

DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.

March 19, 2013

**CenterState CEO Board Room,
572 South Salina Street**

3:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

- Members:** Chairman Breuer; Ms. Gagliano and Littlejohn; Messrs. Carroll, Doucette, Fiorito, Fisher, Koolakian, Maxwell, Russell, Shapiro, Simpson and Tripoli.
- Staff:** Mss. Finch, Hnatko, Pivovarova, Reed, Romeo, and Treier; Messrs. Campanie and McFadden.
- Guest:** Deputy Chief Joe Cecile – Syracuse Police Department
Officer Kevin Hamberger – Syracuse Police Department
Officer Jennifer Hardwich – Syracuse Police Department
Bob Dougherty – Syracuse Common Council
Elizabeth Dailey – OCPL
Doreen Milcarek – OCPL
Richard deVito – Paramount Realty Group
David Holder – SCVB
Brian Anderson – National Grid
Mary Kate Hartman – Landmark Theatre
Paul Stemkoski – Bivens Architects
Nathan Brown – Holt Architects
Russ Andrews – Property owner
Jill Romano – Pyramid Brokerage

I. Welcome and Minutes of January 15th

Chairman Breuer welcomed guests and members present.

Chairman Breuer asked for consideration of the minutes of January 15th. Mr. Koolakian moved and Mr. Tripoli seconded a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion was unanimously carried.

II. Financial Report as of February 28, 2013

Ms. Treier shared the preliminary February 28th financial statement, stating that income is ahead of expense. Ms. Treier reported that the Downtown Committee parking lot continues to perform

well and income for the Downtown Living Tour is starting to come in. Administration is running below budget due to some efficiencies realized with CenterState CEO. Environmental Maintenance is slightly over budget, but that is as expected with the amount of snowfall and rising gas prices to run the plows. Marketing is on budget as expected for the year, with more advertising expense to take place in the spring. In Economic Development all the program costs are expected to be at budget by year end. The Franklin Street Transportation line is on budget and the Herald Place lot is below budget, but in line with our operation of it.

Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to approve the preliminary February 28th financial statement, subject to audit. Mr. Doucette moved and Mr. Koolakian seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

III. New Office Space

Ms. Treier reported that a lease has been signed at the Pike Block and a late summer move is anticipated into the project. CenterState CEO had issued an RFP for office space, including the Downtown Committee in its process. The Downtown Committee is an affiliate organization to CenterState CEO and to maintain organizational efficiencies, will be moving to the Pike Block with CenterState CEO. CenterState CEO will lease the space, and the Downtown Committee will be a sublet tenant of CenterState CEO's. Ms. Treier reported that they have already budgeted for a decreased expenditure in office rent as part of next year's budget as they will have less space. With the move, the majority of the office space will be located on the second floor of the Chamberlin and Witherill Buildings. The Downtown Committee will also have convenient street-level access directly from the Fayette Street entrance. The Downtown Security and Information Center will remain at 440 South Warren Street in the Galleries. Mr. Doucette stated that this will be a great move and commended the Downtown Committee and CCEO for moving back to the center of the Central Business District. Mr. Tripoli asked about signage regarding the Pike Block. Mr. Simpson responded that the signage is not quite worked out, as they are not sure in what form it will have to be in yet.

IV. Formula Review Committee

Ms. Treier reported the Formula Review Committee held their first meeting last week. Ms. Treier thanked the committee as they had a great first meeting with a lot of good feedback around the formula. Discussed at the meeting was the need for the Downtown Committee to quantify service delivery, the impact of their services, and what changes in the downtown atmosphere result in an increased demand for services. Ms. Treier stated that those factors will help build the case for increased funding.

Ms. Treier reported that the committee also discussed revisiting the 2009 Downtown Strategic Plan to include any new goals for downtown as well as an estimate of cost. The committee also discussed some concerns with formula increases, which include both political concerns as well as those related to the fiscal climate.

Ms. Treier noted that the next steps for the committee will include looking at other BID formulas, and possibly adjusting the Downtown Committee's current formula to better meet their goals for downtown. Chairman Breuer commented that with all the enthusiasm happening

in downtown right now, this is a great opportunity to look at what the Downtown Committee does, and see what they can improve on.

