

DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.

September 17, 2013

**Syracuse Media Group Board Room
220 South Warren Street**

3:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members: Chairman Breuer; Ms. Gagliano; Messrs. Carroll, Doucette, Fisher, Koolakian, Maxwell, Shapiro, Simpson and Tripoli.

Staff: Mss. Finch, Hnatko, Pivovarova, Reed, Romeo and Treier; Messr. Campanie.

Guests: Sam Gordon – CNY Regional Planning & Development Board
Peter Alexander – Merrill Lynch
Russ Andrews – Property Owner
Bob Dougherty – Syracuse Common Council
Elias Everett – Pyramid Brokerage
Thomas Kamide – The Bonadio Group
Pam Cifaratta – local volunteer

I. Welcome and Approval of Meeting Minutes of July 9, 2013

Chairman Breuer welcomed guests and members present.

Chairman Breuer asked for consideration of the minutes of July 9th. Mr. Maxwell moved and Mr. Koolakian seconded a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion was unanimously carried.

a. Staff Recognition

Ms. Treier reported that this will be the last board meeting for Alex Pivovarova, who is the Economic Development and Marketing Assistant for the Downtown Committee. Alex will be moving to NYC at the end of the month. Her last day with the Downtown Committee will be September 27th. Ms. Treier thanked her for all her hard work during the past 2 years.

II. Financial Report

a. Financial Report as of June 30, 2013

Ms. Treier shared June 30th financial statement, which represents the fiscal year end. Ms. Treier reported that Year to Date Income Over Expense line is at 0, which means the

Downtown Committee was exactly on budget for fiscal year 2012-2013. The Special Assessment income is showing more than budgeted due to an additional draw from the reserve account to purchase a tractor for the maintenance department. Ms. Treier stated that the Franklin Street Lot continues to perform well and the Herald Place lot did better this year than the previous year. The Downtown Living Tour Income came in ahead of budget due to record attendance and ticket sales, as well as increased sponsorships for this past year's event.

On the expense side, Ms. Treier noted that Administration and Environmental Maintenance were both on budget, with Marketing and Security running under budget for the year. Ms. Treier reported that Salaries were on budget, as well as Transportation. Salaries for Economic Development came in below budget, so these funds were used for economic development marketing initiatives.

b. Financial Report as of August 31, 2013

Ms. Treier shared the preliminary August 31st financial statement, stating that at 2 months into the year, income is ahead of budget. The Farmer's Market continues to do well this year. Ms. Treier reported that the Arts and Crafts Festival also did well this year. On the expense side, Ms. Treier stated that everything is on budget.

Ms. Treier asked for a motion to approve the June 30th fiscal year end statement, and the preliminary August 31st financial statement, subject to audit. Mr. Koolakian moved and Mr. Fisher seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

III. Authorization to Execute 2013-2014 Contract

Ms. Treier stated that Downtown Committee's annual contract will be on the September 23rd Common Council Agenda. The purpose of the contract is to allow the Downtown Committee to contract with the city of Syracuse to draw down on the Special Assessment funds collected for its operations. She reminded the Board that the Downtown Committee's budget is reviewed and approved as part of the overall City budget in May.

Ms. Treier asked the Board for a resolution to allow the Executive Director to enter into and execute the annual operating contract with the City of Syracuse, providing that the only change from last year's contract is the date. Mr. Koolakian moved and Mr. Doucette seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

IV. Economic Development

a. 3rd Annual Retail Recruitment Event

Ms. Finch reported that the Downtown Committee will be hosting the 3rd Annual Retail Recruitment Event on October 17th. This year the Downtown Committee will have three different sessions and participants can attend as many sessions as they want.

Ms. Finch stated that the event kicks off at 2:00pm with a presentation from Joe Grafton, Director of Development and Community Engagement at the American Independent Business Alliance. This event is part of the Centerstate Business Showcase, and Centerstate has agreed to provide admission tickets to the talk for Retail Recruitment Event participants.

Ms. Finch also reported that the Downtown Committee will be hosting a Walking Tour which will begin around 3:30pm. This walk will highlight several neighborhoods in downtown and also stop at three different established retailer locations. Participants can ask questions and interact with current business owners to get a sense of what it's like to do business downtown.

After the walking tour, Ms. Finch stated that the Downtown Committee will be having a Meet and Greet and Networking session at Dinosaur BBQ. The Downtown Committee and six different resource providers will give 3-4 minute presentations explaining how they can help potential businesses looking to locate downtown. The networking session that follows will allow participants to talk with the resource providers that will best be able to assist them with their venture.

