

DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.

March 17, 2015

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

3:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members: Chairman Breuer, Messrs. Tripoli, Howard, Dunn, Koolakian, Lemp, Maxwell, Nutting; Mss. Gagliano, Littlejohn

Staff: Mss. Holbrook, Finch, Maggiore, Reed, Sherlock and Treier; Mssrs. Campanie, Daniele, McFadden

Guests: Ms. Beth Rougeux – City of Syracuse
Mr. Lonny Bornstein – City of Syracuse
Hon. Nader Maroun – Syracuse Common Council
Hon. Bob Dougherty – Syracuse Common Council
Mr. Dave Hess – National Grid
Mr. John Fumie – National Grid
Mr. Larry Leatherman – MOST
Mr. Tony Ortega – MOST
Mr. Eric Will – CBD Companies
Mr. Rich Sykes – RHS Holdings, LLC
Mr. Lou Fournier – Sutton Companies
Mr. Joe Hucko – Washington Street Partners
Mr. Jonathan Logan – Northside Up
Mr. Ryan Goodfellow – J.F. Real Estate
Mr. Chris Madden – Good Monster
Mr. Owen Hunter - Arcadis

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Breuer welcomed guests and members present.

A. Welcome Alice Maggiore, Bruno Daniele

The Board welcomed Alice Maggiore, new Communications Coordinator and Bruno Daniele, Security Officer to the Downtown Committee team.

II. Approval of January 20, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Breuer asked the Board if there were any questions on the January 20 Meeting Minutes, and there were none. Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to approve the January 20 Meeting Minutes. Mr. Koolakian moved Mr. Maxwell seconded; the motion was unanimously carried.

III. Financial Report as of February 28, 2015

Mr. Howard reviewed the Financial Report as of February 28, 2015. He noted under Income, the Special Assessment line is on target at 67%. Transportation (Franklin Street and Herald Street) are producing solid revenue and are ahead of budget at 61%. Dining Week income was successful at 169% of budget, due to larger sponsorship this year.

Mr. Howard reported under Expenses - the Arts and Crafts Show is currently at 94% of budget which is in for the year. Under Administration, he noted that the expense line is currently at 41% of budget and it does not yet reflect the \$10,000 audit fee. The Environmental Maintenance salaries are higher due to the overtime hours put in to clear snow this winter. Mr. Howard explained that the Special Projects expense budget (including bricks, tree planting, trash cans, and kiosks) is currently over budget, but that line does not account for an additional \$10,000 reimbursement from the City as part of our 50/50 program. Mr. Howard noted under the Marketing Expenses that the Advertising numbers will hit next month. Under Security, we are waiting on the offset of workers comp to be added to the line. Under Economic Development – Retail/Office Recruitment expenses will be repurposed this year to support existing retailers. The Downtown Committee has applied for funds to support a Downtown Innovation Zone, which will affect the office recruitment budget.

Chairman Breuer commented that the bottom line on the report looks solid. He asked the Board if there were any questions on the financial report and there were none. He then asked for a motion to accept the financial report subject to audit. Mr. Maxwell moved and Mr. Koolakian seconded. The motion was unanimously carried.

IV. Program Updates

A. Event Save the Dates

Ms. Treier reported on the following upcoming events:

- The NCAA Men's Basketball East Regional Tournament will be in town next week. Hoops in 'Cuse in conjunction with Visit Syracuse are getting ready to welcome players and fans to the city.
- Downtown Committee Earth Day Clean Up is scheduled for Saturday, April 25. We expect to have 100-150 volunteers and will partner with University Hill on this effort.
- Downtown Living Tour – is scheduled for Saturday, May 16. Ms. Finch is the new tour director who is working on an exciting line up of tour stops.
- Downtown Committee Annual Meeting – a date hasn't been chosen yet, but will be scheduled in either the 2nd or 3rd week of June based on speaker availability.

