

**DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.**

**March 15, 2016**

**CenterState CEO Conference Room  
115 West Fayette Street**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance**

- Members:** Chairman Breuer, Messrs. Doucette, Fiorito, Tripoli, Maxwell, Nutting, Fisher and Koolakian; Ms. Littlejohn, Ms. Slater (via phone)
- Staff:** Mss. Holbrook, Maggiore, Reed, Schroeder, Sherlock and Treier; Mssrs. McFadden, and Campanie
- Guests:** Hon. Nader Maroun – Syracuse Common Council  
Corey LaDuke, Cushman & Wakefield/Pyramid Brokerage Company  
Ruth Banegas, Primerica Financial  
Anthony Catsimatides, Open Atelier  
Russ Andrews, Cathedral Square Neighborhood Association  
Walt Sheppard, Syracuse New Times  
Matt Lupiani, SWBR Architects

**I. Welcome and Approval of January 19, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Breuer welcomed guests and members present. Chairman Breuer asked the board for a motion to approve the January 19, 2016 SDODC Meeting Minutes. Mr. Fisher motioned, Mr. Koolakian seconded; the motion was unanimously approved.

**II. Financial Report as of February 29, 2016**

Ms. Treier provided the financial report as of February 29, 2016 and noted that both Income and Expense are on schedule. Ms. Treier reported that under the Dining Weeks Income, that all sponsors' income was accounted for and to date it has incurred an expense of \$4,826.

Additional expenses will show up in the March statement with total expense being close to

\$10,000. Ms. Treier reported that under Miscellaneous Income, it was trending high at 196% due to the income received from the October Progress Breakfast ticket sales. She also noted that the Downtown Committee will be taking an administration fee of \$10,000 from the NYMS grant program this year. Ms. Treier noted that under Environmental Maintenance Expenses that Special Projects is running at 88% of budget due to the purchase of flowers for the upcoming season. Under the Security Expense Line, Depreciation is trending higher than budgeted at \$17,670 because of the purchase of the security cameras, where depreciation is required by the auditors. She also noted that the insurance cost under Security is coming in higher than what was budgeted.

Mr. Tripoli inquired if Environmental Maintenance received a significant savings over this past winter. Ms. Treier responded that it did not incur as much overtime this year due to the minimal snowfall cleanup.

Ms. Treier asked if there were any further questions on the Financial Report and there were none. Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to accept the financial report subject to audit. Mr. Fiorito moved and Mr. Maxwell seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

### **III. Administration**

#### **A. Account Signatories – NBT Bank**

Ms. Treier asked the Board for a resolution to authorize the following as signatories on the Downtown Committee of Syracuse corporate account at NBT Bank: Mr. Breuer, Mr. Fiorito, Mr. Howard, Mr. Doucette and Ms. Treier. Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to approve the new signatories. Mr. Tripoli motioned and Mr. Fiorito seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

#### **B. 2014-2015 Audit Report Distribution**

Ms. Treier distributed to the Board the 2014-2015 Downtown Committee Audit Report from The Bonadio Group. Ms. Treier asked the Board if they had any questions. Mr. Koolakian asked if the organization that undertook the audit was contracted. Ms. Treier responded that it was and that it was the result of an RFP process. With no further questions on the audit, Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to accept the 2014-2015 audit. Mr. Dunn motioned, and Mr. Maxwell seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **C. Not-For-Profit Revitalization Act – Impacts**

Ms. Treier reported that revisions will need to be made this year on both the Downtown Committee’s Conflict of Interest Statement and By-Laws to align with the December 2015 amendments made to the New York State Non-Profit Revitalization Act. Once completed, the new By-Laws and Conflict of Interest statement (being revised by Hancock Estabrook LLP) will be re-distributed to the Board for review, approval and signatures.