V. Security

Chairman Breuer welcomed and introduced the first guest speaker, Deputy Chief Joe Cecile of the Syracuse Police Department.

Deputy Chief Cecile stated that even though the Syracuse Police Department continues to lose officers, there are going to be four officers assigned to downtown. Deputy Chief Cecile reported that two of the positions are continuous, while the other two positions will rotate between four other officers. The two continuous positions will be held by Officer Jennifer Hardwich, and the newest member to the downtown beat, Officer Kevin Hamberger.

Officer Hamberger has been with the Syracuse Police Department for 19 years, with experience in handling juveniles, gangs, and drug enforcement.

Chairman Breuer asked how Officer Hamberger and Officer Hardwich approach the Downtown patrol. The officers stated that they stay together as a team, and travel downtown with focus in the areas with high activity. Mr. Russell asked would the number of officers assigned to the downtown area be enough to handle the volume of activity. Officer Hamberger stated that if the officers all continue to work together that downtown's size is manageable. Mr. Doucette noted that with his location on Salina Street, he notices the activity that occurs very early in the morning. Officer Hamberger stated they are aware of the early morning activity on Salina Street and that they are continuing to keep watch of that area to keep it under control. Mr. Koolakian noted that he has over heard some patrons stating that they don't always feel safe in downtown with groups of loitering people, and with the hopes of increasing the flow of people into downtown, what can be done to make the people feel safer. Officer Hamberger stated the patrol is always working at keeping the loiterers moving, and reported that they are in daily contact with Mike Walsh at Centro, to make sure everything is running smoothly.

Mr. Shapiro questioned whether Officer Hamberger thought the use of security cameras was an effective way to deter illegal activity within downtown. Officer Hamberger stated that cameras are very effective in stopping activity. Officer Hamberger stated that in areas that are known to criminals to contain cameras, break-ins are down, and they help to curtail drug activity. He also stated that security cameras are very useful in helping to identify suspects involved in burglaries. Mr. Shapiro suggested that the topic of security cameras within downtown should be on a list to revisit at a later date.

VI. Economic Development

a. Office Recruitment Initiatives

Mr. Fiorito reported that the Think Downtown Syracuse piece is currently at the printers. This marketing piece was created to stress to businesses to stay and grow here, and to attract new businesses into downtown. Mr. Fiorito noted that it contains great descriptions of all amenities and that it is an important tool for the Downtown Committee. Mr. Fiorito reported that the photo images made it a better marketing piece, and that the testimonials are a great addition. In addition to the office committee, a focus group was created and helped to

inform the document. Mr. Fiorito thanked everyone who participated. Ms. Treier thanked Lisa Romeo for her efforts in creating this successful publication.

Ms. Romeo reported that the Downtown Committee is working with Daylight Blue Media on a companion video that will be posted on the website and shared with prospective Downtown Syracuse office tenants. The video will be up to two minutes long and will feature brief testimonials with existing downtown executives and employees, as well as visuals of Downtown Syracuse to promote the amenities available to office workers here. Ms. Romeo anticipates the video being completed by mid-May of this year. Mr. Tripoli noted that the art/cultural environment is missing from the publication. Ms. Romeo stated that although there is limited cultural information, there are plans for reprinting and they will look to see what can be incorporated into the new printing. Ms. Littlejohn asked about the distribution plan. Ms. Romeo reported that it will be sent to all property owners and leasing agents, as well as potential tenants. Ms. Littlejohn stressed the need to think about outreach and an expanded attraction campaign.

b. Historic District Nomination

Ms. Finch reported that the Downtown Committee is in the process of undertaking a new Historic District Nomination for downtown. Ms. Finch stated that the downtown area clearly has a large stock of historic buildings, and the Downtown Committee has traditionally been the organization to facilitate National Register nominations for districts. In the past, the Downtown Committee has hired the consultants to help with the Armory Square, Hanover Square, and South Salina Street nominations.

