

SDODC

Special District Operations and Development Committee
115 West Fayette Street, Syracuse, NY 13202
Phone: 315-422-8284, Fax: 315-471-4503

Tony Fiorito, Chair

SPECIAL DISTRICT OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes

January 23, 2024

Via Zoom

3:00 pm

Attendance

Members: Chair Tony Fiorito; Ruthnie Angrand, Alberto Bianchetti, Charlie Breuer, Joseph Bryant, Jo Anne Gagliano, Susan Katzoff, Karyn Korteling, Ed Riley, Nicole Samolis, Ron Tascarella, Jr., Meg Tidd

Staff: Merike Treier, Tom Campanie, Laurie Reed, Anthony Pham, Conor Rockhill, Heather Schroeder, Kris Sherlock, Kevin Stanard, Vanessa Szwejbka

Guests: Cory LaDuke, CBRE
Ben Sio, CenterState CEO
Honora Spillane, CenterState CEO

I. WELCOME

A. Recognize Returning Board Members

Chair Fiorito welcomed back returning Board members who have been re-appointed for four-year terms: Joe Bryant, Brian Donnelly, Susan Katzoff and Ed Riley.

B. Recognize New Board Members

Chair Fiorito introduced and welcomed Meg Tidd, President and CEO of VIP Companies, who will be filling the remaining term through December 31, 2024 for David Nutting, who resigned as a Board member at the end of 2023.

C. Executive Director Report – 2023 Recap

Ms. Treier presented a 2023 Recap of the Downtown Committee’s accomplishments that included new grant awards and new initiatives launched. Some of the many highlights Ms. Treier mentioned include the administration of a \$337,500 Syracuse Festival Fund Program on behalf of the City of Syracuse supporting 26 events throughout downtown; the Syracuse Arts and Crafts Festival ranking 11th in the country among contemporary arts & crafts festivals; Dining Weeks promotions had a record 53 participating restaurants; sold-out Progress Breakfasts and Annual Meeting events; and the creation of a new “How Can We Help You?” brochure.

II. ADMINISTRATION

A. Approval of Minutes of November 14, 2023

Chair Fiorito asked the Board if there were any questions on the Minutes of November 14, 2023, and there were none. Chair Fiorito asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Tascarella moved and Ms. Samolis seconded the motion. 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. Tascarella 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 which will be kept in the Downtown Committee files.

III. FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF October 31, 2023

Mr. Tascarella provided the Downtown Committee Financial Report of October 31, 2023. He reported that to date, the Income Statement is on target, which includes the additional special assessment funds used to purchase the new vehicle, reflected under non-operating income. He noted Expenses are in line with the budget. Ms. Treier noted that delays with required Insurance expenses have delayed preparation of the November and December 2023 statements. This will be resolved by the March 2024 Board meeting.

Chair Fiorito asked if there were any further questions on the financial report and there were none. Chair Fiorito asked for a motion to accept the financial report of October 31, 2023 subject to audit. Ms. Gagliano moved, and Ms. Samolis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

IV. SPECIAL DISTRICT PROPOSED BUDGET 2024-2025

A. Review and Approve

Ms. Treier reported that the Budget Committee has met to review, prepare, and recommend the Downtown Special Assessment (DSA) budget to the Board, which upon Board approval, will be recommended to the Mayor as the 2024-2025 Downtown Special Assessment Budget. She thanked Board members, Chair Fiorito, Mr. Tascarella, Mr. Riley, and Mr. Bryant for their contributions as part of the Budget Committee.

Ms. Treier provided a detailed narrative of the proposed FY 2024-2025 DSA budget including the primary sources of revenue and areas of expense for the Downtown Committee's programs and events, noting that the Special Assessment funds makes up 70% of the budgeted revenue this current fiscal year. In order to deliver services to support Downtown's revitalization, additional revenue sources are required. The Downtown Committee derives additional revenue from parking lot and event operations, grants and service agreements to fulfill its mission. The DSA alone does not provide enough funding to the Downtown Committee to deliver its programs and services.

Ms. Treier reported that for fiscal year July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, the budget committee has recommended an 8% increase to the Downtown Committee Special Assessment Budget, which in combination with increased revenue from parking lot operations, earned revenue from events, and grants and service agreements, will allow for the delivery of the programs as proposed and allow for increased staff capacity.

Ms. Samolis inquired if the Downtown Committee parking fees are low compared to other parking vendors. Ms. Treier responded that the rates will be increased to be more in line with other downtown lots.

Ms. Katzoff asked if it is possible to ask the City to increase the SIDA funds that are specifically set aside for security detail, so the Downtown Committee can pay more overtime in case a hire

cannot be made. Ms. Treier noted that she will be meeting with Mr. Eric Ennis to review a future SIDA agreement request that takes into consideration expanded security hours and increased rates. Mr. Campanie added that he is optimistic that the proposed higher rate for a security weekend detail position will attract jobseekers. If the position is not filled right away, it will give more incentive for the current officers to work the weekends.

