

**DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.**

**May 15, 2012**

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

**3:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance**

- Members:** Chairman Breuer; Messrs. Carroll, Carter, Fiorito, Fisher, Fournier, Maxwell, Robbins, Russell, and Shapiro.
- Staff:** Mss. Carrington, Erno, Reed, Romeo, Pivovarova, Sonne, and Treier; Messrs. Marcon, McFadden, and McGann.
- Guest:** Anthony Ortega – MOST & Armory Square Association  
Jim Monahan – Monahan Development Corporation  
John Palmer – Monahan Development Corporation  
Bob Dougherty – Common Council  
Nader Maroun – Common Council  
Thomas Kamide – Bonadio Group  
Dave Shah – Property Owner, 500 Building  
David Holder – Syracuse Convention & Visitor Bureau  
Brian Anderson – National Grid  
Carol Kametz – Aspen Athletic Club  
Mary Kate Hartman – Landmark Theatre

**I. Welcome and Minutes of March 20<sup>th</sup>**

Chairman Breuer welcomed guests and members present. He also announced that Mr. Robbins will be leaving his position as Dean of the School of Architecture at Syracuse University and starting July 1<sup>st</sup> will be the Executive Director of the International Center of Photography in New York City. Chairman Breuer thanked Mr. Robbins for his service to the Downtown Committee Board. Mr. Robbins expressed gratitude for the organization. Chairman Breuer noted that Ms. Erno has accepted a position with The Hartford and wished her well in her new endeavor.

Chairman Breuer asked for consideration of the minutes of March 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Robbins moved and Mr. Russell seconded a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion was unanimously carried.

**II. Financial Report**

**a. Financial Report as of April 30<sup>th</sup>**

Mr. Fournier stated that year to date expenses are down and income is slightly ahead of budget projections. This can be attributed to a few items that have been on-going through the year.

First, the Art Show income came in higher than budgeted due to sponsorships and booth fees. The Events fund also came in over budget, and staff changes within the organization resulted in savings in two of the department lines. Also, with the mild winter, environmental maintenance expenses are running below budget.

Mr. Fournier asked for a motion to approve the April 30<sup>th</sup> financial statement, subject to audit. Mr. Russell moved and Mr. Robbins seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

**b. Audit for 2010-2011**

Ms. Treier stated that all Board members were mailed a hard copy of the 2010-2011 audit. The only comment noted was that due to the size of the organization, a significant portion of the payroll, human resource, and account payable functions are handled by the account services clerk. Ms. Treier stated that this has already been addressed and will not be a concern in next year's audit because we now have a larger and fully integrated finance team as a result of the MDA and Chamber of Commerce merger. The Downtown Committee relationship as an affiliate organization allows diversification of the above mentioned functions. The Board members were provided in their binders a separation of duties chart.

Mr. Russell asked if the shared services were cost effective. Ms. Treier responded that there is a cost benefit to sharing these services with the larger organization.

Mr. Fisher asked for clarification in regards to check signing. Ms. Treier responded that in addition to her, the Executive Committee, which consists of Chairman Breuer, Mr. Fournier, and Mr. Fiorito, has the ability to sign checks.

**c. Budget for 2012-2013**

Ms. Treier announced that on May 7<sup>th</sup>, the Syracuse Common Council passed the 2012-2013 budget, which includes the Downtown Committee's budget request. The budget was reviewed and approved as requested.

**III. Annual Meeting**

Ms. Treier announced that the Downtown Committee's Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at the Oncenter. The program will run from Noon to 1:30pm. The guest speaker will be Mr. Geoff Anderson, President and CEO of Smart Growth America. Formal invites will be mailed next week.

**IV. Downtown Public Art**

Ms. Treier prefaced the introduction by asking the Board what role did they feel the Downtown Committee should play in public art. Ms. Treier introduced Ms. Kate Auwaerter, the City of Syracuse's Public Art Coordinator. Ms. Treier stated that a working group has convened to look at public art in downtown and how the Downtown Committee can be supportive of a coordinated approach for our community. Many entities share a vision for a quality public art program to exist in our community so the goal of this group is to help coordinate and frame a sustainable model for this to occur. Ms. Treier asked Ms. Auwaerter to provide an overview of what has taken place recently with the Public Arts Commission, some highlights of recent artworks installed downtown, and the task at hand for the working group that has been assembled.

Ms. Auwaerter stated that the City of Syracuse passed an ordinance in 2007 in regards to public art. This ordinance created the Public Arts Commission (PAC) and the public art coordinator. This ordinance was created since there was a growing interest of installing public art in the city. The PAC consists of 11 members and they are responsible for reviewing applications for art installations and either approving or disapproving. Her position helps the artists through the application process.

