



James V. Breuer, Chair
Merike L. Treier, Executive Director

DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.

March 20, 2018

**SUNY Oswego Metro Center
Two Clinton Square**

3:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

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

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

Guests: Mr. Kevin Bernstein, Bond, Schoeneck and King
Mr. Steve Case, Acropolis Development
Ms. Elizabeth Dunbar, Everson Museum of Art
Mr. Tom Fabboli
Mr. Mike Intaglietta, The Landmark Theatre
Mr. Christopher Gorman, National Grid
Mr. Matt Funciello, JF Real Estate
Mr. Cory LaDuke, Cushman-Wakefield/Pyramid Brokerage
Ms. Linda Fitzgibbons, MONEY Federal Credit Union
Ms. Victoria Scicchitano, MONEY Federal Credit Union
Ms. Toni Martin, The MOST
Ms. Cheryl Pustzai, Downtown YMCA
Ms. Nicole Samolis, SKY Armory/The Events Co.
Ms. Natalie Stetson, Erie Canal Museum
Mr. Jim Wefers, Marriott Courtyard & Residence Inn/Armory Square
Ms. Lindsay Weichert, M&T Bank
Ms. Erica Volpe, Marketing Specialist – MONEY Federal Credit Union

I. Welcome and Introductions

A. Welcome New Board Members: Ruthnie Angrand and Joseph Bryant

Chairman Breuer called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests present. He introduced and welcomed new board members: Ms. Ruthnie Angrand, Director of Communications and Marketing with the City of Syracuse, and Mr. Joseph Bryant, of J.E. Bryant & Associates, LLC, to their first meeting. Chairman Breuer also commented that he appreciated the interest of the guests to be involved in the new sub-committees and thanked them for their efforts.

II. Approval of Minutes from January 23, 2018

Chairman Breuer asked the Board if they had any questions or comments on the minutes from January 23, 2018, and there were none. Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to approve the January 23, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes. Mr. Fiorito moved, Mr. Dunn seconded; the motion was unanimously carried.

III. Financial Report as of February 28, 2018

Mr. Dunn provided the financial report as of February 28, 2018. He noted that overall the budget to date remains in line with expenses being incurred as budgeted. He highlighted that the Non-Operating Income line reflects the SIDA grant income used to purchase the new security cameras. He noted that the cameras are being depreciated as a security expense.

Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to accept the February 28, 2018 financial report subject to audit. Mr. Tripoli moved and Mr. Fiorito seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

IV. Staff Reports

A. DSA Budget Updates

Ms. Treier reported that the Downtown Committee's proposed annual budget (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019) that was reviewed and approved at the January Board meeting has been submitted to the City of Syracuse for review and approval. There will be a Common Council budget hearing meeting on April 12 at 2:00 p.m. that Ms. Treier

recommended the Board members attend to show support. *[Since the Board meeting, the date of the Council meeting to review the budget has been changed to April 17 at 2:30 p.m. – Ed.]*

Ms. Treier also shared with the Board members that she conducts a monthly one-on-one meeting with the Mayor which provides an opportunity for the Downtown Committee to brief him on what's happening downtown, areas that need additional assistance, as well as learn what items are of priority to him. She noted she recently discussed the budget and additional security needs with the Mayor.

Ms. Treier announced the promotion of Downtown Committee staff member, Bethany Holbrook to Marketing and Events Coordinator. Ms. Treier also distributed to the Board and guests a handout of Downtown Committee events for 2018.

B. Introduction of New Committees

Ms. Treier noted that the Downtown Committee will be creating a series of volunteer councils ("committees of the Downtown Committee") out of last year's Advocate Group in which many Board members and business representatives participated and want to continue. She noted that the group is collectively interested in creating a vibrant downtown and want to help continue to amplify the voice of the Downtown Committee's programs and services. Ms. Treier distributed a draft mission statement and member activities sheet which provides a clear framework of activities and member expectations for participation. Each committee will identify one priority for a given year for members to accomplish. The Downtown Committee staff will participate and work with each committee. Ms. Treier noted that the Communications Committee has already met and is currently doing a communications audit to help the staff evaluate its outreach to ensure it's as effective as possible.

