

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
OCTOBER 7, 2020 8AM

Due to COVID19 Pandemic August 5, 2020 meeting will be through Zoom.

Topic: DSSD Monthly Meeting

Time: August 5, 2020 08:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85063227845?pwd=bzZkdGp3VzNDcS9hVnF4STdhRi96UT09>
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Meeting ID: 850 6322 7845

Passcode: 915620

Dial In: 1 929 436 2866

Members Present: John Tunila, Chair
Beth Stafford, Vice Chair
Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary
Robert Sulick, Finance Chair
Tammy Gerhard
Daniel Mulligan
Joseph Lipiner

Ex-Officio Present: Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and Development
Robert Pagani, GMCC Representative

Staff Present: Joy Press, Interim Downtown Manager

Members Absent: None

Ex-Officio Absent: None

Also in Attendance: Tarek Ambia, Sophia Dzialo, Maj. Michael Himes, Todd McKee, Lynn Sottile

Call to Order – Mr. Tunila calls the meeting to order at 8:05.

Roll Call - Mr. Tunila notes those present and absent.

Minutes – September 2, 2020 – Mr. Mulligan motions to accept the minutes as presented, Ms. Stafford seconds. All approve.

Public Comment – Ms. Dzialo would like to share her observations about parking on Main Street. She feels that we are a walkable downtown and it would be nice to not have single use customers (customers only shopping at a single business). She mentions that there are limited options for long-term customer parkers and wonders if there is a possibility to change the limits of the parking spaces in a way which would incentivize customers to park longer and possibly hop from business to business. Mr. Tunila commiserates that he had insufficient parking for his own tenants and had to secure a private lot for their use. He notes that there is a lot for sale on Eldridge Street, there is an area behind Webster Bank which could be suitable and that there is also the South section of the Bennet Apartments. Mr. Anderson feels that the area with the best chance would be the Bennet Apartments parcel because the Town already owns it. Ms. Press concurs about the lack of parking at that end of the Downtown, and recognizes that Ms. Dzialo's customers are habitually staying for longer than three hours. Mr. Tunila would like to have an informal brainstorming session with Ms. Dzialo to review options and come up with some workable plans for parking within that section of the Downtown.

Prospective Commissioners – Mr. Tunila notes that there are two vacancies on the commission, one for an ex-officio church representative slot, the other for an alternate voting member. We have two people attending today's meeting who have expressed an interest and capacity for those openings.

Tarek Ambia – His realty business is located at 824 Main Street, he has been a property owner here since 2009. Formerly a resident of Oak Street, he is invested as a property owner and landlord and would like to help the Downtown improve.

Major Michael Himes – As an officer of the Salvation Army, here on Main Street, Major Himes is willing to serve as a church representative.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee – Ms. Press mentions that this is the month to form the committee to begin next year's budget. The Report (B) is attached showing the year to date totals and the 2021-22 budget preparations.

Marketing Committee – The Report (D) is attached. Ms. Press saw great online interaction with the "Great Apple Hunt" on social media. Mr. DuBaldo reports that the Scarecrow Festival is ready to go, with installations beginning in less than two weeks. The Scarecrow Festival is a nice burst of activity and engagement for the Downtown. The Holiday Décor has not been installed yet, but the designs have been finalized and decorations should be going up in November. Plans are in the works for our virtual Holiday on Main this year as our ever-so-popular event needs some changes to ensure proper distancing etiquette. We will have a series of virtual performances, a message from Santa and then (hopefully) a livestream of the tree

being lit. Ms. Press is reaching out to our Downtown businesses for some fresh perspectives on their needs for marketing in the upcoming season.

Social Media Policy & Permissions – Report (E) attached

Parking & Maintenance – Mr. Sulick feels that while it has been an active month, Ms. Press' new processes have allowed them to sift through any remaining backlog and establish a proper tracking protocol mechanism. He also feels that while there will always be a "social issue" about paid parking which may never be fully resolved, we will be able to maintain a clear, concise, and fair policy. He also wonders at which time we should renew our search for a second constable. Mr. Tunila is not certain that the current levels warrant a second constable.

PRMI Permits – Tabled for November

Parking for Residents - There are currently two areas for residents to park in, along the fence between Purnell Place and Birch Street, the second nearer the residences. At times, these parking spaces fill up with customers for businesses leaving the resident tenants without legal overnight parking places. Mr. Tunila would like to have better analytics to better understand the scope of the problem. Mr. Sulick wants businesses to be successful, however, we as a district need to be mindful of the needs of all our constituents. While the Downtown cannot manage specific spots for specific buildings Mr. Sulick would like to see if we can produce an information sheet for landlords to better understand our policies for their tenants.

