

Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 27, 2016
330 Main Street, Middletown, CT

Attendees

Diane Gervais (Chair)	Sean Moriarty (Police Department)
Gary Nagler (Commissioner)	William Russo (Director of Public Works)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)	Geen Thazmapallath (Director of Parking)
Peter Harding (Commissioner)	Tom Marano (Planning Department)
Tom Ford (Commissioner)	Matt Lefebvre (Middlesex Music Academy)
Jennifer Alexander (Commissioner)	Pamela Steele (Pamela Rose Specialty Yarns)
Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)	Cathy Duncan (Chamber of Commerce)
Mary Ann Perrotti (Commissioner)	Lisa Melaven (DBD Office)
Valerie Scribano (Commissioner)	

Minutes –

One change made under the Chamber of Commerce to the March 2016 minutes.

The Chamber hosted The Taste of Downtown not The Taste of Middletown.

- Motion made by Marc Levin to approve
- 2nd by Mike DiPiro
- Minutes accepted

Treasurer's Report – Mike DiPiro

The DBD is in good financial standings, with the budget being in line.

The 2nd installment from the City of Middletown has been deposited into our money market account.

- Motion made by Maryann Perrotti to approve
- 2nd by Marc Levin
- Treasurer's Report accepted.

Chair Update – Diane Gervais

Beautification: As you all know Bobbi Eddinger was tragically killed by a hit and run driver. Her Children reached out to Lisa and did complete the spring planting of pansies that Bobbi was about to implement. I have not spoken with them yet regarding whether or not they would like to continue to do our plantings. I will reach out to them sometime in the next Month.

On this note....After discussing it with Marc I authorized a \$100 Memorial donation to the Grace Lutheran church in her honor.

Ken Arnell and his team from the Connection have refurbished our Kiosks.
The staples were removed and they were repainted.

I would like to have a motion to make a donation to the ConnectionWhat \$ do you feel would be appropriate....there were 4 kiosks.

Gift Cards: We have ceased working with Harbor Touch for our credit card processing. While I was able over the last two years to substantially lower our costs with them, it was a constant battle, I never had the confidence that they were a good faith partner, and that came to fruition when they locked us out of our terminals on April 1st. I then locked them out of our bank account and sent them a letter of termination due to their actions. I looked at a number of other options and have come to the decision that the Square seems to fit our needs the best. I have set up the accounts, and expect to have the equipment up and running very shortly. I am currently testing it at my location with a borrowed I pad. If all goes well, I will purchase 3 ipads and we should be all set.

The cost will be equivalent to having to purchase new processing machines.

The paperwork is much more straightforward....a simple 2.75% rate, with a slightly higher rate for the online purchases that do not have a card present.

No hidden fees, no contracts, should simplify matters for our accounting staff as well.

We also had another large sale to the City Board of Education.

Marketing: We are meeting after this meeting to discuss ideas for new commercials.

We will be airing seven of the eight commercials starting this week in rotation. (the one with Esca, and EG salon, is not airing as we need to re do the boutique segment)

I attended a meeting that Tom Marano set up regarding a buy local campaign, Dan Litwin from Youngs's Printing volunteered to design and print for distribution a door decal with a buy Middletown theme to get things started.

I also attended a meeting with the head of the CT DOT to discuss their latest plans to eliminate the lights on Rte 9. They have a new design that is much better than previous ideas, and I believe they will be presenting to the CBB soon and then other community meetings. The biggest change is eliminating the exit from route nine at Route 66. This would drive more traffic to the Hartford Ave exit, creating much more traffic between Washington ST and the Bridge. Part of their plan calls for doing sidewalk bump outs on Main street to shorten the walk times, to allow traffic to flow faster.

Main Street Panhandling is on a serious rise. I am calling 2-3 times a day.

Bicycles and skateboarders are also out of control.

Maintenance – Tom Ford

Tom reports he has been working with Eversource with the claim filed against us, on damages done to an electrical box cover in the sidewalk when using a sidewalk sweeping/cleaning machine. Jen Alexander mentioned the flyers that are being put up on the light poles and trees need to be removed quickly.

Lisa will call Erica at The Connection and John Kniffen from the Buttonwood Tree regarding maintaining/cleaning off old information from the four kiosks, trees and poles once a week.

The Middle Oak building has 65 people from Ashford Communication out of Higganum moving into the building in October.

Chamber of Commerce – Cathy Duncan

Cathy reports this Friday, April 27th at the Chamber breakfast, Wesleyan President Michael Roth will be speaking.

- Thursday, May 12th CT. Rental will be hosting business after work.

Grand Openings are as follows:

- Saturday, April 30th - Oak & Velvet at 3:00
- Thursday, May 5th – Herd Restaurant 5:00 – 7:00
- Coming soon – Perk on Main and Hop Knot

Upcoming downtown events are as follows:

- Wednesday, June 15th – Car Cruise Night; Rain date Wednesday, June 22nd
- Wednesday, July 20th – 5K Road Race; No rain date
- Wednesday, August 10th – Middletown Motorcycle Mania; Rain date Wednesday August 17th

In the future, it is recommended the Harvard Pilgrim Middletown half marathon be moved up to the Wesleyan area, for it interferes with the businesses and churches downtown.

Police Report – Sean Moriarty

Diane Gervais mentions the panhandling is seriously on the rise, not only on Main Street, also coming into the downtown businesses, side street businesses. Jen Alexander recommends sending a letter from the DBD Commissioners to the Mayor and Larry McHugh from the Chamber expressing the concerns on how we can better handle the panhandling situation. There needs to be a protocol made between the businesses and the police department in working together on this important matter.

Sean reports it is important to call into the police department and ask for Wayne Bartolotta to report when you see panhandling happening, followed up with a written statement.

As a reminder Diane mentioned there should be no skateboarding or bike riding on the sidewalks.

The following events are taken place in the downtown area:

- Craft Fair - Saturday, April 30th
- Kids Health and Safety Day – Saturday May 14th
- St. Sebastian’s Feast - May 13th, 14th and 15th

Planning – Tom Marano

Tom reports there is a “Dismount Zone” decal that could be permanently painted and installed on each intersection/corner of Main Street. Tom brought this idea to the Chief of Police and the Public Works Department where the interest was widely received.

Tom handed out a flyer on CivicLift – More feet on Main Street! CivicLift is a web-based community lifestyle platform that provides solutions for municipalities and community groups who seek to encourage civic engagement and improve neighborhood connectivity. Tom would like to invite Evan Dobos from CivicLift to a CBB meeting to speak more on this.

The Buy Local campaign is now underway. The Fed Ex project is moving forward.

Parking Report - Geen Thazhampallath

Geen reports the parking department has been working on a project installing weather covers for the kiosks in Melilli Plaza. The parking department is looking for the right business to come in with good ideas and attention to detail with the re-construction of the arcade parking lot.

As an FYI a parking kiosk with signage has been installed up the North End at Eli Cannons and is going well. The 26 parking meters behind Kidcity will now all be metered, without the two hours of free parking.

Public Works – William Russo

Bill reports the public works department is looking to replace 34 light poles along Main Street to LED lighting. The purchase order has been signed for the fireworks on Friday, July 1st.

On Monday, May 2nd there will be a building committee in place for the parks/future projects.

The public works department will be starting the renovations to Sphere Park during the month of May.

New Business –

None

- Motion to adjourn by Maryann Perrotti
- 2nd by Marc Levin