With no further questions, Chair Fiorito asked for a motion to approve the 2024-2025 budget recommendation. Mr. Bianchetti moved, and Mr. Tascarella seconded. The motion was unanimously carried.

V. PROGRAM REPORTS

A. Marketing and Communications Report

Ms. Szwejbka highlighted the current promotions:

- The Downtown Committee just completed its social media promotion – “31 Days of Holiday Social Media” – between Black Friday and Christmas Eve, which featured 31 different downtown businesses. Posts received over 80,000 views across our social media platforms.
- The Window Wonderland Contest that concluded in December received a record 6,000 votes and the first-place prize winner was the Onondaga County Central Library.
- Starting February – Syracuse businesses will be highlighted on Downtown Committee’s Social Media and Newsletter twice per month through a “Downtown Syracuse Spotlight,” to showcase the unique offerings of Downtown from the perspective of business owners and community leaders.
- *Welcome to the Neighborhood* brochure - geared towards new businesses and employers and highlights the services the Downtown Committee offers.
- Downtown Dining Weeks takes place March 1-14, and menus are starting to come in that can be found on the Downtown Committee website. This year marks the event’s 20th anniversary.

B. Economic Development: Vacant Storefront Report & NYMS Grant Update

Mr. Rockhill reported that storefront retail space occupancy has remained stable from Winter 2022 to Winter 2023. Overall, there was a slight increase in occupancy and there were some shifts in vacancies. Most of the storefronts that were occupied in 2022 remained occupied in

2023. He highlighted that changes in occupancy are well-distributed geographically throughout Downtown. Contrary to some perceptions, the data also indicate that numerous spaces in Armory Square either became occupied or have a plan in place. Mr. Rockhill will give a more in-depth detailed presentation of the occupancy statistics at a future Board meeting.

Mr. Rockhill was happy to announce that the Downtown Committee received a \$232,540 grant from the NY Main Street program. The grant funds will support building renovations and streetscape enhancements within the 100 block of W. Jefferson Street, 100-300 blocks of East Jefferson Street, 300 block of Montgomery Street, and 400 block of South Salina Street. The contract has been executed with the State, and next week he and Ms. Schroeder will be hosting information sessions for property owners within that district. Mr. Rockhill asked the Board to notify him if there is anyone interested in serving on the NY Main Street project selection committee.

Ms. Samolis asked if the ground floor spaces in Center Armory (when it was built) were originally intended for retail or restaurant use, noting a sizable current occupancy by an office tenant. Ms. Schroeder responded that in the MX-5 zoning district (which is where most of Downtown falls), ground floor commercial occupancy is allowed as of right, and this includes both office and retail use. However, the Downtown Committee promotes and supports ground-floor occupancy by retailers-- including personal services, shopping, and restaurants, since this is a more active use in the district.

VI. MICRON: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATES

Mr. Ben Sio, Chief of Staff and Senior Vice President of Strategy, Policy and Planning, and Ms. Nora Spillane, Vice President of Economic Development of CenterState CEO shared an update on the progress of the CNY Community Engagement Committee (CEC). The CEC was commissioned by Empire State Development and Micron, as part of the Micron Community Investment Framework (CIF), to identify community priorities and create a framework for directing investments from a \$500 million Green CHIPS Community Investment Fund across key sectors. The CEC, led by Melanie Littlejohn and Tim Penix, set out to establish a public engagement program to gather feedback from Central New York's diverse community. As of January 3, 2024, a total of 7,960 participants were reached. Mr. Sio encouraged the Board to take the CNY Community Engagement Survey, and will send the link to Merike Treier to forward.

The committee also conducted a deep data analysis in key priority investment areas: Educational Resources and Access; Workforce Exposure, Development, and Job Opportunities; MWVBE, small businesses, veteran, and priority businesses; Community Development; Housing, Quality of Place; Community Health and Family Supports, Sustainable and Equitable Infrastructure Development, to see how Central New York should be investing and aligning its resources to best support Micron and the community.

A draft of the CEC's community priorities document is expected to be released in January 2024, with continued community engagement thereafter. Ben Sio stated they anticipate a state-run, universal application process for CIF funding, similar to New York State's Consolidated Funding Application. He noted he is available to speak with any of the Board members who would like to have a deeper conversation about the Community Engagement Committee and Micron, and can contact him at bsio@centerstateceo.com. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Ms. Treier asked if any of the Board members received questions about Micron and its effect in the downtown Syracuse area specifically.

