

SDODC

Special District Operations and Development Committee
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Tony Fiorito, Chair

SPECIAL DISTRICT OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes

January 22, 2019

**Tech Garden – Fibertech Theater
235 Harrison Street**

3:00 pm

Attendance

Members: Chairman Fiorito; Mss. Gagliano, Zell; Messrs. Bryant, Doucette, Dunn, Lemp, Nutting, Riley, Tascarella Jr., Tripoli

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

Guests: Mr. Cory LaDuke, Pyramid Brokerage Company
Ms. Dee Klees, FOCUS Greater Syracuse
Mr. Anthony Rojas, In-ARCHITECTS
Ms. Debbie Ruthven, MONEY Federal Credit Union
Ms. Lindsay Weichert, M&T Bank

I. WELCOME

Chairman Fiorito welcomed the Board members and guests present. Mr. Fiorito introduced himself as the newly appointed Chairman of the Downtown Committee that began January 1, 2019. He also recognized Ms. Gagliano as vice-chair. Board members Peter Dunn and Don Lemp will also renew their terms for four more years.

II. ADMINISTRATION

A. Approval of Minutes of November 20, 2018

Chairman Fiorito asked the Board if there were any questions on the Minutes of November 20, 2018, and there were none. Chairman Fiorito asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Zell moved and Mr. Doucette seconded. The motion was unanimously carried.

B. Conflict of Interest Policy

Ms. Treier asked the Board to complete and sign the annual Conflict of Interest Statement which will be reviewed by Mr. Dunn as independent director and kept in the Downtown Committee files.

C. Whistleblower Policy

Ms. Treier asked the Board to review and acknowledge receipt of the annual Whistleblower Policy.

III. FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018

Mr. Dunn provided the financial report as of December 31, 2018. He noted that the Downtown Committee is currently at the halfway point of its 2018-2019 fiscal year. He reported that overall, income is ahead of expenses this year. Ms. Treier added that the surplus showing under Income is due to increased parking revenue and the two vacancies (one was just filled) on the Environmental Maintenance team.

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

IV. SPECIAL DISTRICT PROPOSED BUDGET 2019-2020

Ms. Treier thanked Mr. Fiorito, and Mr. Tascarella for serving on the Budget Review Committee. Ms. Treier provided an overview of the proposed 2019-2020 budget that included total expenses and allocation of DSA funds/earned income for its programs. She noted that the Special Assessment budget line will remain the same this year since the budget increase request was approved last year. Ms. Treier also shared the budget committee's recommendation on strategy to provide more funding support in future years.

Ms. Treier reviewed the proposed 2019-2020 DSA Budget and provided an overview on the primary sources of revenue and areas of expense. She noted that the Budget Committee has recommended the DSA remain steady at \$985,000. She reviewed the Downtown Committee's

Signature events and how those contribute to annual operation. She also reviewed primary areas of expense and noted that this year's proposed expenditures will look similar to last year. Looking ahead she shared the goal that "The Downtown Committee will have a secure, sustainable budget that reflects the growth of a thriving Downtown district." Ms. Treier suggested a committee of Board members, staff, and other engaged parties to look at further downtown funding.

As part of the Budget Projections for FY ending June 30, 2019 she noted an increased allocation under Marketing to fund a new website. She thanked Ms. Maggiore for her work in undertaking a thorough website audit as a result of the Communications Committee recommendations. She also noted the staff's research on a CRM system to help automate data collection and information. Board members commented that the current estimate for a new website was modest and it may require additional resources.

Ms. Treier asked for the board's help to review new website design proposals when the time comes.

Ms. Zell recommended the Downtown Committee look into providing a real estate data site as part of the redesign.

Mr. Fiorito asked for a motion to approve the 2019-2020 budget recommendation as presented. Mr. Tripoli moved and Mr. Nutting seconded. The motion was unanimously carried.

V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Ms. Schroeder presented to the board a report on the residential growth trends in downtown Syracuse. She noted that the average growth trend between 2009-2018 showing a rate of approximately 90 new housing units a year and 160 new residents per year. A large spike in growth in residential buildings is expected in 2020 with the introduction of several large-scale projects which will increase the number of residents to approximately 4,500 (or a 16% increase over two years.) This is also very close to the predictions of the 2014 Residential Market Study projections. Ms. Schroeder confirmed that that these trends only cover the 82 blocks of downtown.

Mr. Young reported on the retail trends in Downtown Syracuse. He noted that Downtown Syracuse has experienced a net gain of 47 new businesses since 2009. During 2017-2018 Fiscal Year he reported that there were 19 retail business openings, 16 closings and 8 relocations within Downtown. Overall the trend is positive to a significant degree, signifying a retail market with steady growth. Mr. Young noted that the count does not include storefronts that are pre-leased and under construction. He commented that with numerous mixed-use buildings slated for completion in 2019 and 2020, additional growth is expected for the next few years. The trend is showing that the downtown retail market has never regressed cumulatively into losing more business than it has gained. Per Ms. Angrand's request, Mr. Jordan will provide a report on the breakdown of retail categories. Mr. Nutting commented that it would also be good to see the "office" opening and closure trends. Ms. Schroeder added that the next update in March will include that.

