



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

## **DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.**

**July 24, 2018**

**The Tech Garden  
Fibertech Theater**

**3:00 p.m.**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Attendance**

**Members:** Messrs. Breuer, Bianchetti (via phone), Dunn, Fiorito, Tascarella, and Tripoli, Mss. Angrand (via phone), and Gagliano

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

**Guests:** Hon. Tim Rudd, Syracuse Common Council  
Mr. Karl Bauer, Whiting-Turner  
Mr. Neil Burke, City of Syracuse  
Mr. Steve Case, Acropolis Development  
Mr. Eric Ennis, City of Syracuse  
Mr. Matt Funicello, JF Real Estate  
Ms. Madelyn Hornstein, Dermody, Burke & Brown CPAs, LLC  
Mr. Danny Liedka, Visit Syracuse  
Ms. Ashley Liner, Empire Brewing Company  
Mr. Greg Loh, City of Syracuse  
Ms. Lindsay Weichert, M&T Bank  
Ms. Erica Volpe, MONEY Federal Credit Union

#### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

##### **A. Introduce Jordan Young**

Chairman Breuer called the meeting to order and welcomed guests and members present. Mr. Breuer introduced Mr. Jordan Young, a recent graduate of Syracuse University, who joined the Downtown Committee in June as an Economic Development Assistant working with Ms. Schroeder.

## **II. Approval of Minutes from May 15, 2018**

Chairman Breuer asked the Board if they had any questions or comments on the minutes from May 15, 2018, and there were none. Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to approve the May 15, 2018, Board Meeting Minutes. Mr. Fiorito moved, Mr. Tripoli seconded; the motion was unanimously carried.

## **III. Financial Report as of May 31, 2018**

Mr. Dunn provided the financial report as of May 31, 2018. He noted that this is the 11<sup>th</sup> month of reporting and has been previously discussed, expenses will come in over budget at the end of fiscal year in June. He also noted that overtime cost for the 62 days of sidewalk snow clearing is reflected under Environmental Maintenance Operations program expense line. He highlighted under Transportation – Franklin Street that income has surpassed the 12-month projection. A new income item on the report is Transportation-SOC, which is the parking lot on the corner of Salina and Clinton Streets the Downtown Committee is temporarily managing. Mr. Dunn asked the Board if there were any questions on the Financial Report as of May 31, 2018.

Ms. Treier responded to Mr. Bianchetti's question regarding Dining Weeks Revenue sources and stated it reflects sponsorship income used to market the promotion.

Ms. Angrand inquired about the Annual Meeting income line and Ms. Treier responded that the full extent of income and expenses will be reflected in the June financial report.

Per Mr. Loh's request, Ms. Maggiore will highlight the City's Adopt-A-Block program in the Downtown Committee Newsletter.

With no further questions, Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to accept the May 31, 2018, financial report subject to audit. Mr. Fiorito moved and Ms. Gagliano seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

#### **IV. Administration**

##### **A. Authorization to Execute Annual Contract with City of Syracuse**

Ms. Treier asked the Board for a resolution to allow the Executive Director to enter into and execute the annual operating contract with the City of Syracuse provided that the only changes from previous year's contract is the date and budget figure increase. Mr. Fiorito moved to approve the resolution and Mr. Dunn seconded the motion. The resolution was unanimously approved.

##### **B. Year-End Metrics**

Ms. Maggiore presented to the board a comparison of the Downtown Committee's 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 fiscal year-end Metrics reports which is a snapshot of activities and programs undertaken throughout the year. She highlighted that the Downtown Committee demonstrated increased economic development activities which is displayed in the notable increase of 367 to 519 "Real Estate Assists." She also noted that "Stats and Info Requests Filled" rose from 546 to 591. There was a significant increase in "Programing Grant Dollars Secured," due to SIDA grant funding added in 2017-2018. Ms. Maggiore noted that the report shows an impressive increase in overall engagement, citing several examples within the metrics that show people want to be downtown and get involved in community activities. The number of "Businesses Engaged in Events and Activities" more than doubled. Constant Contact subscribers grew by almost 1,000 new followers over last year, with more than 100 new subscribers just in the last month since the 2017-2018 metrics were published. This year, approximately 2,000 more people attended signature Downtown Committee events and 500 more people got involved in Downtown Committee contests compared to the previous fiscal year.

Ms. Maggiore concluded by inviting the board to share suggestions on what else they would like the Downtown Committee to track in the Metrics Report, and offered that the Downtown Committee would be talking internally to re-evaluate a couple of Metrics-related measures.

