

Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 26th, 2013
330 Main Street, Middletown, CT

Attendees:

Jennifer Alexander
Cathy Duncan
Marc Levine
Michael Stone
Mike DiPiro

Quentin Phipps
Val Scribano
Steven Kovach
Geen Thazhampallath
Gary Nagler

Minutes

- Motion to approve December minutes.
- 2nd.

Minutes accepted.

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TOWN CLERK
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Treasurer's Report

The DBD is waiting for payments for marketing packages from the North End. Invoices have been sent out. Discussions with additional merchants are in progress.

An invoice from Buds and Blooms was delayed so there was an expense of \$9,000-10,000 seen for December under "Beautification."

"Sidewalks" will be higher due to double cleanings in summer and fall. A suggestion was made that it should be done in winter as well.

"Office Coordinator" and "Guides" will be lower because these positions have not been filled. Moving forward, it would be good to have 6-8 guides on staff during the summer.

"Office Supplies" was higher because gift cards were purchased. This will not need to be repeated.

Director's Report

The DBD has sold over \$43,000 in gift cards this past year. There was a 45% increase in unit sales from the previous calendar year and a 23% increase in dollar sales. All points of sale are up and running. All employees have been retrained. Sales are up because there is a lot of repeat business. Highest sales are at the Chamber. There were discussions about the difficulty of selling gift cards. Quentin Phipps will speak with Store Financial to see if there is a better method.

There is no new information about Spirit Park. They are still waiting for a quote from the architect and designer.

Lizzy B's and Praline's are closed. It seems that Trendz is struggling. Signatures opened on Court Street. Osaka closed and Moonlight Sushi will open in that space. The former Fussion will be a Media Lab for the Middletown Press. It is a way for the public to help report news. It will also function as a gathering space for press conferences.

Police

Quentin Phipps reported that though Captain Moriarty could not attend the meeting, he had informed that there were no major incidents over the holidays. They currently have 4 people in the Academy and are looking to add 2 more. No merchants have taken up the offer for theft training, but it is still being offered.

Cathy Duncan said that there were two incidents during the Holiday on Main Street. More police coverage would have been useful. A girl reported her ipod stolen. She did not report it immediately, but sent a bill for \$200 to the Chamber. The second incident was an intoxicated man bothering people on Main Street. It would have served better if the police would come by more consistently during the event. The Chamber would like to have a conversation with the Police. Diane Gervais said that the police should take each issue very seriously, because it is very serious to each person. She gave an example of a theft of merchandise valuing \$2,000 from Amato's. Police reported to the scene, but did not handle the situation as aggressively as they could have.

Public Works

All agreed that they are doing a very good job.

Parking

The conceptual drawings for the garage on Court Street have come in. The architect came up with three versions. Geen Thazhampallath said that he sat down with the Mayor and Joe Simolis to discuss. In the next few months there will be a public hearing.

Discussions are in progress as to what will be done with Metro Square. Bill Warner put out an RFQ for a design concept. Bill Warner also put together a PowerPoint presentation that compared Metro Square to Blue Back Square to show potential for development. Gene said that what happens in Metro Square will impact what happens with the parking garage on Court Street.

The drawings have come in for the streetscape/pedestrian connection project that has been planned. There will be a meeting with the heads of Russell Library, Kidcity and the Chamber to discuss the drawings. Gene Thazhampallath currently has engineering drawings, but is having more artistic drawings rendered to show what it will look like conceptually.

North End

Bobbye Peterson is on maternity leave. The North End is looking into doing a gun buy-back event. DBD gift cards will be given in exchange for guns. Board elections were taking place that evening. Water mains are going to be worked on for Main Street, then the north end will be paved and sidewalks will be done.

Director's Goals for the Quarter

A **survey** will be sent out to the downtown businesses. It will be sent out within one or two months. It was suggested that it be short and to the point. The DBD consists of 60 properties and 140 businesses.

Quentin Phipps presented ideas for a **Marketing Program** (Pinterest Party). Interested participants include Capricorn and Pamela Roose. Jen suggested that the benefit of doing something like this would be to get a little media attention for things happening downtown. It is valuable to give some concentration to retail shops, as most of the focus of Main Street is currently on restaurants.

Jen Alexander said that need to know more about downtown events and partnerships and focus on doing a better job to promote and link events.

Jen Alexander asked that the DBD would look at our strategic plan and see what is have happening for each quarter and that report be emailed to commissioners.

Budget Committee decided. Committee will include Jen Alexander, Gary Nagler, Diane Gervais and Quentin Phipps. The Budget Committee will meet twice to discuss a budget that will be voted on at the February meeting.