V. City of Syracuse Updates

A. Structure of New Administration

Ms. Angrand provided the City's new senior administration organization chart. She stated that no new departments were created. She noted that many city services will be

working under the Director of Operations (Corey Driscoll Dunham), Greg Loh is the new Director of City Initiatives, and departments like Assessment and Information Technology has been moved under the Director of Administration (Christie Elliott).

B. Search for New Police Chief

Ms. Angrand updated the Board on the City's search for a new Police Chief. She noted that the time line of the search is expected to continue through the end of the year. The City will be setting up public input meetings in April and May to help identify criteria for the search committee's interviews. A survey will be released at the end of this month for the public to participate in. Ms. Angrand noted that private meetings to collect input can also be set up by contacting her. Ms. Treier added that the Downtown Committee will send a notice to the Board to participate in a public input meeting scheduled for April 10 from 5:30-7:00 p.m. at City Hall Commons Atrium.

VI. Downtown Constituent Survey

Ms. Maggiore presented the results of the 2017 Downtown Satisfaction Survey that was circulated this past fall electronically and through a link to the survey on the website. The survey provided feedback from downtown constituents, residents and visitors to use for better prioritization or creation of new programs and services. She reported that a total of 572 people responded to the survey, the largest percentage being employees/employers (49%) and visitors (39%). The survey gathered data on where the respondents spent most of their time during the week or weekends and the type of activity (dining/cocktails, events, sporting events, outdoor festivals, music and concerts.) According to the survey results, Armory Square was the most popular location utilized on weekdays and weekends. The "Heart of Downtown" location was second popular on weekdays and Hanover Square on the weekends.

Other information collected were specific drivers of activity, the belief in the strength of downtown, and greatest opportunity for growth. A common theme the survey reflected was a desire for a grocery store and affordable housing. The three top areas that people want to see our community prioritize are 1) Business and Development, 2) Quality of Life and 3) Safety. Ms. Maggiore noted that 93% of people responded that they would be comfortable recommending downtown to a friend. She was happy to report that the Downtown Committee's

Constant Contact database has increased by 2,000 people since January 2016 for a total of 8,300 subscribers.

Ms. Angrand asked how visitors to downtown were defined in the survey, and Ms. Maggiore responded that they were defined as people who came downtown for events, dining and activities who were not living or working in downtown.

Ms. Treier commented that in response to the importance of safety in downtown, evening and weekend patrols are being supported through a SIDA grant. She noted that since 2008, the level of public engagement in the survey has increased, which has provided great input. The Downtown Committee will continue to identify opportunities and challenges to direct more energy towards the need for more retail and affordable housing. She noted that the investment and growth of downtown could expand into adjacent neighborhoods.

The Board members discussed the poor visitor perception of parking and safety in downtown. Chairman Breuer stressed the need to work more on improving communication and public awareness of parking options and improved attention to safety concerns.

Mr. Lemp inquired if the Farmers' Market can be expanded to include additional vendors. Ms. Treier noted that though its operation cannot extend into an additional day, the Downtown Committee will explore the possibility of having more vendors and how that impacts the market.

Mr. Doucette commented that panhandling is still a top concern, and Ms. Treier responded that the Downtown Committee is working with the City to explore a city-wide campaign message to approach the issue with a compassionate strategy. Ms. Treier also commented that staff is working with the city to provide full patrols evening and weekends in high activity areas. Service provider partners like the Housing Homeless Coalition help to identify new individuals or encampments in the area. Ms. Treier commented that with the help of its different committees, the Downtown Committee will be working to propose quality of life and safety solutions to the City.

Mr. Bianchetti suggested sending future downtown surveys and Downtown Committee newsletters directly to large employers' Human Resource departments to include in their own links to reach more employees. He noted that National Grid would be willing to do that.

VII. Public Comments

Mr. Samolis commended the City and the Downtown Committee maintenance crew for doing a great job in plowing and removing snowbanks on sidewalks and curbs which made a huge difference.

Mr. Lemp also noticed that trash is being picked up more frequently near his store on Warren Street.

Ms. Angrand added that there has been an improvement in communication between the City departments so they will be better prepared to provide better service.

VIII. Other Business and Adjourn

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Next Board meeting:
Tuesday, May 15
3:00 p.m.
Location: to be announced