lease. There is speculation of an appliance shop coming to the Tong building but it hasn't been confirmed.

Mr. Sulick Pagani, Chair GMCC - not present at this time.

Ms. Stafford Stafford, MACC - nothing further

Executive Session - Not at this time

Acceptance of the Resignation of the Downtown Manager - We have a written letter from Ms. Wolk-Laniewski resigning her position immediately. Mr. Lipiner motions to accept, Mr. Sulick seconds. All approve.

Job posting for Position of Downtown Manager

We do need to hire a replacement with respect to the same position and responsibilities. There has been input about modifying the scope and design of the position, Mr. Sulick feels that we need to hire someone who can handle the day-to-day business like the checks being deposited, processing tickets and ensure that the paperwork is being done; he suggested reviewing the job description and whittling it down to the top 6-8 needs and starting with a focus there. Ms. Stafford stated that the job climate, with extra pay for unemployment ending in July, could give us a deeper pool to draw from. Mr. Anderson reminded the Board that the responsibilities should be more limited than what Ms. Parseliti was doing, and we shouldn't search for the wide scope of her former tasks. Mr. Tunila will circulate the job description to the Board and then provided there is consensus begin the posting next week. Ms. Sottile has offered to assist with triage in the meantime and discussion was had about hiring a temporary staffer for 10 -15 hours a week in the interim. Ms. Sottile will volunteer to check the phones and the mail and forward the information to whomever should have it. Mr. Sulick asked her to track a week's worth of time and how it's spent so we know what to expect from the new hire. Mr. Tunila will explore the new hire and send a description to the board for approval.

Public Comment

Ms. Sottile shared that in regard to re-starting parking enforcement in back lots, she would recommend we first send email blast to all constituents once or twice to notify them in advance. She offered to help do this and will draft an email to share with Mr. Tunila and Ms. Parseliti will help send it out. She also shared that Imagine Main Street is reactivating the bench program and seeking artists. They would like to complete this before the end of the year. Lastly, she shared that now that we created a campaign for downtown restaurants, that we should plan to do one for other businesses/services. Mr. Tunila shared that what he has seen shared so far has been great and that Mr. Lipiner will be working on this as part of his committee as well.

Mr. Tunila would like an updated contact list for the Board and is asking us to submit an email to him with our business/property we represent, address, email and cellphone (or other preferred contact) to him by Friday, 7/10.

Mr. DuBaldo would like to update the biographies of members on the website with pictures. Please look at what is currently on there and send updates with a photo for your profile to Mr. DuBaldo by Friday 7/17.

Mr. DuBaldo asked to discuss additional positions available on the Downtown Commission. We have both an ex-officio position as well as an alternate position available. In previous conversations, Tarek Ambia had been willing to serve on the board and is a property owner as well as being a representative from an area church and could fill either of those slots. Ms. Gerhard mentioned a few others she'd discussed this within the downtown. We should inquire further.

Mr. Tunila thanks everyone for their time and work to make it through this challenging season. There being no further business, a motion to adjourn is brought by Mr. Sulick at 9:17, Ms. Stafford seconds. All approve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Gerhard, Secretary DMSSD
Recorder