



James V. Breuer, Chair
Merike L. Treier, Executive Director

DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.

May 15, 2018

**The Tech Garden
Fibertech Theater**

3:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members: Messrs. Breuer, Bianchetti, Bryant, Dunn, Tascarella, and Tripoli, Mss. Angrand and Gagliano

Staff: Mss. Holbrook, Maggiore, Schroeder, Sherlock, and Treier; Messrs. Campanie and McFadden

Guests: Mr. Carl Bauer, Whiting-Turner
Mr. Steve Case, Acropolis Development
Ms. Stephanie Crockett, Mower
Mr. Matt Funicello, JF Real Estate
Ms. Karyn Korteling, Pastabilities
Mr. Cory LaDuke, Pyramid Brokerage
Ms. Ashley Liner, Empire Brewing Company
Ms. Cheryl Pusztai, Downtown YMCA
Ms. Lindsay Weichert, M&T Bank

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Breuer called the meeting to order and welcomed guests and members present.

II. Approval of Minutes from March 20, 2018

Chairman Breuer asked the Board if they had any questions or comments on the minutes from March 20, 2018, and there were none. Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to approve the March 20, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes. Mr. Bianchetti moved, Ms. Gagliano seconded; the motion was unanimously carried.

III. Financial Report as of April 30, 2018

Mr. Dunn provided the financial report as of April 30, 2018. He noted that income to date is as expected, however, due to the heavy snowfall this winter, expenses are tracking higher than budgeted due to overtime and equipment operations. Mr. Dunn noted the timing of several grant reimbursements and that overall the income over expense differential will be less at the end of the year than the value presented today.

Mr. Dunn asked the Board if there were any questions on the Financial Report as of April 30, 2018. Mr. Tripoli asked if the 50/50 Program portion from the City was a lump sum. Ms. Treier replied in the affirmative that the Downtown Committee will submit for reimbursement in June.

Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to accept the April 30, 2018 financial report subject to audit. Mr. Tripoli moved and Mr. Bianchetti seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

IV. Administration

A. Accept Audit of Financial Statements for year ending June 30, 2017

Ms. Treier stated that the auditors have completed the audit for fiscal year 2016-2017, and that the Audited Financial Statements were mailed to the Board for review. She asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Bianchetti asked about the insurance expense. Ms. Treier responded that the number represents a six-month period where expenses had not been billed, but that the expense was identified by the accounting staff has been billed and it will show up under income.

Chairman Breuer asked why the completion of the audit was delayed. Ms. Treier replied that due to two staff member services being shared by another organization, information was delayed by the other organization, which held up the completion of the Downtown Committee audit. Chairman Breuer requested for the audit to be completed in a more acceptable time period which Ms. Treier will relay to the audit firm.

Chairman Breuer called for a motion to accept the Audited Financial Statements. Mr. Tascarella moved and Mr. Tripoli seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

B. Execute Cost-Sharing Agreement with the City of Syracuse

Ms. Treier presented the Board with the five-year Cost-Sharing Agreement between the City of Syracuse and the Downtown Committee in which \$25,000 is allocated to streetscape items annually. Mr. Breuer asked for a motion to approve the (five-year) Cost-Sharing Agreement with the City of Syracuse. Mr. Dunn moved and Mr. Tripoli seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

C. Execute Parking Lot Agreement with Syracuse Urban Partnership, Inc. and Syracuse Parking Services

Ms. Treier reported that the Allyn Foundation purchased the parking lot that borders Salina, Onondaga and Clinton Streets. Beginning next spring, they are planning to construct a mixed-use complex to house a food market, retail and apartments, and sought a non-profit organization to manage the existing parking lot while plans are developed. The Allyn Foundation approached the Downtown Committee to take over parking lot operations management, and after review by the executive committee, an agreement has been put forward for full board consideration. Ms. Treier noted that the Downtown Committee has drawn up an agreement with Syracuse Urban Partnership to operate the lot and plans to sub-contract with Syracuse Parking Services to staff it. This agreement has also been circulated to the Board for consideration and vote. Chairman Breuer confirmed that the executive committee has reviewed the deal in great detail and this is a beneficial approach for a short-term agreement.

Ms. Angrand asked about how the lot is staffed. Ms. Treier responded that the lot is presently manned for just a few hours a day and for special events. Under the Downtown Committee's new management, the staffing hours would change to 7:30am to 5:30pm Monday through Friday, plus it would be open for downtown events. She noted that there is one aerial-mounted security camera northwest of the lot which

provides good coverage. She anticipates the parking lot will generate revenue based on the conservative projections.