Ms. Tidd commented that she has received inquiries from clients inside and outside Central New York and she appreciates the information to assist in these client communications.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURN

With no other business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

**Next Meeting:
Tuesday, March 19, 2024 - 3:00 pm**



CNY Community Engagement Committee

January 2024

[MICRONCEC.ORG](https://microncec.org)

A HISTORIC INVESTMENT IN CENTRAL NEW YORK

Micron Will Invest an Unprecedented \$100 Billion Over the Next 20-Plus Years to Transform Central New York Into a Global, Leading-Edge Semiconductor Manufacturing Hub

Governor Kathy Hochul, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer, Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon, and Micron CEO Sanjay Mehrotra announced one of the largest economic development projects in U.S. history — a transformational public-private partnership with Micron Technology to build a cutting-edge semiconductor manufacturing campus in Onondaga County, New York.



Governor Kathy Hochul with Micron CEO Sanjay Mehrotra

CEC Mission Statement:

The Community Engagement Committee (CEC) is dedicated to **identifying community priorities** and **creating a framework for directing investments** across key sectors, to ensure Central New York remains a vibrant place to live, work, and flourish for generations to come.

Through **comprehensive engagement methods**, fostering **ground-up participation** and channeling the **power of collective insight**, we aim to **actively gather feedback** from Central New York's diverse community, ensuring every voice is acknowledged and considered.



Priority Investment Areas



**Educational
Resources and
Access**



**Workforce
Exposure,
Development,
and Job
Opportunities**



**MWVBE, Small
Businesses,
Veteran, and
Priority
Businesses**



**Community
Development:
Housing, Quality
of Place**



**Community
Health and
Family
Supports**

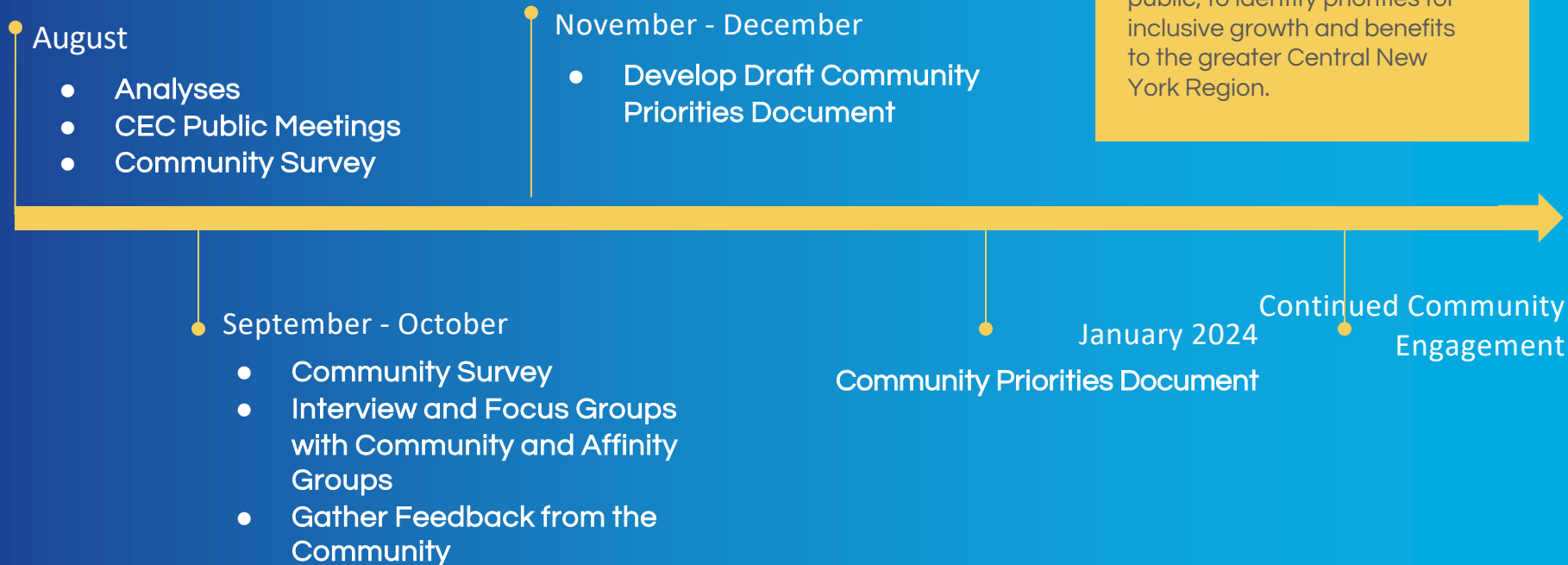


**Sustainable and
Equitable
Infrastructure
Development**

Engagement Activity



Timeline



Micron Community Engagement Update: 1.3.24

7,960

Total Participants Reached*

587

**Participants in 1:1
Interviews, Focus Groups,
and Other Presentations**

399

**Public Meeting
Attendees**

36

Total Events**

1,574

**Postcards Distributed
While Canvassing**

2,984

**Unique Website
Visitors**

2,398

Survey Responses

*18 CEC Members included in this number

**Focus Groups, Public Meetings, and Other Events