VI. DOWNTOWN DINING WEEKS

Ms. Reed announced that Dining Weeks is scheduled for February 18 – March 3. Visions FCU will once again be the presenting sponsor. This year the Downtown Committee has a record 47 participating restaurants: 37 will offer a dinner special; 28 will offer a lunch special; and 18 will offer both. She noted that the price has been raised to \$30 or less for a three-course meal to accommodate the higher priced establishments, and their ability to showcase their cuisine. Ms. Reed thanked Shaughnessy's and Eleven Waters in the Syracuse Marriott Downtown for their sponsorship. The Sleep-Over Package will be available again to dining patrons who wish to make a night of it. When diners show their receipt at one of the four downtown hotels, they will receive a \$25 room rate discount. Dining Weeks will advertised with television, print, digital ads, and a heavy social media campaign. Additionally, with donations made to the Food Bank of Central New York, there will be a special rate of \$5 parking at four downtown lots.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Livability Committee

Ms. Weichert gave an update on the recent activity of the Livability Committee. She noted that the Downtown Syracuse Foundation has partnered with the Downtown Committee to address the Clinton Street/West Onondaga Street gateway project. She noted that in January, a proposal has been executed with Environmental Design & Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering & Environmental Services, D.P.C. to

undertake the conceptual design and cost-estimating for this space. A completed design and estimated cost for the project will be ready by April 1, 2019. The Livability Committee will also be working with the Mayor's Office and New York Susquehanna & Western Railway company on this project. Ms. Weichert noted that a steering committee specific to this project will be established and an initial meeting with members, the City and NYS&W is anticipated within the next two weeks to kick off the project.

B. Security Liaison Committee

Mr. Tripoli presented to the board an update of the Security Liaison Committee. At the last meeting on January 7, the new Chief of Police Buckner shared his vision and focus for the Syracuse Police Department in the city. He plans on tackling challenges the community faces by forming partnerships, enlisting community involvement/using a data-driven approach and addressing hot spot enforcement. He plans on deploying more resources to stimulate Syracuse's economic engine as well as putting more officers on the street who will also be trained to better service those with mental illness. Mr. Tripoli noted that the Security Liaison Committee will help the SPD by being the "squeaky wheel" for downtown and assist with protecting our economic hub by looking at all decisions that are made and understand any unintended consequences and their impact on our community. He also recognized varying perspectives on the issue of panhandling in downtown and noted that the committee will be spearheading an educational campaign as part of the solution. He also recognized the need for more support services for addiction and mental health.

Mr. Tripoli noted that proposals were due January 11 for organizations interested in running the \$200,000/city/county funded workforce development program for homeless/panhandlers which will help provide temporary labor to city and county departments. There will also be an educational (marketing) campaign implemented to educate the public on "giving where it counts." A committee has been formed to help roll out the elements of the campaign by April 1, 2019. Mr. Tripoli noted he will reach out to advertising agencies to help with the communication and branding strategies. Business representatives at the meeting also relayed they would like to be more engaged with human service agencies. It was suggested that the Housing

Homeless Coalition be invited to attend business meetings to provide cultural awareness and diversity training for employees.

C. Doing Business Committee

Ms. Zell gave an update on the Doing Business Committee that met in December where they continued the discussion of working with the city to improve the system of issuing building permits. All shared a desire for consistency in process, clear communications and timelines sought for issuance of building permits. She noted that an RFP for third party review was put out by the city three years ago, but unfortunately the cost was unattainable and NYS Laws on administrative code posed some roadblocks for pursuing the process relative to city reviews required. She reported there is currently a lot of initiative in the city's permit office for software and structural improvements. New city systems under development include:

- "Open Counter" software to help identify the needs of the project that will be built and rolled out during Quarter 1 and 2 of 2019. First focus will be on business application and then a focus on zoning.
- Two inspectors are planned to be in place to focus on commercial projects in spring 2019.
- An availability of E-permitting to process permits that don't need specific review (i.e. electrical) will be developed.
- Potential of hiring of a plans examiner to work with fire review.

The city's ultimate goal is to be at full digital plan review with a transparent process.

Ms. Zell noted that the committee agreed that if this community wants self-certification to be implemented, a coalition of municipal, elected and private interests must come together to push it forward. The committee plans to regroup late January/early February to further discuss issues that design professionals have with the permit office.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Angrand noted that the Syracuse Police Department will be adding a public information office that she would like to connect with the Downtown Committee staff.

Chairman Fiorito commended the Downtown Committee's Environmental staff for doing a great job of snow removal on the sidewalks over the weekend. He also commented that the City's DPW did a great job of plowing the city streets during the recent storm.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURN

With no other business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: **Tuesday, March 21, 2098 - 3:00 pm**
 Tech Garden/Fibertech Theater
 235 Harrison Street