

Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2023
363 Main Street, Suite 404 Middletown, CT 06457

Attendees:

Jen Alexander (Chair)	Chief Erik Costa (MPD)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)	Sara Mendillo (Chamber)
Diane Gervais (Commissioner)	Maryellen Shuckrow (St. Vins Director)
Matt Lefebvre (Commissioner)	Rani Arbo (Wesleyan)
Marie Kalita (Commissioner)	Kevin Elak (Health Director)
Tom Ford (Commissioner)	Cassandra Day(Middletown Press)
Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)	Emily Ford (Hajjar Dev Group)
	Cathy Duncan (Chamber)
Sandra Russo-Driska (DBD Coordinator)	Brian Hubbs (PD)
	Trevor Davis (363 Main LLC)
	Chris Holden (Public Works)
	Dep. Chief Rich Davis (MPD)
	Chris Conley (Gilmartin, DiPiro, Sokolowski)
	Brent Thomsen (Inn at Middletown)

Call to Order- Meeting was called to order by Chair, Jen Alexander at 8:30 a.m.

CITY PARTNERS

Mayor- Not Present

Health Department- Kevin report that Covid, flu, and RSV are declining. Hospitalizations are down.

Important update to the state food code. Adopting FDA's code. Code has not been changed since 2001. A series of seminars and webinars will be held and information will be forthcoming to all food establishments. Anyone from public may attend with registration.

Public Works- Chris reported they have been working closely with the DBD on garbage and recycling can cleaning process. Discussion on new containers is ongoing.

There will be a meeting on March 1st at 10 am for north end business and building owners on the pilot program for back in parking.

Lighting issues and graffiti are an ongoing project for the department.

Police-

Chief Costa reported that calls to service are down. Few incidents in City that required mental health services that were brought to resolution. Identifying that businesses are having long lines later in the evening and are monitoring. No major incidents to date. A meeting with the hookah lounge owner and Mayor took place. Working on the 23-24 budget and asking for 5 new officers is in beginning phase and will be meeting with the Mayor. Discussion followed on need for additional officers.

Jen inquired as to the two social workers. Chief informed that they are in the budget and the job descriptions are working their way through the process, and hopefully they can be posted soon.

Economic Development/Parking- Not Present

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

St. Vincent's-

Maryellen reported they continued to work on the new building and should have ownership by end of March. Dept. of Housing application will be submitted by end of April. Kitchen was open extended hours during the deep freeze. 2 Peer managers have been present in the dining room. She is continuing to employ James and a barber that are working five half days per week.

Chamber-

Sara noted that Speaker Matt Ritter will be coming to the Inn at Middletown in their Legislative Series. Also, Geno and Rosa DeLauro are coming up. Business after work will be held April 6 at the Sheraton in Rocky Hill. April 15 is the comedy fundraiser.

Cathy reported the next CBB will be held March 2 and they will notify if hybrid or Zoom only.

Larry's retirement party will be held May 10th at the Aqua Turf. Tickets available online and selling quickly. She noted that Larry's old office is now the Larry McHugh conference room.

Wesleyan:

Rani no specific updates.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion made by Tom to approve January minutes
- 2nd by Marie
- December minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report

- Motion to approve Treasurer Report made by Marc
- 2nd by Diane
- All in Favor. Treasurer's report accepted.

Draft budget was discussed. Jen stated this is a flat budget. Mill rate to be set based on assessments from the City Assessor. Discussion followed.

- Motion to approve draft budget as submitted made by Marc
- 2nd made by Diane
- All in favor to approve draft budget for submission to Annual Meeting for vote.

DBD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Discussion was held on the Annual Meeting commissioner election. Sandra read the names of those interested in running for commission on the ballot:

Jen Alexander, Marie Kalita, Chris Conley, Brent Thomsen, Katie Hughes-Nelson, Matt Lefevbre, Patrick Harding, Tom Ford, Diane Gervais

The term will be for 2 years.

- Motion made by Marc to accept the slate of candidates for commissioner
- 2nd by Tom
- All in favor

Advertising/Promotion- Sandra reported she is beginning to work on a newsletter to go out monthly. Also, social media followers continue to grow.

Gift Cards- Sandra reported we are fully stocked and selling gift cards in all locations: on line, Amato's, Chamber and Kidcity.

Maintenance & Beautification- Sandra noted that she and Ken continue to work with and make progress on items with Public Works.

Special Projects-

Jen asked the commission for a vote to allow her to request a reallocation of the ARPA funding in the amount of \$300,000 that we received for a facade grant to be used for the purchase of new garbage/recycling containers (approx. \$100,000) and a Street Scape Plan that includes lighting issues, tree wells and more. She stated that we met with Public Works and they are in favor of the idea.

- Motion made by Marc to have the ARPA committee pursue the reallocation with the City to Public Works for the following projects: garbage and recycling containers, and street scape items including lighting, trees, and tree wells and to have final jurisdiction on spending be with the DBD Commission.
- 2nd by Tom
- All in favor

Jen proposed that we run another Outdoor Seasonal Grant for the purchase of items such as pots, flowers, tables, chairs, etc. Up to a \$500 matching grant.

- Motion made by Diane to have an Outdoor Seasonal Grant program with match up to \$500 for items mentioned.
- 2nd by Tom
- All in favor

925 Report-

Discussion followed on the Rte 9 light reconfiguration plan.

Discussion followed on the back in parking pilot plan.

Jen requested Sandra to set up a meeting with Johanna and Pam to discuss both items.

Adjournment:

- Motion to adjourn at 9:48am by Marc.
- 2nd by Diane
- All in Favor. Meeting Adjourned.