

**DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.**

**May 21, 2013**

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

**3:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance**

- Members:** Chairman Breuer; Ms. Gagliano; Messrs. Carroll, Doucette, Fiorito, Fisher, Koolakian, Russell, Simpson and Tripoli.
- Staff:** Mss. Finch, Hnatko, Pivovarova, Reed, Romeo, and Treier; Messrs. Campanie and McFadden.
- Guests:** Deputy Chief Joe Cecile – Syracuse Police Department  
Sergeant Pat Phelps – Syracuse Police Department  
Lieutenant Jon Hamblin – Syracuse Police Department  
Bob Dougherty – Syracuse Common Council  
Nader Maroun – Syracuse Common Council  
Ben Walsh – City of Syracuse  
Linda Dickerson Hartsock – Syracuse University  
Paul Stemkoski – Bivens Architects  
Nathan Brown – Holt Architects  
Sarah Stephens – Synapse  
Kiva Vandergeest – SUNY ESF (Student)

**I. Welcome and Minutes of March 19<sup>th</sup>**

Chairman Breuer welcomed guests and members present.

Chairman Breuer asked for consideration of the minutes of March 19<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Doucette moved and Mr. Fisher seconded a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion was unanimously carried.

**a. Downtown Committee Annual Meeting**

Ms. Treier noted that the Downtown Committee Annual Meeting luncheon will be at the Oncenter, on Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup> this year. The key note speaker is Joe Minicozzi, of Urban 3. Ms. Treier noted that Mr. Minicozzi will be speaking about the importance of investing in Downtown. Ticket sales are underway now.

**b. Comments from Board Member**

Chairman Breuer stated that current board member, Mr. Russell, will be resigning this year. Mr. Russell announced that he will be leaving EMA to start a new business that will be based in New York City. Mr. Russell thanked the Board for the intellectual conversations over the years and stated that his time with the Board has been very rewarding. Mr. Russell noted that the board has dealt with some great issues, and the city is really transforming. Chairman Breuer presented Mr. Russell with a gift to thank him for his years of service.

**II. Financial Report as of April 30, 2013**

Ms. Treier shared the preliminary April 30<sup>th</sup> financial statement, stating that the month of April was relatively quiet in terms of expenditures. In May and June, the Downtown Committee will expect to see increased expenditures as the advertising campaigns, branding, and environmental maintenance expenses will begin. Income is well ahead of expense at \$142,361.

Ms. Treier reported that the Franklin Street Parking Lot continues to perform exceptionally well and has passed income expectations for the year at \$92,669. Downtown Living Tour income started coming in this month and will be fully reflected in the May statement. Miscellaneous income is ahead of budget because of a vehicle trade in, and the trade in value has to be accounted for in this line. Ms. Treier noted that there are no major expense items to report.

Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to approve the preliminary April 30<sup>th</sup> financial statement, subject to audit. Mr. Doucette moved and Mr. Tripoli seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

**III. Update on Proposed Boundary Expansion**

**a. Resolution to Support Boundary Expansion**

Ms. Treier reported that the Downtown Committee participated in a City Budget hearing last month where an overview of the Downtown Committee budget and program highlights was presented. Ms. Treier thanked Mr. Fiorito for attending on behalf of the Board. Ms. Treier noted that the hearing also focused on the proposed boundary expansion to provide maintenance services to the Connective Corridor. Ms. Treier noted that the goal is for the district to be in place July 1, 2013, to coincide with the start of the City's and Downtown Committee's fiscal year.

Ms. Treier stated that according to the Legislation, the Common Council has the authority to amend the Downtown Special Assessment District boundaries. The Common Council is required to hold a public hearing no less than 10 days before any action occurs. Ms. Treier noted that the City's Legal Department and City Clerk have reviewed the timelines needed for advertising the hearing. A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm in the Common Council Chambers.

Ms. Treier noted that the Downtown Committee made an effort to notify property owners of the proposal ahead of time. Ms. Treier presented the proposal at the EGRA meeting on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Treier noted that the EGRA sent out a notice to businesses and owners inviting them to this meeting where the topic of the meeting was clearly stated. At the end of that meeting, the EGRA voted to endorse the proposed expansion of the Downtown Committee's boundaries to provide maintenance services to the Connective Corridor. They requested that their endorsement include a proposal outlining roles and responsibilities of

the Downtown Committee, City, County, and property owners. Following this meeting, the Downtown committee sent personalized letters to all affected property owners explaining the proposal to expand the boundaries and offered to meet with anyone interested. Ms. Treier met with or spoke on the phone with several businesses to help explain the proposal. Ms. Treier reported that the Ronald MacDonald house is objecting to the district.