Ms. Crockett noted that because of some theatre patron safety concerns around Clinton Street, she was happy to hear of the installation of additional security cameras and that the lot will now be manned.

With no further questions, Chairman Breuer asked for a motion to authorize the execution of the Parking Lot Agreement with Syracuse Urban Partnership, Inc. and Syracuse Parking Services. Mr. Tripoli moved and Ms. Angrand seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

V. Committee Reports

A. Communications Committee

Ms. Crockett provided an update from the Communications Committee. She reported that Ms. Treier and the team put together a good overview of what the Downtown Committee does including what services are effective and invaluable to the needs of downtown constituents. She noted that the communications team will meet again to evaluate the materials sent and identify any opportunities to implement new strategies.

B. Security Liaison Committee

Mr. Tripoli reported that the recent security liaison meeting was well attended. Based on the feedback from the meeting, it was decided that panhandling was an issue to pursue. They will explore the multi-prong approach and will examine best practices and how other communities are dealing with the issue. For the short-term, the team will look to monitor the “hot spots” of panhandling activity and individuals. Mr. Tripoli noted that they will work with human service agencies with a wide angle approach to help eliminate the problem where they can and get help in other cases. The Security Liaison Committee also discussed the importance of the education component to steer people to the better option of giving where it counts. Mr. Bianchetti asked what people in downtown want to see in order to give them a better sense of safety. Mr. Tripoli

responded that people would like to see more of a security presence (additional foot patrol), especially in areas where there is undesirable activity.

Chairman Breuer asked Mr. Campanie if there are any updates on downtown security coverage. Mr. Campanie noted that the number of foot patrol officers has increased. Both the Downtown Committee and Syracuse Police Department provide two foot patrol officers each during the day. The Downtown Committee also provides two part-time foot patrol officers from 4:00-8:00 p.m. and the SPD has coverage from 3:00-11:00 p.m. He noted that the 432-HELP line rolls over to the SPD officer on duty after 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Angrand agrees it changes the atmosphere to a more positive one when people see more officers patrolling the streets. Ms. Treier added that the Syracuse Police Department and the Mayor's Office have been responsive and proactive in managing troubling activities.

C. Livability Committee

Ms. Weichert reported that the Livability Committee met last week and identified various areas that they will work to prioritize:

- Improve the parking perception downtown by educating the public and bringing more people in from the suburbs.
- Infrastructure: advocate for more connectivity such as extending the Creekwalk trail along the creek and not over to West Street; find ways to connect into the Erie Canal Trailway program to better improve Erie Boulevard and connect downtown to Dewitt; find more walkability connections between downtown with the Northside and University Hill; look into bike-sharing programs and add more bike lanes; implement reduced speed limits on Adams Street to help calm the traffic flow; create more permanent experiences that will make people want to come downtown (other than just the draw of events); improve green spaces; and better maintain the "gateways" into downtown which is a visitor's first impression.
- Develop policy guidelines for the City to put into practice and balance: manage multi-use areas that house residents and bars (noise, cleanliness, etc.); balance

the increasing popular food truck business alongside brick and mortar restaurants without losing business; control the number of festivals in downtown which downtown is currently saturated with though they are a big economic impact for businesses; and review current busking licenses to help control the permitted hours and locations that effect residents, visitors and employees.

VI. Economic Development Report

A. Vacant Storefront Survey

Ms. Schroeder reported that the Downtown Committee completed its annual vacant property survey, which catalogs available storefronts within downtown's 82 blocks. Of the 74 storefronts that are currently available, 12 are under construction and 11 are part of a redevelopment plan. Four received improvements over the past year, and 8 participated in the Downtown Committee's Art in the Windows program, which uses local artwork to showcase available space. The 39 remaining storefronts will be targeted by the economic development team for new occupancy.

Compared with last year's numbers, 17 storefronts that were occupied have now become vacant this year, (two of them have been temporarily occupied and three closed for redevelopment). Twenty-one storefronts switched from vacant to occupied. New businesses that opened in previously vacant spaces include FHIIT Barre and Bodyworks, The Fish Friar, and ExpressMart, and Café Kubal in the Marriott Syracuse Downtown.

B. *Be Downtown* Publication

Ms. Schroeder introduced the newly updated *Be Downtown* retail recruitment brochure as a tool to use in filling available storefronts. This publication, which is also available on the Downtown Committee's website, is designed to introduce downtown neighborhoods to potential new businesses and investors and help them find the right fit. She noted that downtown sees a net gain of about eight new businesses a year. She noted that the brochure also provides information on visitor data, foot traffic (provided by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council), investment trends and gaps in resident services.