Annual Constable Review – Mr. Sulick would like to have that meeting prior to the February 17 due date.

Electronic/Kiosk Options – Ms. Parseliti and Mr. Tunila met with a vendor for electronic parking options. They feel we will need to have a thorough review to study the process and have a solution in place by next year. Mr. Sulick would like to be included in that process while Mr. Anderson will provide assistance.

New Business

Hiring Committee - Downtown Manager – Mr. Tunila feels that it is time to put together a committee to hire a permanent Downtown Manager. We need to contact the Town HR to repost the job, which should not be a lengthy or difficult procedure. A motion to establish the hiring committee with Nick DuBaldo as chair, is proposed by Mr. Sulick, seconded by Ms. Gerhard. All approve.

Outdoor Dining Extended - The most recent executive order extended the policy to Nov 12 with removal of outdoor dining fixtures on the 13th. If there are tents/heaters that may or will

be in place, owners need to go through Health and Fire departments for approval. Ms. Gerhard inquires as to the latest capacity regulations, Mr. Anderson notes that they are all State policies, and Mr. Sulick offers to walk her through those regulations. Mr. Lipiner notes that the recommendations are online and should be easily accessible.

Old Business –

New Commissioners - A motion to add Tarek Ambia as an alternate member is made by Ms. Stafford, Mr. Mulligan seconds. All approve.

Snow Removal (Sidewalks) - We are exploring the possibility of removing the snow between the street and the sidewalk to remove the physical barrier preventing people from patronizing businesses in the winter. Mr. McKee - It is a problem that has been around for years; it is quite a big undertaking with a long stretch of walkways and many obstacles magnifying the issues. He feels that it is not a snowblower and shovel situation rather, it's Bobcats and laborers possibly needing the addition of the highway department. He feels that it is a great idea to remove the snow day one or two from the snowstorm which will open the area up for snowmelt instead of melt/refreeze which makes it safer for everyone. Mr. Tunila mentions that there are some options: to gather the snow and remove it offsite which is costly. The second option would be to move the snow to the bumpouts and remove it when there's enough buildup. The District can't clear the entire sidewalk and would need property owners to continue handling that sort of clearing. Mr. McKee feels that it might be better for the contractor to clear the entire sidewalk even though it's costly, the machine will scrape to the surface of the concrete and clean better than a shovel if there's packed snow. In his opinion, the trickiest thing is that this all needs to happen at night so it doesn't intrude on the business during the day. Mr. Anderson recalls that the Downtown has met several times over the years about this to work on timing, who does what, when etc. If this really is an item of need for businesses the District should enter into discussions with the Town. Mr. McKee mentions that there would be specialty equipment and labor involved, so a rough estimate could be \$1500 for a 1-3" storm, just to push snow to the bumpouts.

Ordinances (on website) - They won't be on the website until January.

Other Reports

Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and Development - Mr. Anderson reached out to DPW and will pass along the contact information for the snow removal liaison. He is preparing a memo about the Downtown 2020 plan, there are capital projects and transition of responsibilities, the Downtown loan program which is set to expire at the end of the year. He will recommend that the BoD extend the program for another two years. Mr. Mulligan makes a motion to note that the District supports the extension of the loan program, Mr. Sulick seconds.

Mr. Anderson would like to see some Covid-related expenses included into the program. Mr. Tunila inquires about the updates to 2-4 Pearl, Mr. Anderson says they are still in demolition but are actively working; he expects the new owners to speak with the DMSSD and Town about other items and a possible loan. In other news, the Johnson Block recently sold and he hopes they will be a positive landlord.

Robert Pagani - Not present at this time.

Administration

Manager's Report – Ms. Press says that it's unique to be in this position "solo" and not have a person to bounce ideas off of.

Updating Manuals – She feels that it would be nice to update the welcome commissioners, new businesses, tenants, etc. manuals.

Evaluation of Fax Needs – She notes that we pay \$27 per month for a fax line, and wonders if we need to have a dedicated fax line? The board recommends plugging in the fax to the main line and having the dedicated line disconnected.

Public Comment – Mr. Lipiner had an incident where someone defecated on his property. Ms. Stafford would like people to know that MACC does offer services to people in need so if there is an individual in need, MACC is there to give them some help. Mr. Tunila wonders if there is anything the District can do to raise awareness about MACC's services. Ms. Stafford notes that the outreach director is coming out this week to drop off packets of information with the area businesses.

Mr. Lipiner will be attending the EDC meeting tomorrow.

Mr. Tunila mentions that we may have a "later in the month" meeting in future years to discuss that information and others.

A motion to adjourn is made by Ms. Gerhard at 9:36, seconded by Mr. Sulick.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas DuBaldo, DMSSD Secretary

Recorder