

SDODC

Special District Operations and Development Committee
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James V. Breuer, Chair

SPECIAL DISTRICT OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes

January 23, 2018

Downtown Committee of Syracuse
115 West Fayette Street

3:00 pm

Attendance

Members: Chairman Breuer; Ms. Zell; Messrs. Bianchetti, Dunn, Fiorito, Lemp, Nutting, Tascarella Jr., Tripoli

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

Guests: Mr. Cory LaDuke, Pyramid Brokerage Company
Mr. Matt Funicello, JF Real Estate

I. WELCOME

Chairman Breuer welcomed the Board members and guests present.

A. Reappointment of Board Member: Gregg Tripoli

Chairman Breuer welcomed back reappointed member, Mr. Gregg Tripoli

B. Welcome New Board Members: Melissa Zell, Alberto Bianchetti

Chairman Breuer welcomed new Board members Ms. Melissa Zell, President and COO – Pioneer Companies, and Mr. Alberto Bianchetti, Regional Executive, Customer and Community Management – National Grid, to their first meeting.

Chairman Breuer also recognized retired board member, Edward Koolakian for his years of service on the board.

II. ADMINISTRATION

A. Approval of Minutes of November 21, 2017

Chairman Breuer asked the Board if there were any questions on the Minutes of November 21, 2017, and there were none. Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Nutting moved and Mr. Fiorito 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.

D. Authorization to Execute Contract with NYS HTF

The Downtown Committee of Syracuse was awarded a \$500,000 NY Main Street grant through the NYS office of Housing and Community Renewal in December 2017. Ms. Treier asked for a motion to authorize the executive director to execute the two-year contract for these funds with the NYS Housing Trust Fund. Grants will be made on a reimbursement basis to eligible property owners for awarded activities. The Downtown Committee has also budgeted funds from this grant to assist with administrative costs and the required environmental testing.

Mr. Dunn moved and Mr. Lemp seconded. The motion was unanimously carried.

Ms. Treier also noted that the Downtown Committee is looking for volunteers to serve on the grant review committee. Mr. Tripoli and Mr. Dunn agreed to serve.

Ms. Schroeder added that the process for the grant application submission and approvals take about 30 days for each, with anticipated construction to begin in June of this year.

E. Downtown Security Storefront

Ms. Treier reported that the Downtown Committee has maintained a Security & Information storefront, which is shared with the Syracuse Police Department, on the South Warren side of The Galleries since 2011. This space, along with about 44,000 square feet of additional space will be the new home of TCG Player.com. The Downtown Committee received a 60-day notice to vacate the space the week of January 1.

The Downtown Committee prioritized three spaces:

- The first space was high-visibility and was offered rent-free if the Downtown Committee pays the build-out and utilities (the same deal as The Galleries location). Ms. Treier noted that they learned two weeks ago that a larger tenant is looking at this space, which could put the relocation plans on hold 3-6 months, which the security staff does not have the ability to do.
- A second space was identified on South Warren Street and two cost-estimates for the build out of this space was received. The building's owners are aware of the expectation of minimal rent and staff are currently exploring their use of the space might look like in terms of an Agreement and possible payments.
- There is a third space under investigation and staff is currently reviewing the possible structure of an agreement.

Ms. Treier noted she will have more information within the next week to share with the Board.

III. FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2017

Mr. Dunn provided the financial report as of December 31, 2017. He noted that the Downtown Committee is currently at the halfway point of its 2017-2018 fiscal year. He noted that under Income/Transportation that the Franklin Lot is performing ahead of budget. The SIDA grant will offset the new security cameras purchase. Ms. Treier reported that Administration expenses are tracking higher due to the purchase of a new laptop, software and equipment for staff. She also noted under Security, Insurance expense came in higher than initially budgeted. The Downtown Committee's auditor, Fust, Charles Chambers, should have fiscal year 2016-2017 financial audit report completed soon.