Ms. Finch stated that the Downtown Committee is now looking to nominate another area of downtown, the Jefferson and Warren Street Corridor. The Downtown Committee is utilizing Preserve America Grant funds to finance this project, and has hired edr Companies to complete the nomination process. Ms. Finch stated that they anticipate that this project will be completed by June of this year.

Ms. Finch reported that a historic nomination is different than a historic registration. The nomination process simply does the legwork for registration, but it does not make an area or a property historic. Instead, it creates a cover document or a book report to accompany registrations. This will allow each property owner to pursue a historic registration on their own, if they so choose. If property owners decide to register their buildings, they won't need to perform all of the research regarding the area. Instead they will simply need to utilize the report and the nomination that edr Companies has completed. Ms. Finch noted that the Downtown Committee will make the nomination available on their website for anyone to access.

Ms. Finch stated that once a building is registered as historic, the property owners have an opportunity to utilize historic tax credits. The property owners are eligible for a federal and state tax credit, each equivalent to 20% of their renovation cost.

c. Sibley's Building

Mr. Doucette stated that they are currently finalizing the financials for the Sibley's Building. Mr. Doucette noted that the renovations include significant façade improvements and the plan is to remodel all of the store fronts using a contemporary design, as opposed to historic

design. Mr. Doucette stated that this building will undergo a total transformation. Mr. Doucette also stated that they are discussing getting the parking garage back in service. Construction for this project is anticipated to start by the end of this summer and would take approximately 12 months to finish. Mr. DeVito added that the parking garage will have 300 spaces when opened. He noted that this is a critical element and that the parking needs to be ready when the building is. Mr. Tripoli noted that he is thrilled to hear how excited they are about this project.

Mr. Simpson stated that the parking garage has space for 800 spots, so that still leaves 500 to market. Mr. DeVito stated that they are in the middle of the engineering report, and that they are still determining the cost of bringing all the parking spots on line.

d. Downtown Living Tour

Ms. Romeo reported that this year's Downtown Living Tour will be on Saturday, May 18th from noon to 6pm. The tour will be headquartered at the Pike Block and the tour stops are still being confirmed. Ms. Romeo reported that there are two new stops on the tour this year, the Inns at Armory Square and the apartments under construction at the White Memorial Building. Ms. Romeo stated that the other stops this year are at the Pike Block, Merchant's Commons residential unit, Syracuse Media Group, Dey's Plaza, Loew's Residential Suites, and Jefferson Clinton Commons. Tickets will go on sale in April.

VII. Earth Day Clean Up

Mr. McFadden reported that the Earth Day Clean up will be Saturday, April 13th this year. He noted that this is the 18th year the Downtown Committee has been running a clean-up celebration. This event will run in conjunction with the City of Syracuse Clean Up 'Cuse event. Mr. McFadden stated that the Downtown Committee has eight cleanup crews, and volunteers will be provided with gloves, trash bags, t-shirts, and lunch afterward. Mr. McFadden works with the DPW to get all bags picked up. Chairman Breuer asked how it is they get the word out for volunteers. Mr. McFadden stated that the Downtown Committee has an extensive volunteer list, and volunteers can also register at www.volunteercny.org. He noted that the Downtown Committee averages about 200 volunteers each year.

VIII. OCPL Renovation

Chairman Breuer introduced Elizabeth Dailey, Executive Director of the Onondaga County Public Library, to highlight some of the renovations taking place at the public library. Ms. Dailey stated that they are currently working on a concept to redesign the Central Library. Ms. Dailey reported that these renovations will contribute to Downtown's Revitalization. Ms. Dailey stated that they have received final funding for the renovation from Onondaga County and New York State. They are currently taking design and construction bids. Ms. Dailey stated that work should begin in January 2014. Ms. Dailey stated that there will be some interactivity with the street, and the library activities will be visible through the windows.

