



Tony Fiorito, Chairman
Merike L. Treier, Executive Director

DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.

March 19, 2019

**The Tech Garden
Fibertech Theater**

3:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members: Messrs. Fiorito, Bianchetti (via phone), Breuer, Bryant, Doucette, Dunn, Riley, Tascarella, Tripoli; Mss. Angrand (via phone), Gagliano, Zell

Staff: Mss. Holbrook, Maggiore, Schroeder, Reed, Sherlock, and Treier; Messrs. Campanie, Young

Guests:

Mr. Ryan Benz, Whitney Loft Properties
Ms. Linda Fitzgibbons, MONEY Federal Credit Union
Mr. Matt Funicello, Pyramid Brokerage
Ms. Lauren Klemanski, Helio Health
Mr. Larry Luttinger, CNY Jazz
Mr. Nader Maroun
Ms. Allyson Penfield-Doctor, SEFCU
Ms. Stephanie Pyle, Jefferson-Clinton Hotel
Ms. Debbie Ruthven, MONEY Federal Credit Union
Ms. Lindsay Weichert, M&T Bank

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Fiorito called the meeting to order and welcomed guests and members present. He also welcomed new board members: Charlie Breuer, Executive Vice President of Hueber-Breuer Construction Company, and Onondaga County Deputy Executive Brian Donnelly (not present). Chairman Fiorito also noted that board members Peter Dunn and Don Lemp have been appointed to another four year term.

II. Approval of Minutes from January 22, 2019

Chairman Fiorito asked the Board if they had any questions or comments on the minutes from January 22, 2019, and there were none. Chairman Fiorito asked for a motion to approve the January 22, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes. Ms. Gagliano moved, Mr. Dunn seconded; the motion was unanimously carried.

III. Financial Report as of February 28, 2019

Mr. Dunn provided the financial report as of February 28, 2019. He noted that overall, income and expenses are on target. He noted that the surplus in overall income is due to the DSA budget increase this year and that two open staff positions on the Environmental maintenance crew need to be filled.

Mr. Dunn asked the Board if there were any questions on the Financial Report as of February 28, 2019, and there were none.

With no further questions, Chairman Fiorito asked for a motion to accept the February 28, 2019, financial report subject to audit. Mr. Tripoli moved and Mr. Doucette seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

IV. Program Reports

A. Marketing and Communication

Ms. Reed reported on the Downtown Dining Weeks promotion that ran from February 18 to March 3. She noted that a record 47 restaurants provided either three-course dinners for \$30 or less and/or lunches for \$10 or less. She shared testimonials from several restaurants and noted that the dates of Dining Weeks do occur at the same time as events such as Winterfest, theater shows, or basketball games, which can impact attendance positively and negatively depending on the coinciding event.

Ms. Angrand commented that the city is looking to create a more comprehensive Winterfest campaign to bring more people to the event. This could be an opportunity to apply for a regional grant. Ms. Treier added that Winterfest is run by the Updowntowners. The city is looking to find local partners to enhance a winter event.

Ms. Angrand will forward information on the program opportunity to Ms. Treier who will circulate to the Board for input.

Chairman Fiorito thanked Ms. Reed for the update.

Ms. Holbrook provided an update on the Downtown Living Tour scheduled for Saturday, May 18 from 11:00am-4:00pm. She was happy to report that tour stop locations this year will be more centrally focused and shuttle service will be available to all locations. All units in each of the buildings will be finished or mostly finished to show.

B. Economic Development Office Trends

Ms. Schroeder presented the Downtown Syracuse Commercial Office Trends report 1999-2018 to the Board. The density of retail occupancy downtown has remained constant for 15 years and square footage has increased steadily as mixed-use development projects are developed. The report also shows that the conversion of outdated office space into residential has created a shift in square footage. She highlighted that Armory Square's office space has experienced relatively constant square footage for the past 20 years. Ms. Schroeder noted overall, downtown has seen a gradual decline in office square footage from about 6.25 million square feet to 5.7 million square feet over the past 15 years.

Mr. Doucette asked if any cross-city comparisons have been done. Ms. Schroeder noted it has not but will look into it.

Ms. Schroeder noted that commercial space data is updated daily on the Downtown Committee Website. She also answered Mr. Bianchetti's question that there is no rule of thumb on price per square foot per class. Mr. Bianchetti noted a trend back to private office spaces rather than open office space. Chairman Fiorito recommended that the Downtown Committee look at other cities' change in demand as this is a growing trend. Ms. Zell added that she also sees density is increasing in single office units (transient/bench systems vs. assigned cubes).

V. Committee Reports

A. Livability Committee

Ms. Weichert gave an update of the Livability Committee's Gateway Project. Environmental Design and Research was selected to design a comprehensive and cohesive concept for the south-end gateway. The committee will convene with stakeholders on Thursday, March 21 to present design concepts to the group and collect feedback on the potential appearance and use of space. Ms. Weichert noted that the hope is to use this process and design as a template for future gateway projects. She noted that the board will receive the minutes of that meeting once completed.

B. Security Liaison Committee

Mr. Tripoli provided an update from the Security Liaison Committee's last meeting in February where initiatives were discussed to address panhandling. He noted that Mower and Digital Hyve have agreed to help craft the public message and campaign slogan of giving where it counts. The committee will help fine-tune the message and distribution strategy (including multi-lingual materials.) The committee plans to distribute the message through various mediums such as social media, TV commercials, radio, print, physical signage, posters, toolkits for office employers, and scripted lunch and learn presentations. Ideally, this could be a multi-county effort.

C. Doing Business

Ms. Zell provided an update from the Doing Business Committee. She reported that the committee has been meeting with various people at the city code enforcement office regarding implementing a self-certification process. It was determined that any change to the international building code has to be approved at the state level, so without a change in New York State Legislation, self-certification cannot happen in Syracuse. Ms. Zell noted that the committee will reconvene to discuss next steps.

Ms. Angrand shared that the city is launching its online permit and zoning system: open counter. She offered to demonstrate the new system for the Downtown Committee

Board to collect feedback. She also noted that the permit office will be adding one to two new people to their staff by mid-April.

VI. Downtown Events

A. Discussion

Ms. Treier presented to the Board a plan to hold a family-friendly signature summer event in Downtown Syracuse in 2020. The Downtown Committee is working with several community partners to amplify the existing 10-day Summer Artsweek event to brand it as a signature event drawing more tourism and putting Syracuse on the map. This expanded event would be an opportunity to infuse energy into several areas of downtown to benefit all neighborhoods. A marketing plan and funding source will be needed to support this effort. The concept will be built this summer with existing and new partners. The goal would be to put together a proposal this summer and know by October 2019 if funds have been made available for a 2020 event.

After board discussion, it was agreed that Ms. Treier will work as the advocate and facilitator (with the involvement of Visit Syracuse and CNY Arts) to bring the right partnerships together and help find a better way to package the events to benefit downtown. Ms. Angrand suggested the Board work together with the city to pitch the signature event concept for funding support.

Chairman Fiorito approved the consensus to move forward with this plan. Ms. Treier will send out a request for volunteers to be involved in the planning.

VII. Public Comments

Mr. Fiorito asked if there were any public comments, and there were none.

VIII. Other Business and Adjourn

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Next Board meeting:

**Tuesday, May 21, 2019
3:00 p.m.
Tech Garden – Fibertech Theater**