

**Downtown Business District
Annual Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 26, 2014
Inn at Middletown, Middletown, CT**

Attendees:

Michiel Wackers
Tom Ford
Valerie Scribano
Diane Gervais
Marc Levin
Jeff Pugliese
Bill Russo

Gary Nagler
Jennifer Alexander
Nicole Castrogiovanni
Mike DiPiro
Mike Stone
Captain Moriarty

Motion to Nominate Officers

- Diane Gervais made a motion to nominate:
Jennifer Alexander – Chair
Gary Nagler – Vice Chair
Mike DiPiro – Treasurer
Marc Levin – Secretary

- 2nd motion by Mike Stone.

Motion to Accept Budget

- Motion to approve 2014/2015 budget.
- 2nd.

Motion to Authorize Chair and Treasurer to Set Mil Rate with Tax Collector

- Motion by Marc Levin.
- 2nd motion by Diane Gervais.

Minutes

- Motion by Marc Levin to approve January and February minutes.
- 2nd motion by Diane Gervais.

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TOWN CLERK
MIDDLETOWN, CT

Treasurer's Report

A letter will be sent to the Finance Department to request a draw down of the remaining DBD balance – approximately \$69,000.

The question was raised, as to whether or not DBD funds in the city account collect interest.

- Motion to accept Treasurer's Report by Marc Levin.
- 2nd motion by Tom Ford.

Maintenance

Sidewalk sweeping started this month. Jennifer Alexander and Tom Ford have worked on a proposal of additional sidewalk washing. They propose to rent a pressure washer an additional 2 times per year, for a total of 3 washings per year. Midfield rents the equipment and the DBD pays for the labor. Sidewalk washing is currently scheduled for May. Additional washings would take place in summer and fall. It would cost approximately \$1500 per extra cleaning. Jennifer Alexander will continue correspondence about sidewalk washing by e-mail.

Planters – Diane Gervais is working on an early spring planting. She asked that the DBD guide remove sticks from planters.

Marketing

Nicole is working on a new DBD brochure to come out in April. New photography was commissioned. Marc Levin and Diane Gervais reported that Sandy Aldieri took photos at Mallove's Jewelers and Amato's Toy & Hobby.

Police

Captain Moriarty said that the police were anticipating a large turnout for the NEAT gun buyback that would take place the coming weekend, Saturday March 29th. Funding has been decent.

He reported that with warmer weather, more activity has been seen in Spear Park. Police will continue to monitor the area. Jennifer Alexander raised concern there has been an issue of loitering in front of Moonlight Sushi on Metro Square property. She explained that the DBD guide had reported the incident at the police station but was told by the officer on duty that nothing could be done about the report, due to the incident occurrence on private property. Captain Moriarty affirmed that there is little that can be done about incidents on private property when the report is made by a third party rather than by the property or business owner themselves. He said that guides should urge business owners to report loitering. Loitering on sidewalks is difficult to eradicate, because the sidewalk is public property and if

the individual in question is not panhandling or blocking free passage, technically they are doing nothing illegal. Captain Moriarty said that officers should not be ignoring guides' reports about loiterers and should always check to be sure that illegal activity is not taking place.

At a meeting in fall 2013, removal of tables and benches from Spear Park was discussed. Bill Russo said that tables and benches could be removed and that there have been discussions about additional things that can be done with Spear Park.

Public Works

The Harvard Pilgrim Half Marathon is scheduled for April 6th. Gary Nagler expressed that it would be a very difficult day for the Inn at Middletown. The Inn is sold out for entire weekend, for non marathon related events. 1,000 runners are expected. Main Street will be closed from the Inn at Middletown to Court Street. Business owners on Main Street should receive a print-out of course. Bill Russo said that there will be a meeting on April 6th with Public Safety regarding the marathon.

Public Works is trying to make people aware of what they can do in terms of recycling. Diane Gervais expressed concern that Amato's Toy & Hobby trash removal bill increased exponentially. Bill Russo said that the price is based on how many times they pick up. He said that recycling will bring down the amount of pickups needed per week. Working on single stream recycling will make trash removal easier for everyone.

On May 15th sweeping of the entire town is expected to be complete. On April 9th, at 7:00pm in room 208 of Town Hall, Gene Thazhampallath will make a presentation of his proposal for walkways to Public Works. Lee Osborne is the designer.

Public works has begun a study of all parks. There has been a downturn in numbers with baseball. The study will look at field turf, maintenance and conservation of parks.

Planning

Michiel Wackers reported that Bill Warner has announced his retirement. His last day will be April 25th. The mayor will appoint a new director to the position. April 18th will be the final day of work for the Environmental Specialist. The three finalists for the position of Economic Development Specialists will be interviewed by the mayor next week.

Gas station tanks will be pulled from 645 Main Street, on the corner of Grand Street and Main Street. Negotiations for Metro Square have begun.

Environmental Development is working with Wesleyan on a design for a boathouse on the river, to replace the two existing boathouses. It will include some type of banquet facility. After they finish assessing size and cost, they will begin to look at hiring an architect. One boathouse is owned by the city, used by Middletown High and the other is owned by Wesleyan. Wesleyan leases the land from the

city for \$1000 annually. The Middletown boathouse has two programs: a Park and Rec program and the Middletown High program. Wesleyan has one program. There has been talk about Choate and Mercy High getting involved.

On April 1st, the Department of Transportation will meet at 7:00pm with the Riverfront Committee about the potential plan for the interchange. Jennifer referred to a discussion that had occurred at the last riverfront meeting: a consultant had suggested that an improvement for downtown would be to "streetify" Route 9. Instead of a highway where people stop short, you let people cross at-grade. She explained that it would be less expensive and more practical than building pedestrian bridges. She cited that it has been done on the West Side Highway in Manhattan and in Chicago next to Millennium Park. Cities are taking urban highways and improving the flow of traffic, by timing lights and putting in more lights. She feels that this "streetification" would decrease congestion and would make the river our "front yard." Pedestrians would be able to cross at the bottom of DeKoven Drive, Martin Luther King Drive and Washington Street. There is resistance to this idea and a push to get rid of the lights. However, from an urban planning/downtown perspective, this would be ideal for our Main Street, to allow people to push a button and cross the street. She would like to push for a study on the cost of putting in more lights and the effect on traffic.

Jennifer Alexander asked if the Metro Square urban design study will take public input. Michiel Wackers said that the study should be completed by July. It will be mostly developer driven, but there will be at least one public information session.

Search Committee

A meeting of the Search Committee will take place following the DBD meeting.

Other Business

Mike DiPiro said that he received a mailing from the Business Improvement District of Hartford with marketing information requesting sponsors for banners. Jennifer Alexander pointed out that there are banners on Main Street! Diane stated that they are ineffectively small. A comment was made regarding the wind tunnel on Main Street as it affects banners. Jennifer Alexander explained that the lamp poles currently have a top bracket, but not a bottom bracket. This will be an investment if we decide to install full size banners.

Marc said that there is going to be a burger restaurant on Main Street in the location of the former Pattie Palace. Moonlight Sushi seems to have resolved the issue of the flashing neon light.