## **IV. Upcoming DTC Events Preview**

### **A. Residential Committee Meeting – March 22**

Ms. Holbrook announced that as a result of the new Downtown Committee Strategic Plan, a Downtown Residential Committee has been formed and a meeting has been scheduled for March 22 at 10:00 a.m. This committee was put together by the Downtown Committee because of the need to gain additional information about needs. Residents, property owners, property managers, and leasing managers were invited to this first meeting. This first meeting will be an open format to start communications on what resident needs exist and to discuss the best way to communicate relevant information, and establish programs.

### **B. Progress Breakfast-March 29**

Ms. Maggiore announced that the Downtown Committee is organizing another “Good Morning Downtown Syracuse Progress Breakfast” on Tuesday, March 29, 8:00 a.m., at SKY Armory. Harris Beach PLLC will be the presenting sponsor of the event and it will focus on entrepreneurship in Downtown Syracuse. Presenting will be Troy Evans and John Talarico from Common Space; Chedy Hampson of TCGPlayer.com; and Mark Graydon of Wolff’s Biergarten. Ms. Maggiore encouraged the Board to visit the Downtown Committee website for more information and to purchase tickets.

### **C. Earth Day Cleanup – April 23**

Ms. Maggiore announced that the Earth Day Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, April 23. So far, 30 people from the community have volunteered. Ms. Maggiore will be

coordinating teams of 8-10 people from local businesses and organizations to help in the cleanup efforts within downtown. Official promotion for the event on social media will begin in two weeks. Ms. Maggiore noted that volunteers will receive an Earth Day Cleanup T-shirt, gloves, bags, and a free lunch at one of the local eateries. Typically, close to 150 people volunteer for this event.

#### **D. Downtown Living Tour – May 21**

Ms. Maggiore announced that the Downtown Living Tour is scheduled for Saturday, May 21 from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. To celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the tour will feature 10 stops plus two bonus stops just outside downtown – 558 Erie Blvd and Fayette Place. Tickets for the event will go on sale starting April 24. The Downtown Committee has also secured advertising sponsors for the Living Tour’s program. Ms. Maggiore thanked Mr. Doucette for his participation in the event, and Mr. Dunn for offering to host the Downtown Living Tour Pre-Party at the Community Foundation on Friday, May 13, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Ms. Holbrook added that the pre-party is a celebration to commemorate the Downtown Living Tour’s 10<sup>th</sup> year and as a “thank you” to all the volunteers and building stop sponsors. There will be drinks, appetizers and a special presentation from the Downtown Committee.

Ms. Treier complimented both Ms. Maggiore and Holbrook for doing a tremendous job lining up the tour stops and sponsors for the event. Ms. Treier will send this event out to the Board as out outlook invitation for their calendars per Ms. Littlejohn’s request.

#### **E. Other Business**

Ms. Treier noted that the Downtown Committee’s Special Assessment budget from the City has remained constant at \$850,000 since 2010. The City has been under constraints due to the tax cap legislation and has not approved any increase requests by the Downtown Committee, which would allow the Downtown Committee to be able to provide the services needed for this growing downtown district. The committee is therefore looking at every avenue where sponsorship opportunities exist to cover the expenses where the Special Assessment is unable to. This year, the Downtown Committee has been successful in securing sponsors for the Progress Breakfast in March

and the Downtown Annual Meeting in June. In preparation for upcoming Common Council hearing to propose the budget for 2016-2017, Ms. Treier has been meeting with the city councilors to ask them to keep the Downtown Committee in mind in respect to the desired budget proposal which reflects the support needed for downtown's continued growth. During the budget hearing, Ms. Treier will also talk about the new programs and show that with the City's increased support, how increased services to provide for downtown residents and visitors delivered.

Mr. Fiorito commented that with downtown's continued growth that maintenance will be a concern. He asked if the Downtown Committee's staff has a good relationship with the DPW if their assistance is required. Ms. Treier responded that the Downtown Committee is always looking for opportunity to align its services, and have maintained good relations with the DPW and the SPD. Mr. Breuer added that the Downtown Committee needs to rethink how they will make its presentation of the budget to the Common Council hearing because of the restriction of the tax cap. Councilor Maroun commented that they will be getting the Mayor's budget draft by April 8<sup>th</sup> and will begin discussions while being sensitive to what the Downtown Committee presents and will be able to make a judgement on what needs to be done. Chairman Breuer stressed the importance of funding to the Downtown Committee to service the people. Councilor Maroun commended the Downtown Committee staff on behalf of the City for all they do to service Downtown Syracuse.