Ms Auwaerter provided an overview of current installations: the railroad bridge that goes over West Street near the Warehouse, the mural on the side of the First Niagara building, ArtErie on Erie Boulevard between Salina and Montgomery Streets, the Urban Video Project at the Everson Museum, and the installation of 'Walt' by the Creekwalk in Armory Square. Currently there is a moratorium on the installation of public art in the downtown area. This was done so that the PAC could have time to create a master plan for public art, which is currently underway. The lack of a master plan created a concern for the Commission. This moratorium is expected to be lifted shortly.

Ms. Auwaerter stated that with the bus shelters being removed from the intersection of Fayette and Salina Streets that this gives a great opportunity for public art.

Ms. Treier stated that currently the Downtown Committee has been playing the convening role of getting organizations to the table. She asked if the Downtown Committee should be playing any other role.

Mr. Fiorito asked what sources of funding exist for the installation and maintenance for public art. Ms. Auwaerter responded that the artwork is funded privately or through grants, with the Connective Corridor currently funding the largest portion. The PAC is investigating a predictable source of revenue. Maintenance is extremely important and she stated that the PAC ensures that the art is easy to maintain.

Mr. Robbins added that the public art is only good as those selecting the work. The PAC should shoot for works that are surprisingly great. He also asked if there is a way to attract artist from outside the community to do their best work for our city. Ms. Auwaerter stated that a goal could be that every 3-4 years an amazing piece could be installed that falls in line with the master plan.

Mr. Fisher stated that the size of the PAC seems rather larger to approve the art installations. Ms. Auwaerter responded that the PAC does play some sort of curatorial role but looking at moving that role away from the entire Commission and giving it to an individual. Mr. Fisher also added that the PAC might think of working with the Airport Authority as they are also looking into installing public art at the airport and it's a major gateway into the community.

Chairman Breuer stated that the Downtown Committee should maintain their current role as convener, a promoter, and try to assist in financing moving forward. He noted the need to ensure the necessary tools exist to maintain the pieces.

## **V. Economic Development**

### **a. Downtown Living Tour**

Ms. Carrington announced that the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Downtown Living Tour will be on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup> from Noon to 6pm. The Tour Headquarters will be the Dinosaur Bar-B-Que's Upstairs Function Room. The Tour features 10 stops that will highlight some of downtown's newest living spaces as well as two cultural venues that will show downtown living through the years.

**b. CFA/REDC**

Ms. Carrington stated that the latest round of Regional Economic Development Council funding was announced May 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Board was provided an email message that Ms. Carrington had sent out to property owners and developers in downtown that the Downtown Committee has been in contact with regarding projects. A second email is going out on Thursday to the Downtown Committee's entire listserv. Applications are available online and all materials are due July 16<sup>th</sup>. Staff will be assisting developers complete the applications for this competitive funding process.

**c. EM O'Donnell**

Chairman Breuer announced that the EM O'Donnell building, across from National Grid, will become housing for Syracuse University senior and graduate students. The building has been vacant for over a year. It is planned to house 150 students and is a great location as it is near the Warehouse, on the Connective Corridor, and near the Creekwalk.

**VI. Marketing & Communications**

**a. Co-op Ads Program**

Ms. Reed informed the Board that the two commercial that were produced by Solon Quinn last summer are currently running on Time Warner Cable.

She also stated that the Downtown Committee will be running a promotion with CNY Central to give downtown retailers an opportunity for ads on their stations. The costs are \$565-\$1,255 and there are between 19-27 spots. These ads will not only run in the Syracuse market, but will also be featured in the Utica and Watertown markets. The ads will have the Downtown Committee logo and tagline.

**b. Constituent Satisfaction Survey**

Ms. Romeo stated that the Downtown Committee would be distributing their biannual constituent satisfaction survey on May 21<sup>st</sup> to get feedback on the Downtown Committee's programs from property owners, business owners, residents, employee, and anyone else with an interest in downtown. A copy of the survey was distributed in the Board's binders. Some new questions were added this year which are intended to gauge awareness of the services that the Downtown Committee provides and what programs are most important to them. A question was added asking how people would like to get involved with downtown Syracuse, as the staff often hears from people looking get more involved with the organization. The survey will be distributed via mail and will also be available to take in electronic form. The feedback from this survey is used to inform staff on the Downtown Committee's programs and service offerings.

Ms. Treier informed the Board that she will email a copy to members and asked for feedback on the draft. Comments are requested prior to May 21st.

Mr. Russell asked if there were metrics tracked year to year. Ms. Treier responded that there are certain questions which serve this purpose. Ms. Treier will provide the Board with an Executive Summary once the survey has been closed. The results will also be reviewed at a later Board meeting.