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

IV. OVERVIEW OF DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE PROGRAMS

The Downtown Committee staff presented an overview of its programs and services to the board and guests. Ms. Treier noted that the Downtown Committee of Syracuse (a 501c4 organization), contracts with the City to deliver enhanced services in the central business district in Downtown Syracuse. The Downtown Committee staff reports to the board of directors and its operations are funded in part by a special assessment and also through grants and sponsorships. Ms. Treier noted that the Downtown Committee is a partner of CenterState CEO (where it rents its main office) and operates as a stand-alone organization.

Environmental Maintenance Program

Mr. McFadden highlighted the following services of the Downtown Committee's maintenance program which ensures downtown is attractive, accessible and clean: sidewalk maintenance (snow plowing, flushing/sweeping and repair or replace sidewalk furniture/waste cans (as part of a 50/50 City program); mowing lawns/trim hedges; graffiti and gum removal; install and maintain about 330 seasonal flower baskets with the support of sponsorship dollars; plant, prune and water 660 trees; organize the annual Earth Day Clean-up (400 volunteers!) and Partners in Planting with the community in the spring; cleaning doorways and replacing bricks, and mural refurbishing. Mr. McFadden added that the equipment is also maintained by the crew. Mr. Lemp commended the maintenance crew for doing a great job of keeping the street corner walks clear during the winter. Ms. Treier noted that in addition to the 50/50 maintenance agreement with the city, the Downtown Committee raises about \$20,000 in sponsorship to support the environmental maintenance program.

Downtown Committee Security

Mr. Campanie presented the Downtown Security program. There are currently two patrolling officers working 8:30am-5:00pm with an additional officer scheduled in the evenings from 4:00-8:00pm. He noted there is one more officer in training for the evening shift so there will be two patrolling the streets together soon. The Downtown Committee is looking to hire additional officers for weekend coverage. He noted that security patrol is mostly on foot and

they are also equipped with a van. The Downtown Security team works in partnership with the Syracuse Police Department. He noted that they are also flexible in providing coverage around downtown events. Mr. Campanie reminded the board of the 423-HELP hotline which is answered by their security office. The Security team also offers personal safety seminars for businesses and residents and has “Security Smarts” crime prevention tips handouts. Mr. Campanie noted that the Downtown Committee owns and maintains 17 pole-mounted security cameras (7 of which are new) in strategic downtown locations which are tied in to the Syracuse Police Department.

Economic Development Program

Ms. Schroeder presented the Economic Development program to the board. She noted that the program focuses on business recruitment and retention; real estate statistics and information; and quality of life improvements in downtown. Ms. Schroeder shared in detail the support the Downtown Committee provides including:

- Maintaining a downtown database of over 82 blocks of property
- Retail and support office and retail tenants
- Serve as liaison with the City of Syracuse on approvals, policy, etc.
- Provide and present occupancy reports and demographic information
- Promote and research housing development
- List available real estate, assemble property packages
- Identify incentives and grant opportunities
- Provide additional programming including Pop-up retail, Art in the Windows, District planning, ReZone, Social Service partnerships, Public Art and Invest Health

Ms. Schroeder noted that the Downtown Committee provides additional recruitment resource tools on its webpage including interactive real estate maps; office, retail and housing data; and semi-annual commercial occupancy reports. Staff also prepares custom property packages in response to requests from prospective downtown businesses. Ms. Schroeder highlighted additional Downtown Committee programming, such as the Pop-Up Retail and Art in the Windows programs, including the holiday Window Wonderland contest, made possible by grant and sponsor funding. Ms. Schroeder noted that the economic development staff also connect developers and businesses to resources such as SIDA tax abatement, SEDCO low-interest loans, and the National Grid grant program, and most recently the Downtown

Committee received a \$500,000 Main Street Grant from New York State. Ms. Treier thanked Mr. Dunn of the Community Foundation for its support of the Window Wonderland program.

Marketing & Communications

Ms. Reed presented the Marketing and Communications Program. She explained that the program supports downtown constituents by raising visibility, increasing business and foot traffic and encouraging exploration of downtown's assets. She noted that advertising is a key component and uses a variety of media sources including TV, billboards, print, radio, digital and direct mailings. The Downtown Committee also produces collateral for visitors, shopping and dining guides, and the popular walking tour guides. Ms. Reed noted that the website (DowntownSyracuse.com) has everything you need to know, including how to participate or volunteer at community events and the information is always up-to-date.