Ms. Treier stated that the City has sent notification to all affected property owners of the public hearing and has publicized the public hearing date in the Post Standard. The Common Council is expected to vote at their June 10<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting. Ms. Treier noted that although the Downtown Committee has voted to support the expansion of the district and have approved a budget of \$149,100 for the maintenance district, the Board should pass a formal resolution to this effect. Ms. Treier noted that the Downtown Committee is still in the process of developing a document outlining the roles and responsibilities so this resolution should be contingent upon a satisfactory agreement with the City to ensure the Downtown Committee is protected against future responsibilities that haven't been budgeted for.

Chairman Breuer noted that expectations are important and the Downtown Committee needs to be very clear with the property owners and partners in the City as to what services will and will not be provided. Ms. Treier noted that she has talked with the City, and they stated they would create a guidance letter that will pledge what services the City will be responsible for.

Mr. Simpson noted that a formal agreement and a letter are different. Ms. Treier responded that the City does not want to execute an MOU, so the agreement that is developed needs to be clearly defined so that the Downtown Committee is not tackling items that are not budgeted. All parties need to clearly understand services.

Ms. Hartsock referenced a service agreement that Syracuse University has developed that illustrates the need for specific equipment. Ms. Hartsock noted that the City, County, and the Downtown Committee need to agree on defined roles and responsibilities. There will need to be something more from the City if not an MOU.

Mr. Fisher stated that there are several options that could be explored to come to an appropriate agreement. Mr. Carroll recommended a call with all parties involved to discuss the specifics. Mr. Simpson stated that the roles and responsibilities of all partners and parties need to be included in the agreement.

Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to approve the following:

RESOLVED, that the Downtown Committee of Syracuse with consensus of property owners and approval of the proposed Connective Corridor maintenance budget, supports the proposed expansion of the Downtown Committee's boundaries to include East Genesee Street, University Avenue, Forman Park and the Warehouse Node.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Downtown Committee will support the expansion contingent upon a definitive agreement on scope of services that defines the

responsibilities for maintenance by the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, Property Owners, and the Special Assessment District.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Downtown Committee will support the expansion contingent upon an executed services agreement with Syracuse University/Connective Corridor for the purchase of equipment and tools in an amount no less than \$165,791 needed to operate the expanded maintenance district.

Mr. Doucette moved and Mr. Fisher seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

**b. Authorization to Purchase Equipment**

Ms. Treier noted that if the boundaries are amended, the Downtown Committee will need to purchase equipment for operations in this district. A list of equipment and associated cost is provided in the Board Member's binders. The Connective Corridor has allocated \$165,701 for equipment purchases and build-out for a garage. This will be reimbursement dollars so the Downtown Committee would need to pay for the equipment upfront and be reimbursed by the Connective Corridor. Ms. Treier stated that once the Boundary Expansion has been approved, the Downtown Committee would execute a services agreement with the Connective Corridor. Ms. Treier asked for authorization to purchase the equipment as outlined in order to provide maintenance services if the boundaries are amended. Mr. Doucette moved and Mr. Koolakian seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

**IV. Economic Development**

**a. Syracuse Creekwalk Commons**

Chairman Breuer stated that the E.M. O'Donnell building at 324 W. Water Street, across from National Grid is under redevelopment. The building has been vacant for 6 years. Chairman Breuer stated that this building will be converted into student housing to supplement university demand in downtown. Chairman Breuer noted that this is a wonderful use for this building, and it fits in well with the planning of the Connective Corridor and the Creekwalk.

Chairman Breuer stated that the Downtown Syracuse Foundation, a 501c3, was created to solicit funds and grants that the Downtown Committee could not, and its mission is revitalization of downtown Syracuse. Chairman Breuer stated that the Downtown Syracuse Foundation would be the beneficiary of any profits from the new housing units, and these funds would be reinvested in improving downtown Syracuse through the mission of the Foundation.