## **VII. Environmental Maintenance**

### **a. Farmers' Market**

Mr. McFadden announced that the opening day of the Farmers' Market will be Tuesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. He also added that this is the 40<sup>th</sup> year of the Farmers' Market. He stated that since the Market has moved to Clinton Square, interest from vendors has been amazing. He has a waiting list of vendors and receives calls from other communities asking why the downtown market is so successful.

Chairman Breuer recalled that when the Farmers' Market moved a couple of years ago to Clinton Square that there was concern that it would not be as successful. Mr. McFadden responded that he feels it is the ambience of the area that attracts more people. There is shade, a fountain, and places to sit that the other location did not provide. Chairman Breuer asked if it was the space of Clinton Square as the reason for turning down vendors. Mr. McFadden stated that he only uses half of Clinton Square and tries to create a nice mix of vendors for variety. Chairman Breuer questioned if it would be viable to look at closing a section of Clinton Street to create more space. Mr. McFadden responded that as long as there was a mix of vendors that closing a section of Clinton Street might be a viable option.

Mr. Russell indicated that with this being the 40<sup>th</sup> year, this is an opportunity for advertising. Mr. McFadden responded that he is working with Marketing to create ads.

### **b. Center for Community Alternatives Partnership**

Ms. Treier stated that on May 1<sup>st</sup> the Downtown Committee signed an MOU with the Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) for a two-year downtown worksite program for non-custodial parents. The goal of the program is to teach hard to employ non-custodial parents the value of meaningful work and also provide workplace experience with the goal of moving them in to permanent positions using this as a starting point for their careers. The CCA's program is funded by the US Department of Labor and is one of seven sites across the nation selected for this program. The goal is to treat 500 individuals in two years. Currently, there is a 15 person transitional work crew assigned to downtown. These individuals are employed by the CCA, working as an extension of the environmental maintenance crew, and receive a weekly paycheck from CCA. Individuals must "test-in" to this program and then on days when they are not working, they are taking classes at CCA or receiving other services.

Mr. McFadden stated that he broke the downtown area into five sections. Four of those sections include the gateways entering downtown and the fifth section is the Armory Square area. Currently, the CCA crew is concentrating on litter but Mr. McFadden will be incorporating weed control and graffiti removal into their task list.

Mr. Shapiro asked how many people are working. Mr. McFadden responded that no more than seven or eight on any given day, Tuesday through Saturday.

## **VIII. Centro's Transfer Hub Opening & Re-routing**

Mr. Kobliski provided a brief history of public transit. Fifteen locations were considered before selecting the current site. The new Transfer Hub will provide a safe, convenient location for the public. The busiest routes will be in the center of the Hub. The location provides an covered location. There will be a waiting room and public restrooms. Security is being provided by

Onondaga County Sheriffs and will be 24 hour for the property. There will also be janitorial services for the location. Opening is scheduled for June 25<sup>th</sup>.

Centro is currently going through a rebranding. All of the existing shelters downtown are being replaced. There will also be new route signage. After the Transfer Hub is opened, the old Common Center at Fayette and Salina Streets will be removed.

Mr. Shapiro asked if the bus will still be stopping at Fayette and Salina Streets. Mr. Kobliski responded that there is no bus stop at that location. Patrons will have to use existing bus stops that are about a block to a block and a half from that intersection.

Mr. Kobliski offered the Board and members of the public present at the meeting a tour of the new facility following the Board meeting.

**IX. Public Comments**

Mr. Breuer opened the floor for public comments. No comments were provided

**X. Other Business and Adjourn**

Mr. Carroll asked if there was anything that the City could do to help with the incident that occurred on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Breuer requested for Mr. Marcon to provide any information he has heard from businesses. Mr. Marcon stated that he had received calls from Bank of New York Mellon and Travelers that their employees are concerned with safety. He feels that this is a good opportunity to be proactive and to work with the City to ensure that this type of incident does not happen again. Mr. Carroll offered to have the Chief of Police and the Captains meet with the companies that have concerned. Ms. Treier stated that a meeting with the Mayor and the Chief to discuss this incident in more detail and what can be done proactively and cooperatively would be desired. Mr. Fiorito added that the location is a 'hot spot' but that the Syracuse Police Department does a great job in responding to calls. Mr. Robbins noted that downtown is not a high crime area, compared to other areas in the city. Chairman Breuer agreed and suggested that these numbers be made public. Mr. Shapiro suggested that an incident map be brought to the next Board meeting to show where in downtown incidents are occurring.

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Next meeting: **Tuesday, July 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm**  
**572 South Salina Street, Board Room**