B. Security Update

Ms. Treier introduced Mr. Bruno Daniele as a new Downtown Committee Security Officer who will help with coverage on a part-time basis. Mr. Daniele is retired from the Syracuse Police Department and previously worked in community policing patrolling the Westcott St. area.

Ms. Treier reported that the Downtown Committee, in partnership with the City and County has formed a new task force to address the downtown issues of panhandling, substance abuse and mental illness. The goal of the task force is to improve effectiveness of service delivery and to address quality of life issues. The task force has the participation of the Samaritan Center, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Hutchings, Rescue Mission, and Onondaga County Department of Mental Health. With their help, an innovative approach can be taken on how to deliver services. In the task force's third meeting last week, a pilot program was established with the goal to improve social services delivery. Ms. Treier explained the three-pronged approach: A scout (Downtown Committee Security/Syracuse Police Department) will be able to connect a person in need to a point person on the response crew that will include a clinical expert to diagnose the condition or prescribe medications, and a case coordinator to help connect the person to resources. Mr. John Tumino who is presently working under contract to the City will play a key role in this process. The Downtown Committee's role on the task force will be as an advisor,

participant, communicator with service providers, as well as education provider for constituents, with tools such as the Personal Safety Seminars.

Ms. Treier reported that there is a SU/Newhouse class working on a PR campaign for panhandling which will target its message for downtown employees. The campaign will include an educational component to increase awareness of existing resources. The class will also provide an implementation plan for this campaign. Ms. Treier noted she will email the Board an invitation to attend the final presentation on April 27.

Ms. Treier provided the security camera update: She noted a final walk-thru was conducted with the Syracuse Police Department and VPN last week. Due to an extended delay since the initial walk-through and that some poles will not be available for use, VPN had to redo the wireless plan and survey which are pending approvals. The Downtown Committee will be coordinating with the City on these efforts. We are now looking at mid to late April for camera installation. Ms. Treier also commented that through the support of Assemblyman Magnarelli, the State will provide a \$78,000 grant to offset the total cost of the program. Mr. Tripoli asked Ms. Treier if there was a way we could speed up the process. Ms. Treier responded that it had taken longer than expected for the \$78,000 State Grant to get repurposed and a new contract needed to be put in place before the Downtown Committee could order the cameras. She is also talking to other entities to help with the purchase of additional cameras. Ms. Treier noted she will touch base with the team on the timeframe and report the progress to the board. Mr. Lemp inquired on the cost of the cameras which Mr. Tripoli responded it was approximately \$134,000 for ten cameras. These cameras will have high resolution and be connected directly to the police department system.

Chairman Breuer asked Ms. Reed about the success of Dining Weeks, that she responded that 17 restaurants extended the offer into an additional week. Lemon Grass reported triple sales. Ms. Reed was overall pleased with the event.

V. Presentation of Proposed Special Street Lighting District Legislation

Ms. Rougeux, Director of Administration for the City of Syracuse, presented to the Board and guests the consolidation proposal of the special street lighting districts in the City of Syracuse. Ms. Rougeux noted that the first special lighting district was established in Syracuse in 1914 on South Clinton Street and around Jefferson and Onondaga Streets. The current definition of special lighting includes street lighting that is comprised of underground wiring or have a decorative element such as the pole, the arm or the fixture. Ms. Rougeux explained that property owners that wanted special lighting (different from standard lighting) would petition the Common Council to get this lighting. The Common Council required 75% of the property owners' signatures to get the petition approved. Ms. Rougeux noted that the City never increased the charge of usage over the years, so they needed to start from square one to review all 134 original ordinances of special lighting on the map. They had discovered that some properties resided in eight different ordinances and nothing was up-to-date. Ms. Rougeux noted that Mr. Bornstein mapped and inventoried every pole and location including nine different assets that make up the lighting pole which took three years to accomplish. Ms. Rougeux explained that in order to improve the management of the special street lighting districts, the City is proposing to reduce the number of districts from 134 to six districts which comprise of: Auto Row, Franklin Square, Lake Front, University Hill, Urban Core (Downtown) and Residential. Ms. Rougeux stated that under the new proposal, property owners in these districts that benefit from the special lighting will be charged per linear foot of frontage. Presently, the City's bill from National Grid for the Special Lighting Districts is \$1.9 million and the taxpayers have only been paying \$223,000, creating a \$1.7 million gap. The City is proposing that the districts be charged 100% of the true cost with the exception of Urban Core which the City will subsidize 50% of the cost. Ms. Rougeux noted that she knows the cost will be a shock to property owners, so they will be spreading the increase over three years on the tax bills which, pending Common Council approval, will commence at the beginning of the City's fiscal year on July 1, 2015. Ms. Rougeux distributed a copy of the ordinance to the Board and guests. Ms. Rougeux also mentioned that the new district map will be on the City's website starting Wednesday, March 18.