## **V. Consensus Presentation**

Ms. Littlejohn presented an update on the Consensus initiative to the Board. She noted that the Commission have been engaged in this governance reform initiative for the past 18 months. Ms. Littlejohn also acknowledged Mr. Maxwell on the Board who is one of the members and represents the Mayor's Office. Ms. Littlejohn gave a brief recap on the progress of the baseline review that was conducted in November of 2015. They took details shared across the county and heard from key people and factored their responses into the Options report being presented today. Ms. Littlejohn noted that the Baseline Review and Options Report does not include schools. There will be another team formed to look at schools. As of 2016, the commission produced an Options Report and Preliminary Recommendations which can be reviewed on the

website. Ms. Littlejohn commented that in order for the City and County to become sustainable in its communities, we need to adapt our competitive position. She noted that Onondaga County has been declining in population since 1970, with increasing poverty levels, poor economic performance and a difficult tax climate. She also added that after talking to towns and villages, it was discovered that there has been over \$100 million of taxes spent on redundant services. In 2016, the Consensus Committee created an Options Report that focused on the top five areas to address: Infrastructure, Public Safety, Municipal Operations, Economic Development, and Governance. The report also included preliminary recommendations on opportunities to streamline services in each of these areas, including sharing purchasing and training agreements, sharing maintenance and planning of infrastructure and assets, adopting of common software and recording keeping, and Creation of coordinated “metro” authorities, agencies, departments, and service areas. Ms. Littlejohn noted that the only Option that requires a referendum is Recommendation #51 which is the merger of the County and City governments. Mr. Maroun added that the sustainability of the changes is a bigger issue than the savings. Ms. Littlejohn stressed the importance of evaluating all of the options to see if they make sense. Ms. Littlejohn noted there will be a third report coming out late spring outlining the structure of Recommendation #51. After making numerous presentations to over 1,700 people, the two top common themes were (1) a focus on Recommendation #51 and (2) why were schools not included in the plans. Ms. Littlejohn noted that the committee has studied other municipalities’ models to see where they got it right or wrong and how their poverty picture has changed. Ms. Littlejohn encouraged the board to fully understand all the options and to post comments or feedback on the website: [www.consensuscomment.com](http://www.consensuscomment.com). Mr. Doucette commented that Consensus has successfully established a common set of goals for the entire county and is moving in the same direction, however, he doesn’t believe this will solve the state mandate problem and will require political solutions. This may help from an advocacy perspective but it will still take State Legislature to make any real changes. Mr. Fisher added that the County Legislature will be reconvening by the end of May which would be the best time to share these public comments received on the Consensus Report. Ms. Littlejohn noted that the committee will be wrapping up public comments by the end of May and a final report should be coming out early summer. She noted the committee has been pleased with the level of discussion from the public. Mr. Tripoli commented that the two main concerns he sees is (1) lack of representation from the minority community and (2) the possible decrease in quality of service

outside of the city. Because of the presidential election year, the Consensus Commission may be pushed to get all final recommendations completed by the fall in order to get a higher and comprehensive vote of the people if Recommendation #51 goes to referendum.

Mr. Breuer commented that from a business stand point, we have to do “more with less”. He further noted that Recommendations 1 through 50 can all happen in small steps in each community.

Ms. Littlejohn noted there is far more to come and there will be another presentation in late spring for the public to weigh in on.

## **VI. Other Business and Adjourn**

Chairman Breuer asked if there were any updates on I-81. Ms. Treier responded that there has not been any updates on public information by the NYSDOT on the viaduct solutions.

Ms. Treier recommended to the board that the Downtown Committee put together a sub-committee to review the Consensus Report and provide formal comments.

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Next Board meeting: **May 17, 2016**

**Location: CenterState CEO, 115 West Fayette Street**