Ms. Schroeder stated the Downtown Committee has printed 2500 copies and welcomed the board to contact her if they want any *Be Downtown* brochures.

VII. Upcoming Events

A. Downtown Living Tour – May 19

Ms. Maggiore announced that the Downtown Living Tour is scheduled for Saturday, May 19 from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. This year, the theme of the tour is “Transformation in Action” and will highlight nine stops with the State Tower Building as tour headquarters. New apartment developments on the tour include: the Lofts at 239, GrangeX, Iron Pier Apartments (Inner Harbor), Oak Knitting Mill, Tallman Block, 435 South Warren, and Empire Building. The newly opened Redhouse will be added as a special stop on the tour. She noted there are two days left for \$12 advance sale tickets, then tickets will be available at City Hall Commons Atrium the day of the event for \$15. There will be shuttle service throughout downtown and the outlining stops. Along with details of each property, the Downtown Living Tour program will feature numerous “Downtown Deals” that tour-goers can take advantage of.

Ms. Maggiore thanked the City of Syracuse and National Grid as sponsors of the event.

Ms. Treier and the Board thanked tour co-directors Ms. Maggiore and Ms. Holbrook for all their hard work to put the tour together.

Mr. Bianchetti commented that with the evidence of more residents willing to live downtown and becoming more vibrant, it can help improve the safety and security image.

B. Beautification Initiatives – Start May 29

Mr. McFadden announced that 328 hanging flower baskets will be installed starting May 29 throughout downtown. This year the Downtown Committee secured 46 sponsors and reached its budgeted goal. He noted that baskets will also be installed around the parking lot on the corner of Onondaga and Salina to improve the perception of the area.

Pioneer Companies has sponsored the Young Leaders United Group, who will have 15 volunteers to help with the “Partners in Planting” program on June 1. Employees will engage in planting flowers and mulching along Washington Street, Hanover Square and Lemp Park. The Downtown Committee will be installing “pick up after your dog” signs to help promote cleanliness. In July, café type lighting will be installed between City Hall and State Tower Building. Mr. McFadden also noted that the Downtown Committee maintenance crew recently purchased a new power washer to take care of tough problem areas which will make a big impact.

Ms. Angrand asked if the color of the hanging flower baskets will be different this year. Mr. McFadden pointed out that they will be purple again as that color is more durable and lasts longer.

Chairman Breuer commented that new lighting at night in the parking lot on Salina and Clinton will make the lot more welcoming and safe. Ms. Treier added that the Downtown Committee will be doing debris sweeps, installing new pavement markings and putting up signage in the lot.

C. Farmers Market Opening Day – June 12

Mr. McFadden announced that the Farmers Market will be starting up again on June 12 in Clinton Square and every Tuesday through October 19. He noted that there could be a delay with some farmers’ produce due to the weather.

D. Annual Meeting – June 21

Ms. Treier announced that the Downtown Committee Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 21 in the Grand Ballroom at the Marriott Syracuse Downtown. Tickets are available for purchase on the website. Pathfinder Bank is once again the presenting sponsor, and SWBR is a corporate sponsor. Nominations are being taken for the Awards of Excellence: Urban Innovation, Perfect Partner and Heart of Downtown. Nominations can be submitted on the Downtown Committee website.

VIII. Public Comments

Chairman Breuer asked for an update on the WWI Memorial in Billings Park. Ms. Treier noted that the Onondaga Historical Association is taking the lead to plan the re-dedication ceremony this summer. The event is scheduled for July 15 from Noon to 2:30 p.m. which will also be the memorial's 100th anniversary. Mr. Dunn added that Sean Kirst, who has been a strong advocate for the memorial, will be involved. Ms. Treier noted that the benches and trash cans in the park will be replaced or refurbished.

Ms. Korteling expressed concern of the state's tipping wage proposal and wanted to know the Downtown Committee's position. Ms. Treier noted that a survey for feedback on the proposal was distributed to restaurants and nine responses were received. None have been supportive of the proposed increase in tipping wage. She stated the Downtown Committee will issue a public statement on the new policy affecting Downtown Syracuse restaurants by July 1. She also thanked David Hoyne for bringing the issue to the Downtown Committee's attention.

IX. Other Business and Adjourn

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Next Board meeting:

Tuesday, July 24

3:00 p.m.

**The Tech Garden
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235 Harrison Street**