Mr. Nutting asked what percentage residential property owners would be paying and Ms. Rougeux responded 100%. Mr. Hess of National Grid added that charges will be lower in

residential districts as compared to other districts since there is less density and fewer decorative poles. Ms. Rougeux noted that the streetlight costs for residential districts is currently coming out of the general fund, but now residents will be paying to make up the difference of the special lighting district charges. Mr. Tripoli asked what the standard rate proposed per linear foot would be for the Urban Core district. Mr. Hess responded that the standard charge is \$5.41 per linear foot. Mr. Leatherman expressed his concern of setting a linear foot charge for properties downtown as more than just property owners' benefit from lighting in downtown. Downtown is the regional center. When he also asked about the responsibility of the park lighting, Ms. Rougeux confirmed to Mr. Leatherman that the MOST wouldn't be charged electricity for the park lights and lights in all city parks will be paid for by the City. Mr. Nutting questioned why a property isn't being assessed based on usable space instead of linear footage. He feels that the way it is being divided is misappropriated.

Mr. Leatherman asked what the cost of the poles are to which Mr. Bornstein responded about \$6,000 each. Ms. Rougeux noted that the City will not be owning the poles because it is too expensive. She also confirmed that the red Connective Corridor poles are not considered special lighting. Mr. Hucko asked why property owners were paying for the poles in perpetuity rather than for a specific time period based on this formula. Mr. Nutting asked if there was a baseline City cost for providing lighting services and why wasn't this baseline cost factored into the formula to reduce the fees, as special assessment fees are not meant to take the place of basic city services.

Ms. Littlejohn noted that there have been no rate adjustments made since 1950. National Grid's objective is to continue to service and work with the City for lighting options. She also stated that National Grid has to keep pace with the tariff adjustments. Ms. Gagliano asked what this community can do to better plan for future lighting.

Mr. Koolakian expressed his concern that the North Salina Street corridor property owners, grouped in as part of Downtown, may not be paying their fair share.

Ms. Treier asked Ms. Rougeux if over the last three years the City had looked into any other formulas to assess the charges to properties. Ms. Rougeux responded that at this time, the linear foot formula is being presented. She believes other communities also use linear foot formulas.

Mr. Rougeux stated that the City will put out a press release to notify people of the Syracuse Common Council public hearing on Mayor Miner's proposal on April 13 at 5:30 p.m. The press release will also include information on where to see the district map and proposal property charges on the website.

Mr. Koolakian asked Mr. Bornstein if there is any way to turn off the electrical outlets in the Squares, especially Hanover, where people are seen charging their electrical devices. Mr. Bornstein confirmed that the black plugs are turned off.

Chairman Breuer concluded that the linear foot formula is a concern. He encouraged the Board and guests to go to the City's website to review the information on the proposal. He also stressed the importance of contacting their local Councilor with concerns.

VI. Public Comments

Chairman Breuer asked for any further comments from the guests, and there were none.

VII. Other Business and Adjourn

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

Next Board meeting: **Tuesday, May 19, 3:00 p.m.**
Location: CenterState CEO, 115 West Fayette Street