## V. Committee Reports

### A. Livability Committee

Ms. Weichert provided an update from the Livability Committee. She reported that the committee met on June 19 and chose to focus on two activities: Greenspace and Gateways/Entryways. The committee agreed that improvement is needed for gateway areas to make them friendlier in appearance. Because the group desired a more comprehensive understanding of neighborhood and master plans, information on TNT and ReZone will be included at the next meeting. Ms. Weichert noted that Ms. Angrand from the City of Syracuse shared the city's Adopt-a-Block initiative aimed at cleaning up existing spaces. The committee noted that there is still interest in a County program that has recently faded: Adopt- an- Exit/Off-ramp, even though there was a volunteer liability involved. The group agreed that if the railroad bridges at West/Fayette St. could be painted and concrete maintained, it would dramatically improve the appearance. The benefits of bridge lighting was also discussed. It was agreed that the primary focus would be to try and maintain what currently exists versus creating new spaces to maintain. Ms. Weichert reported that the committee is exploring potential funding sources such as the Upstate Revitalization Initiative. The group also expressed desire for the addition of permanent building signs or placards to share the history of the spaces.

Ms. Weichert concluded that the next steps will be to ask TNT or City Planning to attend the next Livability Committee meeting and share overview of neighborhood plans and identify priority areas that can help downtown connect with nearby neighborhoods.

Mr. Loh noted that he can provide a target map of good Adopt-A-Block opportunities around downtown which also extends out to Erie Boulevard.

Chairman Breuer thanked Ms. Weichert for a good report and looks forward to seeing this initiative taken to the next level.

## **VI. U.S. Bowling Congress – Impacts**

Mr. Liedka of Visit Syracuse updated the board on the U.S. Bowling Congress tournament's impact. He noted that the hotels and restaurants saw an increase in revenue during this event which ran from March 24 to July 7 at the Oncenter. He noted that local hotel rooms were aggressively sought after, and as a result, occupancy rates went up around the city and suburbs during the tournament. It is estimated that the event saw a \$75 million economic impact. He noted that this event will be used as a successful marketing tool and testimonial to draw larger events to Syracuse. Mr. Liedka thanked the Mayor of Syracuse and the County Executive Office for its support of hosting the U.S. Bowling Congress. He noted that many positive reviews were received on website ratings. He also noted that the general public may have not been aware of all the local labor that went into this and after the event, much of the building material was donated to charitable organizations (such as Habitat for Humanity.) He noted that in order to replace such a large scale event yearly, the city would need to generate 3,000-4,000 size groups annually to match the economic impact the tournament had.

## **VII. Syracuse Bike Share Plan**

Mr. Ennis and Mr. Burke of the City of Syracuse provided an update of the Syracuse Bike Share Initiative that will be rolled out citywide by the end of the year (with a soft rollout in six weeks) after approval at the July 30 Common Council session. He noted that the program began as an initiative of 40 Below and Transit Task force. Mr. Ennis noted that it was first introduced as a "Pop-Up" Bike Share Program during the 2016 Downtown Living Tour and found that people were interested in this service. This past spring, it soon developed as an official Bike Share committee of Adapt CNY where stakeholder groups share research and gather data of existing programs in other cities (which Ms. Schroeder of the Downtown Committee is also a member). This past April, the committee collected proposals of affordable bike share programs of which a private vendor was selected. Mr. Burke noted that the committee is working closely with the Mayor's Office, Constituent Services, Codes & Enforcements, and other departments to ensure the rollout of the program is successful and be able to maintain the ability to balance the data system with rest of the city and transportation network. Mr. Burke stated that the committee also hopes to integrate the program into low income areas as an affordable transportation alternative. Mr. Ennis added that the committee is working to obtain sponsorships and grants to support the program. He added that the committee is holding neighborhood meetings and has a

website to collect feedback. He encouraged the board to visit [www.syracusebikeshare.com](http://www.syracusebikeshare.com) for more information and provide feedback on the program.

Mr. Tripoli inquired on the cost of a sponsorship package in which Mr. Burke replied that is still under development. They are also working on an RFQ to handle all operations with company staff. They are looking into the possibility of extending the program outside the city but right now are focusing inside the city. He noted that the service will encourage riders to use helmets which the program will not provide.

Ms. Weichert asked about the safety issues – who will maintain the bike stripes on the road? Mr. Burke responded that they are having on ongoing discussions with the DPW to increase capabilities.