Chairman Breuer noted that the financing for this project is expected to close in late July 2013, with students moving in July 2014. Chairman Breuer stated that this new project will be a major face lift for the area. Mr. Russell noted that this project is in a great location, and will bring a new vitality to downtown.

**b. Downtown Living Tour Re-cap**

Ms. Romeo stated that this past Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, was the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Downtown Living Tour. This was the largest tour to date, with over 2,600 people taking the tour. Ms. Romeo

has received positive and enthusiastic feedback about the tour and she continues to see an abundance of empty nesters taking the tour. Ms. Treier noted that the Downtown Living Tour had great sponsorship this year, and an increase in online ticket sales.

**c. Hotel Syracuse, Mizpah Towers, NYNEX Redevelopment**

Mr. Walsh opened by stating that the Hotel Syracuse, Mizpah Towers, and the NYNEX building all have development interest. Mr. Walsh noted that all 3 properties are tax delinquent and the City has sent foreclosure notices to each property owner.

Mr. Walsh stated that Hotel Syracuse is the most publicized building of the 3 mentioned. The Hotel Syracuse is in foreclosure for the second time in 18 months. In December 2011 the mortgage holders paid the redemption amount of \$200,000 and then did nothing with the building. The taxes accrued once again. Mr. Walsh noted that when the current group interested in the building tried to seize it, the mortgage holder again paid the necessary back taxes. Mr. Walsh noted that the City is considering eminent domain and although this is not the most ideal avenue, it may be the only remaining one. The city has not taken any formal action. Mr. Fisher noted that the building in its current state is a significant detriment to the neighborhood. The Hotel Syracuse is a pivotal building in a pivotal location. Mr. Fisher recommended that the federal, state, and local levels should do everything possible to redevelop the Hotel Syracuse.

Mr. Walsh noted that a developer with plans for mixed use of the Mizpah Towers is preparing to close on the property.

Mr. Walsh noted that there have been multiple offers made for the purchase of the NYNEX building. An appointed committee has reviewed the proposals and made a recommendation to the Mayor. Mr. Koolakian asked if the offers were local, and Mr. Walsh stated they are.

**d. Interstate 81 Public Meeting**

Chairman Breuer noted that the I-81 meeting is taking place at this time, and he encouraged the members and guests present to attend. Mr. Breuer stated that it is important for citizens to be informed so that the best decision can be made for this community.

**V. Environmental Maintenance**

**a. Hanging Flower Basket Program and Farmer's Market**

Mr. McFadden reported that the Downtown Committee is expanding its Hanging Flower Basket Program to include Armory Square this year. Mr. McFadden also announced that the opening day of the Farmers' Market will be Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup>.

**b. Mural Restoration Project**

Ms. Reed stated that there are two art murals located Downtown that are in need of repair and restoration. One is located in Columbus Circle on the Parish Center and the other is located on the base of a railroad bridge on the 400 block of South Clinton Street. Mr. Reed noted that both of these murals were commissioned by the Downtown Committee in the early 1980's when artist Andy Matlow was on staff. Andy Matlow formed the Syracuse Art Squad and they produced a total of 5 murals downtown. Ms. Reed noted that these murals have been part of the downtown landscape and the Downtown Committee feels it is

important to preserve them. Ms. Reed noted that the Downtown Committee has secured the services of Kelly Curry, an artist who will work to restore and conserve them.

Ms. Reed noted that one of these murals has been refurbished twice before, and in the process colors have changed, details have been lost, and perspectives have been altered. Ms. Reed met with the Syracuse Public Arts Commission, which has jurisdiction over projects like this, and they are in favor of restoring the artwork back to its original state. Ms. Reed will be submitting an application to the Commission. Ms. Reed noted that this project is funded through a partnership of the Downtown Committee, the Syracuse Diocese, and CNY Arts through a NYS Council on the Arts grant.

## **VI. Security**

Ms. Treier reminded the Board of the robust conversation about downtown security at the March Board meeting. Ms. Treier stated that following that meeting she had an opportunity to meet with Deputy Chief Cecile and his team at the Syracuse Police Department to discuss the possibility of surveillance cameras for downtown.

