

**Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 25, 2014
330 Main Street, Middletown, CT**

Attendees

Diane Gervais (Chair)	Jeff Pugliese (Chamber)
Jennifer Alexander (Commissioner)	Sean Moriarty (Police)
Peter Harding (Commissioner)	Pamela Goose (Business owner)
Gary Nagler (Commissioner)	Shane Grant (Downtown Business District)
Tom Ford (Commissioner)	Trevor Davis (Commercial Real Estate)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)	Sonia Balram (Downtown Business District/ NEAT)
Geen Thazhampallath (Parking)	Bill Russo (Public Works)
Steven Kovach (NEAT)	Tom Marano (Public works)

Minutes

- Motion made by Marc Levin to approve May minutes.
- 2nd motion by Peter Harding.
- Minutes accepted.

Treasurer's Report

- Motion to table Treasurer's Report.
 - Treasurer's Report tabled for later review.
- Jen liked the format of the Treasurer's report and liked having the balance sheet.

Maintenance Report

None. Streets are cleaned Mondays & Fridays.

Beautification

Planters are planted. Look beautiful. Gene advised they are waiting on quotes for planters (including Buds & Blossoms) and would talk to Bill Russo about getting rid of dead plants.

Marketing Report

None.

Lead Guide Report

Shane introduced new uniform. The back indicates that you are Main Street Guide which is very helpful. He also introduced Sonia. Shane also advised that things have been great on Main Street. Panhandling has not been an issue. Commissioners highlighted the hot spots are at Dunkin Donuts and in stairways in Metro Square (specifically the place near the Japanese restaurant). Pamela did advise that since the weather is warming up she has been experienced some panhandling.

Police Report

Panhandling. Sean Moriarty advised that for arrests on panhandling, they need statement. The police can move people along. We can give police a call and provide description in case the panhandler is no longer in the same location.

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Spear Park. Sean commented that the new garbage cans at Spear Park have been helpful because they stop people from hiding their beer cans. He also indicated that they are looking to work with other community partners and social services on the issue. They have been arresting people and moving the traffic along but for a longer term solution there needs to be other partners involved.

Metro Square. The new hotspot is now Metro Square near the staircases on both ends. Sean Moriarty advised that because of issues with private property, they cannot move people along at Dunkin Donuts and Metro Square. The police needs a letter from Metro Square property owner that allows the police to remove persons drinking in public (not at a restaurant). Marc indicated there is a conversation between the owner at Metro Square and Michiel that may be helpful in getting this letter drafted.

Patrolling. The police have been walking through. John has been walking through etc. There will be more bicycles. They are not removing walking beats but adding additional bikes.

North End Hotspots. Two major players for hotspots are no longer present in North End. In the North End, the hotspot is near Macdonough school and Donovan Park. Older (high school) kids are fighting in the area. (The problem is not with the elementary school.) The issue is not gang related. There were issues with gangs in middle and high school but the police was able to defuse the situation.

Dunkin Donuts. Warm spot. There has been some activity. Since the location is private property, the police face similar difficulties as in Metro Square.

Meeting. Sean and Diane will be working on scheduling a meeting between guides and police.

Public Works

Spear Park. Commission voted to remove fountain however the housing authority was not present. There will be a meeting on July 9th and the Housing Authority will be present. It would cost \$35000 to have fountain fixed to be OSHA compliant. It would cost \$25000 to take it out. They also talked about removing benches. Jen Alexander indicated that Bill Vasiliou was hoping to get rid of paved areas and just extend the lawn. Bill Vasiliou is not interested in temporary parking but this is negotiable. Bill Russo indicated that the difficult part is the City is paying for something it does not own. Commissioners agreed that the changes with Spear Park should happen quickly. Bill Russo indicated that they do not want to see issues from Spear Park move to the waterfront. Bill commented that the activity has been great by the river and the area is very family friendly. The public is enjoying fishing walking and biking. Police officers have been doing a great job patrolling the area. The lights are upgraded. Everything looks great done there. Bill indicated they will work as quickly as possible on Spear Park.

Fireworks. The event starts at 6:00 and fireworks will begin at 9:30 on July 3rd. The City will clean up afterwards. (*Since then, event canceled and moved to 5th*) Dekoven and Lower Court will be closed. In the afternoon, there will be limited access to streets. Geen will send information to chamber and chamber will email information. Guides will send out information.

Cleanliness. Sweeping programs are working very well. The recycle bins have worked well. They will all be replaced very shortly and they will continue replacing older bins. The bins people from going through it and garbage from flying away.

Parking Report

Melilli Parking Meter. Geen advised that they received permission to remove gate system at Melilli Plaza etc. They will go to a gateless/ ticket-free environment. Customers will receive a receipt and can upgrade time from phone. This would reduce current upkeep costs (for 6 lanes of traffic it is \$35000 in upkeep). They are hoping for September 1 implementation.

Arcade Construction/Referendum. Gene went over costs for Arcade (roughly 17 million plus added costs; 6.9 million in Federal money available for project). At the August Council Meeting, there will be a council vote on whether to put on November ballot. If it is on ballot, there will be education around the referendum so the public is prepared to vote on the issue in November.

Planters. Geen advised that the Parking department will be maintaining the planters around Melilli Plaza. They are still working on finding a contractor.

North End Report

Farmer's Market started last Friday, June 20, 2014 and will continue until October 31st. The first evening market will be July 3rd (*Since then, market canceled and first evening market will be August 7th*). Kids Market will also be starting in July (youth will shop at the Farmers Market and learn about healthy eating and budgeting). NEAT Garden Party will take place on August 14, 2014.

Planning

Tom Marano, the City's new Economic Development Specialist, introduced himself. Currently, he is visiting business and will visit manufacturers. Business owners are happy about the gates removal. From his feedback, businesses would like customers to get a free 15 minutes in parking.

Chamber is partnering on creating a space downtown for at home workers to meet-up, exchange information, resources etc. It is modeled after The Grove in New Haven. It should create an enormous amount of foot traffic. The audience includes those in their twenties and fifties. Currently, Tom indicated there is a significant population working out of homes which could be brought downtown.

Out of State recruitment. There is fair amount of business interest. Out-of State projects are kept confidential. We only hear about them when they sign a contract. Connecticut won projects because other towns talked about them publically. He is working on figuring out what is available by speaking with property owners. Right now, it does not appear to be much.

Chamber

Summer Youth Program. Jeff Pugliese indicated that the summer youth employment program will start on July 8th. There will be 90 kids working for six weeks for 20 hours. There are 46/47 host sites including Gary, Billy and Trevor. Chamber goes through etiquette, clothing etc.

Events. July 23rd is Road Race & August 13th Motorcycle Mania

Motion to adjourn by Marc and approved.