Ms. Dailey introduced Ms. Doreen Milcarek, Central Library Administrator. Ms. Milcarek stated that her objective is to reimagine the Central Library, to have it viewed as an attraction. Ms. Milcarek noted that the updated Central Library would have a reduced amount of total square footage, but be more sustainable. Ms. Milcarek stated that the library would attract

people from all over the county, and bring in more people to the Downtown area. Ms. Milcarek plans to return to the Downtown Committee with future updates regarding the library renovations. Chairman Breuer thanked Ms. Dailey and Ms. Milcarek for their continued contributions to this project.

IX. Board Discussion – Parking

Ms. Treier reported that Downtown is undergoing a revitalization, which has been exciting, but with this growth comes increased pressure on downtown's parking resources. Ms. Treier noted that the lack of parking supply is hindering the community's ability to attract more growth to downtown. Ms. Treier stated that they do not have a parking solution when trying to attract larger companies.

Ms. Treier reported that in 2008 a Downtown Parking Study was undertaken for the Central Business District to look at:

- Loss of existing parking and additional demand created by planned development projects;
- Different parking demands and preferences created by increased residential development; and
- Concern that future development may be impeded by real and perceived parking issues and constraints.

Ms. Treier reported that from that study the Downtown Committee has verified that downtown is a very car-centric community, with over 90% of downtown workers using a car, either alone or in a carpool, to travel to and from work. Ms. Treier noted that the study resulted in a matrix that summarized and prioritized recommendations to assist the City in developing a work plan for implementation. The goal had been to complete these within a 5 year timeframe. Ms. Treier reported that some transportation management strategies might include biking, buses, and car pooling.

Ms. Treier stated that she has been in contact with the City and they would be open to a committee being formed to look further into this issue. Ms. Treier stated that the Downtown Committee does not have authority over parking, and therefore cannot change parking policy, but that it seems as if this issue should be given a priority focus given the level of activity that is happening in downtown's core. Ms. Treier asked the Board if it believed staff should dedicate their attention to the current parking issue, and/or play a role in the discussions.

Mr. Shapiro asked about how many parking spaces will downtown need in the next 5-10 years. Mr. Fisher stated that in 2008 certain areas, such as Armory Square, had a real shortage, where other areas did not. Chairman Breuer stated that the study needs to be updated, with the closing of Sibley's etc, so the information should be revisited. He stated that it was a good study in 2008, and a good basis to start from. Mr. Simpson stated that he is worried for the current situation, and for long term, specifically of upcoming projects such as I-81. Mr. Simpson stated that it is the right time to update the study. Mr. Simpson noted that the parking situation is a significant stumbling block for attracting and retaining major tenants. Ms. Gagliano stated that the options are limited when moving into the city, but once they are here they love downtown.

Mr. Tripoli asked what type of parking facility would people who are coming into downtown want. Ms. Gagliano stated that maintenance issues pose a problem with stairs and elevators. Ms. Littlejohn stated that NYC has tiering garages, which can double capacity, but part of the process is finding the money to fund it. Mr. Koolakian stated that owning a parking facility is technically a net loss, but being able to provide parking to attract more people into downtown is what brings in the money. Mr. Carroll stated that they need to take the study to the next level, and they need to discuss management of the parking facilities.

Mr. Fisher asked whether the Downtown Committee should work with the City or create their own committee, although they have not authority. Mr. Fiorito stated that although the Downtown Committee would work hard on this issue, the committee needs to work in partnership with the City, the County, and private developers as well. Mr. Simpson stated that the parking issue is important, and that they need to include public transit options. Mr. Fiorito noted that other options are needed such as shuttles and valet. Mr. Dougherty stated that this has to be a joint effort, and that perception is a reality. Mr. Koolakian agreed that there are good solutions on the table such as public transportation and car pooling. Chairman Breuer stated that the Downtown Committee needs to contact the City to determine how it could play a meaningful role in this conversation. Ms. Treier stated that she will work with the City and County and report back regarding this issue.

X. Other Business and Adjourn

Mr. Maxwell stated that a section of the Onondaga Creekwalk will be closed for most of the year as the NYS DOT prepares to work on nearby bridges. Possibly starting next week, the Creekwalk will be closed between West Genesee Street and Plum Street through the end of October.

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Next meeting: **Tuesday, May 21st at 3:00 pm**
572 South Salina Street, Board Room