Ms. Treier noted that it was an informative meeting and they were able to view the functionality of the cameras on the near West Side as well as gain a better understanding as to how the system works. Ms. Treier sent the Board an email summary of the meeting, but also asked Chief Cecile to join them again today to provide a presentation on what a 'downtown program' would look like. Chief Cecile introduced Sergeant Pat Phelps and Lieutenant Jon Hamblin to provide an overview of the program.

Sgt. Phelps noted that they based the surveillance analysis for Downtown on a pilot project currently operating on the near West Side. Sgt. Phelps provided the Board with a presentation on the types of crimes and activities reported in the central business district between May 2012 and April 2013. Sgt. Phelps also provided a comparison that showed the percent reduction in crime from a no-camera summer, to the first summer with the camera system on the near West Side. The information showed as much as a 45% reduction in calls in some areas. Sgt. Phelps noted that cameras work to reduce/deter crime and they aid in prosecution efforts of crimes caught in view of the camera. Sgt. Phelps noted that the graph on page 4 showed a 1 year analysis of the near West Side system and there was a 42% reduction in reported drug crimes and a 27% reduction in reported assaults.

Sgt. Phelps reported that between April 2010 - March 2011 compared to April 2011 - March 2012 there was an overall reduction of 4% in calls, 28% in arrest charges, and 25% in reported crimes for their test area. Sgt. Phelps showed an example of a current camera in operation and stated that this is the model of camera proposed for the Downtown area.

Sgt. Phelps provided a draft proposal for a downtown system that involves the placement of 10 cameras in the Downtown Area. Sgt. Phelps noted that this is just a proposed layout. The cameras must "see" each other to connect and communicate information, so there are requirements for layout location. The cameras transmit significant amounts of data and have a two-way data flow. Mr. Russell asked, with regards to the near West Side reduction, did the SPD notice the crime migrate to other surrounding areas. Sgt. Phelps stated that he had not seen any data to substantiate a migration of crime in the neighborhoods. Mr. Tripoli asked if the SPD was collecting data on those particular surrounding areas. Sgt. Phelps stated that the SPD is

always collecting data but there was no evidence of any displacement of crime. Ms. Gagliano asked if the cameras are vandal resistant. Sgt. Phelps stated that the cameras are considered “vandal resistant”. Ms. Gagliano asked how high the units are mounted, and Sgt. Phelps replied that they are 15 ft up. The cameras could be higher but then they may not be able to see faces. Sgt. Phelps noted that the recordings are kept for 14 days and will be kept longer if a crime has been reported. Chief Cecile added that individuals must receive approval to view footage.

Mr. Russell asked if the Syracuse Police Department had undertaken any cost benefit analysis on the system. Sgt. Phelps replied no, as the cameras are not a replacement for officers, just additional form of security. The cameras help deter and apprehend in times of shrinking resources. Mr. Koolakian stated that the people in Downtown will want to know they are safe, and he feels as though the public should be informed about the cameras.

Ms. Treier stated that the estimated cost would be \$10,000 initial set-up plus \$10,000 per camera. Following this initial cost, there are ongoing licensing costs and the cameras have a 3-5 year lifespan. Cameras have been installed in other areas using grants and the City has absorbed the electricity cost. Ms. Treier noted that there are some maintenance related items so SPD advises keeping spare parts on hand. If private building owners wanted to add cameras to a system, SPD has a provider/supplier who could work with the owners, and for about \$3,000/camera the owner could mount a camera and besides camera maintenance costs, the ongoing monthly fee is about \$100 for the IP address that would be provided to SPD so they could tap into the camera feed. The clarity isn’t quite as good, but this could be another option for expanding the camera system.

Ms. Treier stated that if this is something the Downtown Committee wanted to explore further, she would put together a proposal for how this could be funded. The Downtown Committee would also have to budget for the ongoing maintenance of such a system.

Chairman Breuer asked that Ms. Treier and the Syracuse Police Department fine tune this proposal and bring it back to the Board at the next Board meeting. He asked that a two-phase program be explored due to possible funding constraints, as well as an all in one program. He also asked for a budget proposal to accompany the options. Chairman Breuer stated after more discussion, they would decide how to proceed.

## **VII. Public Comments**

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

## **VIII. Other Business and Adjourn**

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Next meeting:     **2013 Downtown Committee of Syracuse Annual Meeting**  
                          **Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm**  
                          **Oncenter Ballroom, 800 South State Street**