Ms. Finch reported that invitations were sent to approximately 1300 retailers in the Upstate New York area. Mr. Tripoli asked how those retailers were chosen. Ms. Finch stated that the focus was on independent retailers in the Upstate New York area that were established in adjacent cities to Syracuse.

Ms. Treier stated that the event attendance averages 50 retailers. As a result of last year's event, 4 new businesses have opened in downtown within the last year.

b. Syracuse 2030 District

Chairman Breuer introduced Mr. Sam Gordon, from the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board. Mr. Gordon reported that the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency in 2010 to provide financial and technical assistance to local municipalities to reduce energy consumption. They are currently working with 7 municipalities within the region. Part of the program entails visiting other peer communities. Mr. Gordon visited communities such as Denver, CO, Washington DC, and Seattle, WA. The group from Seattle, WA, spoke to Mr. Gordon regarding the Seattle 2030 District. Mr. Gordon stated that 2030 Districts are unique private/public partnerships that bring property owners and managers together with other local businesses with the purpose of information sharing. As a group they benchmark and analyze energy use, with the hopes of reducing energy, water, and vehicle emissions.

Mr. Gordon is looking to see if there are property owners and managers in Syracuse who are interested in becoming founding members in this area. Mr. Gordon stated that this plan fits in well to support innovation and the revitalization of the area. Through district membership, building owners and property managers are given incentives to participate and properties would have anonymous benchmarking against other local buildings.

Mr. Gordon stated that he has brought the 2030 District information to other districts in the area and received positive and supportive feedback. Currently he is looking to set up a local advisory committee to participate in this partnership. Mr. Gordon noted that the next step is for property owners and building managers to help explore a district charter and help get the project underway.

Chairman Breuer stated that building owners on the Board would be interested in learning more and participating in this program. Ms. Treier stated that the Downtown Committee will continue to work with Mr. Gordon on the charter and reach out to businesses in the downtown community.

c. Interstate 81

Ms. Gagliano reminded the board that on July 15th the Downtown Committee had the opportunity to meet with the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTTC) to discuss the Interstate 81 project. Ms. Gagliano and edr Companies is a sub-consultant to the I-81 project. She stated that the main components that remain for the project include the Corridor Study, Public Participation and Transportation Demand Model.

Ms. Gagliano stated that the current viaduct will not hold in its current state. There have been 5 different strategies offered to address the current system: (1) Leave as is with improvements; (2) Reconstruction; (3) Tunnel; (4) Depressed Highway; and (5) Boulevard.

Ms. Gagliano stated that edr is a member of Parson's Project Team and edr serves as a liaison to the local community.

Ms. Gagliano stated that through a license plate study, the state has specific data regarding traffic volume. She reported that 12% of traffic on I-81 is passing through, and the remaining 88% of traffic is using I-81 as a local road to get in and out of Downtown.

Ms. Gagliano stated that there is a scoping meeting scheduled for November 15th by the NYSDOT. Ms. Gagliano encouraged the Downtown Committee to take part so that their questions and opinions could be heard. Ms. Gagliano stated that the Downtown Committee needs to decide what they are concerned about and how to strategize their method of communication. She stated that they need to be as involved as much as possible. Ms. Gagliano noted that the options that were dismissed will be addressed at the November meeting.

Mr. Doucette commented that when attending the upcoming sessions, people aren't responding to the information presented at the session, but to the information that is already out there. Mr. Doucette noted that sessions should be conducted when the solutions optimize particular options. Ms. Gagliano stated that the options will be different, but that is part of the national process, and it is most important to get the feedback.

Mr. Simpson asked if revised interventions will be shown to the public. Ms. Gagliano stated that after the November meeting, all pieces will be presented.

Mr. Doucette asked what land will be taken from property owners for eminent domain. Ms. Gagliano stated that they do not know at this time. Mr. Koolakian asked if the Board had been canvassed regarding their opinion, and what is the outcome that they would seek. Ms. Treier stated that the Board is not yet taking a position and the Downtown Committee needs to be more informed, needs more answers to their questions, and as a community they all need to move forward. Chairman Breuer asked if the Downtown Committee should have a planning visionary to assist with this process.

