

Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 22, 2014
330 Main Street, Middletown, CT

Attendees

Diane Gervais (Chair)
Peter Harding (Commissioner)
Tom Ford (Commissioner)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)
Mike Stone (Commissioner)
Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)

Cathy Duncan (Chamber)
Sean Moriarty (Police)
Trevor Davis (Commercial Real Estate)
Michiel Wackers (Director of Planning)
Tom Marano (Economic Development)
Lisa Melaven (DBD Office)

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TOWN OF ENFIELD
COMPLETION REPORT

Minutes

- Minutes were approved by Marc Levin
- 2nd
- Minutes accepted.

Treasurer's Report – Mike DiPiro

The transfer of \$70,000.00 was made into our bank account from City Hall. Diane Gervais was able to get the wire transfer fee of \$10.00 from Liberty Bank reversed and put back in our bank account. It appears we are under budget in spending and salary line. The DBD Gift Cards has the possibility of going over budget. At the end of this year on December 31st, our bookkeeper Bob Stasko will be retiring. He is willing to stay on during the transitional time. There was a recommendation for Mike DiPiro's office to take over the process, during the transition in finding a bookkeeper to include the gift card sales.

- Financials approved
- 2nd
- Financials accepted

Maintenance Report – Tom Ford

The streets are looking good, leaves cleaned up etc. There is an area of concern with the colorful markings on the sidewalk. These are from "Call before you dig", Yankee gas and the Public works department with the milling and paving that is going on downtown, and are not permanent. The "gum" marks up and down Main Street need attention and need to be power washed. Tom is going to work on this.

Beautification – Diane Gervais

The planters up and down Main Street are still looking good. Diane has been in touch weekly with Bobbi from Stone Post, to discuss maintenance and replacing plants. The large planters on North Main Street and the Welcome Island will be re-planted with Kale and with keeping the ornamental grasses and sweet potato vine. The week of November 16th all the large planters on Main Street will be replaced with winter greens and berries, for the winter season.

Lead Guide Report- Diane Gervais

Our lead guide Shane Grant, could not attend meeting today. Shane did report to Diane that everything is going along well. There has been good communication between city departments and the DBD office in getting things done.

Police Report – Sean Moriarty

Sean reports things are going smoothly in the downtown area. They are gearing up for Holiday on Main Street. The restaurants have started to clean up and close down the outside seating/dining due to the seasonal weather changes. The police department is working on verbiage for new bike signs to be hung on the light posts downtown. There have been some near misses with bike riders on the sidewalks. Realizing this is a nationwide issue and looking through hundreds of signs, Diane Gervais from the DBD and Cathy Duncan from the Chamber of Commerce had a model picture of a new and improved bike sign, which is a start to modify the existing ones that are hanging. The model sign conveys the law and is user friendly. The first step is marketing the sign(s) and the second step is having the police department go around in a friendly manner to the Middletown Public Schools and educate the student population on safety in bike riding.

Public Works –

None

Parking Report-

None - Director Geen Thazhampallath emailed he was out ill and would not be able to attend today's meeting.

Economic Development Report- Tom Marano

Connecticut consumer council would like to set up a meeting to discuss "gig a bite networks". It is a critical in driving economic development into downtown Middletown. The larger cities and corporations are already on board. There is a meeting scheduled for next Friday, October 31st, and all are welcome to come and see presentation. Commissioner, Peter Harding suggested the DBD take out a full size marketing ad in the consumer and business guide for Middletown, Connecticut through the Global Design & Publishing Company. It is an economic and development piece, which is critical to the quality of life here in Middletown. This city guide is printed ever two years and should be distributed around town. Anybody or business who is new into town would receive one, as well as the DBD and the Chamber of Commerce would have them readily available.

North End Report-

None

Other- Trevor Davis

A new non-profit organization "Middletown Arts Center" will be renting at First Church. It has a nine hundred room capacity, which is very large area to host events. Their mission is to target the downtown folks to catch a show after dining downtown supporting the Arts program. This would be another good attraction to the downtown area.

Chamber – Cathy Duncan

Holiday on Main Street – Cathy handed out the schedule in the making. There will be several events from tree lightings, hay rides, train rides, horse and carriage rides, free pictures with Santa, story time, annual holiday craft & bake sale, train exhibits, holiday music, popcorn, pretzels and more. There will be a new attraction this year with safari rides in front of Amato's Toy and Hobby store. All sponsorships are welcomed. The chamber is looking for volunteers to work three hour shifts, during each of the four Saturdays of this event.

Before the holiday wreaths are hung on Main Street this season, they need to be "fluffed" and cleaned. It is recommended by Diane Gervais and Cathy Duncan to select a group of volunteers for this task. Cathy will discuss with Jeff Everett of Everett regarding this matter. Lisa Melaven from the DBD office and Tom Marano's wife Rose Marano has volunteered to start this process. There are a total of 50 wreaths to be worked on.

The dead tree in front of the Chamber of Commerce needs to be removed as soon as possible. The arborists who had surveyed the tree all agree it needs to come down. The city departments need to work together in making this happen before Holiday on Main begins. The power source for lighting purposes needs to stay. Tom Marano said he would speak to Rick Romano.

Chair Update – Diane Gervais

Gift Cards:

The Gift card program continues to get reorganized, all locations are operational, and have new signage. Amato's should be selling gift cards early November. We are looking at ways to promote the sales of cards as client gifts to businesses.

Brochures:

The new brochures are in the final proofing stage and will go to the printer shortly. We had 10 business deletions and 8 new business additions. 22 more businesses now accept the gift cards. New features in the brochure should make it easier to use. Lisa and Shane have done a fantastic job of helping to get this done.

Street Signage:

After much discussion between the Chamber, myself, Public Works and the Police Dept Signage regarding the no bike riding on downtown sidewalks has been designed and is in the process of getting approval and installation. Sample of sign was displayed.

Guides:

Diane requested help on guide hiring and job description update. Marc Levin agreed to help, they will meet.

Office:

Office environment is vastly improved. Following up on our idea of having some of Sandy Alder's downtown pictures framed and displayed on the wall, Diane suggested that we purchase some of the prints which Sandy will do for us and paint the wall an accent color. A motion was made, seconded and approved to spend \$1500 to do this.

Holiday on Main Street participation:

Diane proposed that in lieu of spending \$1800 on songbooks we try something different. The idea was a downtown gift bag giveaway. The DBD would purchase reusable gift bags with our Discover Main Street logo on them, fill them with promotional materials from the downtown businesses and hand them out to visitors to the downtown during the four Saturday Holiday on Main St events.

The bags would be handed out by local DECA club high school students. A donation would be made to DECA club for their time. A motion was made and seconded to spend \$3300 on the bags and to donate a to be determined amount to the clubs.

Diane has a number of ideas for creating greater involvement of our businesses in the New Year. Diane also thanked Lisa for all of her hard work and support.

Motion to adjourn by Marc and approved.