Ms. Holbrook shared with the Board that in the Marketing program, the Downtown Committee creates welcome bags for new or prospective business employers to downtown. The bags include brochures, and retail or restaurant deal promotions, newsletter and event information. She noted they have recently distributed about 1,000 bags. She encouraged the board to let her know of any new tenants who would benefit from the welcome bags. Another communication tool the Downtown Committee utilizes is the electronic weekly newsletter that is emailed to over 8,000 people per week. Ms. Holbrook noted it's a place to highlight local downtown events and help businesses promote themselves.

Ms. Maggiore reported on the Downtown Committee's social media efforts. She noted that the Downtown Committee currently has 7,900 Twitter followers, 5,500 on Facebook, and 3,520 followers on Instagram. She also noted that last year there were 79 earned media stories connected to Downtown Committee events.

Ms. Maggiore presented a review of the signature events of the Downtown Committee:

- *Progress Breakfast* – held twice a year in March and October, are themed presentations that highlight and celebrate our downtown businesses' successes.
- *Earth Day Clean-up* – held every April engages stakeholders to participate in the beautification efforts of the downtown environment. Last year, 402 people

volunteered! Ms. Maggiore commended Mr. McFadden and his team for doing a great job in coordinating five designated volunteer locations.

- *Downtown Living Tour* – May 19, 2018. This year the State Tower Building will be the headquarters. This is a great tour for people looking to move downtown and explore the many and unique rental unit options and what the city has to offer.
- *Downtown Farmer's Market* – June 12-October 19, 2018. Held in Clinton Square and receives about 5,000 visitors a week.
- *Annual Meeting* – June 21, 2018. A celebration of announcements, people and places that have contributed to Downtown Syracuse's growth, diversity and overall vibrancy.
- *Syracuse Arts & Crafts Festival* – July 27-29, 2018. Ms. Reed and Ms. Holbrook plan this annual favorite event that attracts about 170 of the best artists nationwide, and 50,000 visitors.
- *Syracuse Style* – September 20, 2018. An 80-foot runway fashion show that allows downtown retailers to shine. About 1,000 people come down for the event every year.
- *Downtown Dining Weeks* – February 15-28, 2018. A well-publicized promotion that gives restaurants a boost during slow times in the winter season. This year, 40 restaurants will be participating, and new this year – 21 restaurants will also provide a lunch special. Vision Federal Credit Union is the presenting sponsor and the press conference will be held at the Marriott Syracuse Downtown.

Ms. Treier mentioned that every Downtown Committee staff member plays a role in all of the events and earned revenue goes back into supporting Downtown Committee programs.

The Board agreed that the messaging of the services and programs the Downtown Committee provides needs to be communicated more broadly to the community. Mr. Nutting raised opportunities to integrate with surrounding neighborhoods. Ms. Treier noted that staff has worked with bordering neighborhoods to share information and start similar programs for their own constituents. Mr. Fiorito commented that it is important to encourage connectivity between downtown neighborhoods and others.

Chairman Breuer recommended using this PowerPoint presentation at a special Common Council meeting and invite other neighborhood representatives to see what the Downtown Committee does and offer free exchange of ideas.

V. SPECIAL DISTRICT PROPOSED BUDGET 2018-2019

Ms. Treier thanked Mr. Dunn, Mr. Fiorito, Mr. Riley and Mr. Tripoli for serving on the Budget Review Committee. Ms. Treier reported that the committee has recommended an increase to the Downtown Special Assessment (DSA) fund for FY 2018-2019. The DSA fund has not increased since 2010 and the \$652 million in investment into downtown Syracuse over this period has significantly changed the uses of downtown and the services required. Ms. Treier provided an overview of the proposed changes, noting increased funds would prioritize increased environmental maintenance, economic development and security services. Ms. Treier also shared the budget committee's recommendation on strategy to increase funding moving forward.

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

VI. OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURN

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

Next Meeting: **Tuesday, March 20, 2018 - 3:00 pm**
Downtown Committee of Syracuse
115 West Fayette St.