Ms. Gagliano noted that the I-81 team is very multi-faceted. NYSDOT wants the Syracuse area to have something to benefit from, and there is a lot of pressure on consultants regarding this multi-phase project. Ms. Gagliano reported that during September and October there will be a round of public sessions on the Interstate 81 project. The results of the scoping meeting in November will be used to narrow down and refine the options. The public meetings are not part of the scoping meetings. Mr. Simpson stated that after the scoping phase, which will be at the end of October to early November, there will be a 30-45 day period for comments. He noted that period will be when the Downtown Committee has the opportunity to submit comments for the record. These comments will define the work that will be done. Mr. Simpson noted that after that their comments and opinions will be irrelevant.

Mr. Doucette stated that he is an advocate for downtown, and it is his opinion that the Downtown Committee needs to take a stand. He noted that from his perspective the city needs to get rid of I-81 as it is a barrier between the University/hospital area and the city. He believes the boulevard would be beautiful and more functional. Mr. Tripoli stated that he too is an advocate for downtown, but that he is not ready to make a decision yet as he still has questions that need to be answered. Mr. Tripoli agreed with Mr. Doucette that the Downtown Committee need to take a position on the future of I-81. Mr. Koolakian agreed that there is a disconnection between the University area and downtown. Mr. Kaminde commented that traffic should be taken into consideration as people will reroute around Syracuse if their timeframe through the city is twice as long as before. Chairman Breuer stated that there is still a lot to be learned about this project. He noted that he will advocate for downtown, but he isn't quite sure what that decision will be yet. Mr. Tripoli stated that the Downtown Committee needs a plan on how to become better informed on all options.

Ms. Treier stated again that the Downtown Committee has no official statement yet. She noted that the group needs to focus on what their questions and visions are. Ms. Treier will work with the Board to get special meetings set up that are devoted to the I-81 options.

V. Marketing and Communications

a. Syracuse Style Event

Ms. Reed reported the 4th annual Syracuse Style Fashion Show is Thursday, September 20th. The Downtown Committee is co-producing the event with local fashion designer, Lisa Butler. This year 17 Downtown retail shops will present fashions and accessories, including Mr. Shop, also one of the event sponsors. Ms. Reed thanked Mr. Shapiro for all his help. Ms. Reed noted that the 80-foot runway will be set up on the 100 block of Walton Street, and the street will be closed to all traffic. Although the event is free, VIP tickets are still on sale, which provide front-row seating and hors d'oeuvres and cocktails at parties before and after the show at Empire Brewing Co. Ms. Reed noted that the event starts at 7:30pm and the weather forecast is favorable.

VI. Environmental Maintenance

a. Quality of Life Task Force

Chairman Breuer stated that a new Downtown Committee task force has been established. The Quality of Life Task Force is set to meet on Tuesday, September 24th at CenterState CEO, to discuss quality of life issues downtown. Ms. Treier noted that issues will be

organized and recommendations will be compiled into a report that will be presented to the city. All Board members are encouraged to attend and are free to discuss any and all issues.

VII. Security

a. Update on Surveillance Camera Proposal

Ms. Treier reminded the Board that at the July meeting a resolution was passed to provide for a 10 camera surveillance system in downtown. Based on the conversations at that Board meeting, staff would work with the SPD to modify the initial proposal to reflect camera placement on lifestyle centers and areas of residential development.

Mr. Campanie met with City of Syracuse DPW, the SPD, and VPN to discuss logistics of placement and revise the proposal. A revised proposal is found in Board members' binders. She asked Tom Campanie to walk the Board through the camera placement locations.

Mr. Campanie noted that they revisited any double camera placement, and made some changes to the proposed locations. Mr. Campanie noted that they also looked at hot spots versus spots that weren't so active. He stated that the cameras could be installed on preexisting traffic lights as a cost savings measure. The traffic poles are a better fit since the camera angles would be more precise, and they can also be adjusted. Mr. Campanie noted that the proposed camera near National Grid was relocated, as was one of the cameras on Walton Street. Mr. Campanie noted that a camera is now proposed to be placed in Hanover Square as there is a significant amount of increased activity in that area during the summer. He also noted that there is a proposed camera installation at the corner of Bank and Fayette Streets.

Ms. Treier added that staff is expecting a draft service and maintenance agreement from VPN, but in conversations with the provider, they were extremely flexible with what could be provided. VPN will also provide the Downtown Committee with an I/T contract to address basic trouble shooting. This will be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

Chairman Breuer asked if there had been any more discussions with the Syracuse Police Department about reviewing the tapes, as a preventative measure, to see what the cameras may have captured. Ms. Treier stated that the tapes could be viewed at the public safety building, but would not be fed into the storefront.

VIII. Public Comments

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

IX. Other Business and Adjourn

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

Next meeting: **Tuesday, November 19th at 3:00 pm**
572 South Salina Street, Board Room