Chairman Breuer thanked Mr. Ennis and Mr. Burke for their presentation. He commented that once the bike traffic increases, the riders will need to be cognizant of pedestrians.

## **VIII. Upcoming Events**

### **A. Downtown Farmers Market - ongoing**

Ms. Treier announced that the weekly Downtown Farmers Market is underway and operates every Tuesday, 7:00am-3:00pm through October 9 in Clinton Square. If a customer shows proof of purchase to the Downtown Committee information table they can receive a free tchotchke. Back again this year is the Food Bank with free 20 minute cooking demonstrations with food bought at the market (through August.) Patrons can subscribe to the Farmers Market Newsletter on the Downtown Committee's website for weekly information and a "corny" joke!

### **B. Arts & Crafts Festival**

Ms. Treier announced that the annual Arts and Crafts Festival is slated for Friday, July 27 from 10am-6pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am-5pm in Columbus Circle and side streets. AmeriCu is once again the presenting sponsor and funding is made possible by Senator DeFrancisco's community grant. Ms. Treier thanked Onondaga County for their help securing parking and the City of Syracuse for their partnership on event

operations. She commended Ms. Reed, Ms. Holbrook and Mr. McFadden who worked hard to organize and maintain the show. This year the juried show will have 170 artists (chosen out of 400 applicants). Entertainment this year includes strolling musicians, small dance performances, child activity areas, and a variety of food. The Redhouse will also be at the festival inviting participation in painting pieces. Just recently, the show has been named one of the top 200 festivals in the Country in “Sunshine Artist” publication. This is also the 11<sup>th</sup> year of the Arts Week (July 19-29) collaboration. Other events going on downtown include the Jazz and Wine Festival, Montgomery St. Cooperative show, the OHA will be open, and activities at the Everson. Ms. Treier noted that the paper lanterns that were created at the 2016 and 2017 Art Show will be displayed with café lighting at the City Place, located between State Tower and City Hall Commons Atrium through the end of summer. The café lighting will remain permanent to draw more attention to the unique space. Ms. Treier thanked the City of Syracuse for help in its installation.

### **C. REDC Applications**

Ms. Treier reported that the New York State CFA grant fund application deadline is Friday, July 27 at 4:00pm. The Downtown Committee provided support letters for the following projects:

- Everson Museum – public art demonstration during Artsweek 2019
- CNY Arts – Art in Windows
- MOST – stabilize and improve the Armory Square building and STEM Learning Center
- Landmark Theatre – address marquee repairs needed
- City Center Project – support renovation of vacant space into offices
- 484 S. Salina Street – Allyn Foundation for its new construction project
- 246-250 East Water Street building renovations

### **D. FitBoss – August 8-9**

Ms. Treier announced that on August 8 and 9, SKY Armory will be hosting FitBoss, a health and wellness expo featuring fitness trainer and speaker, Todd Durkin. There will

also be a free workout session on Walton Street on August 8 from 5:30-6:30pm. More information can be found on their event site: <https://www.fitbosssyr.com/>

## **IX. Public Comments**

Mr. Case commented that the Whitney Loft project is coming along well. He noted that 16 residential units will occupy the upper floors and there will be a restaurant on the ground floor. The goal is to be open by the end of December 2018.

Ms. Treier reported that a letter opposing the Wage Tip Credit proposal was sent to the NYS Department of Labor. She noted that restaurant and hospitality constituents have raised concern over the proposed elimination of the tip credit. Based on feedback from our constituents, the current proposal threatens the livelihoods of their businesses, resulting in extremely negative impacts on their business models.

Of those surveyed:

- 81% are aware of the proposal to raise the wage of tipped employees
- 94% have assessed how this would impact their business model
- 88% would need to increase their prices
- 62% would need to reduce the number of employees
- 56% would need to reduce overall staffing levels
- 88% oppose this proposal

Ms. Angrand expressed the importance of drawing people in from the surrounding neighborhoods to downtown events and festivals to ensure a sense of inclusion in the community. She reinforced the desire to expand communications efforts to attract a more diverse audience to events.

Mr. Tripoli announced that on August 15 from 4:00-8:00pm, at the Marriott Syracuse Downtown, the Onondaga Historical Association (partnering with Willow Rock Brewing Company) will be hosting a special event to re-launch a new version of Congress Beer, an icon beer that was brewed in Syracuse in the past.

**X. Other Business and Adjourn**

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

**Next Board meeting:**

**Tuesday, September 18, 2018**

**3:00 p.m.**

**(Location to be announced)**