



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

DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE, INC.

September 18, 2018

**The Tech Garden
Fibertech Theater**

3:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members: Messrs. Fiorito, Bianchetti, Bryant, Doucette, Dunn, Lemp, Nutting, Riley, Tripoli;
Mss. Angrand, Gagliano, Zell

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

Guests:
Mr. Bert Aufsesser, I Love Syracuse Vintage
Mr. Ryan Benz, Whitney Loft Properties
Mr. Jonathan Leister, M&T Bank
Ms. Erica Volpe, MONEY Federal Credit Union
Ms. Lindsay Weichert, M&T Bank

I. Welcome and Introductions

Vice Chair Fiorito called the meeting to order and welcomed guests and members present.

II. Approval of Minutes from July 24, 2018

Vice Chair Fiorito asked the Board if they had any questions or comments on the minutes from July 24, 2018, and there were none. Vice Chair Fiorito asked for a motion to approve the July 24, 2018, Board Meeting Minutes. Mr. Dunn moved, Mr. Nutting seconded; the motion was unanimously carried.

III. Financial Report as of June 30, 2018 and July 31, 2018

Mr. Dunn provided the financial report as of June 30, 2018 and July 31, 2018. He noted that overall, the June 30 year-end income and expenses are on target. He noted that an additional

draw on the Downtown Special Assessment Fund has been taken to cover the cost of the new security storefront build-out. He also noted that the Environmental Maintenance program expense line came in higher than budgeted due to staff overtime for snowplowing in the winter season.

Mr. Dunn reported that the July 31 financial report shows an increase in special assessment funding. Overall, income and expenses are on target for the first month of the new fiscal year.

Mr. Dunn asked the Board if there were any questions on the Financial Report as of June 30 and July 31, 2018, and there were none.

With no further questions, Vice Chair Fiorito asked for a motion to accept the June 30, 2018, and July 31, 2018 financial reports subject to audit. Mr. Lemp moved and Mr. Tripoli seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

IV. Administration

A. Authorization to Execute Annual Support Services Agreement

Ms. Treier asked the Board for a resolution to allow the Executive Director to enter into and execute the annual support services contract with CenterState CEO provided that the only changes from previous year's contract is the date. The agreement outlines the Downtown Committee expenses incurred for accounting, human resources, office equipment and related expenses purchased from CenterState CEO. Mr. Lemp moved to approve the resolution and Mr. Nutting seconded the motion. The resolution was unanimously approved.

V. Committee Reports

A. Livability Committee

Ms. Weichert provided an update from the Livability Committee. She reported that at their meeting on August 9, the group decided to focus on gateways and to review activities currently underway. Mr. Owen Kerney attended this meeting and shared what the City Planning Office was working on as to not duplicate efforts. He presented to the group the details of ReZone which is an overhaul of the City's zoning code expected to

be implemented in 2019. He also noted that next spring, energy efficient lighting will be installed under the railroad and Interstate 690 underpass (among other bridge underpasses), thanks to a grant from NYSERDA.

The committee met again on September 10 to review a map of other groups' projects underway and identified the railroad bridge location around West Onondaga/Clinton Street as a focus area for efforts. It was agreed that elements of the area to be addressed include the bridge, condition of the concrete, lighting, paint and landscaping. She noted this is a location where more energy is growing due to the re-opening of the Marriott Syracuse Downtown Hotel and new Allyn Family Foundation building project. Mr. Robert Bucklin of West Onondaga Street Alliance (WOSA) who attended the meeting shared their plan to paint the bridge, add new trash cans, banners and planters; and rebrand the entrance as City Gate. WOSA and the Downtown Committee expect to partner on an effort moving forward.

Mr. Riley commented that WOSA has been involved with the Rescue Mission bridge cleanup efforts. For the past three years the alliance has invested heavily in vacant building refurbishment and cleanup. Any support they can get would get an investor a good return. Mr. Nutting acknowledged Ms. Gagliano of Environmental Design & Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering & Environmental Services, D.P.C., who is also involved in the landscape design of the Allyn Family Foundation project.

This revitalization will also tie into the city's focus to encourage economic development of the South Avenue corridor and connections to nearby neighborhoods.

Weichert concluded that the next steps of the Livability Committee will be 1) to speak to the Mayor to understand current conversations with the Railroad Company and any plans that have been discussed; 2) to reach out to potential conceptual design consultants including QPK, SUNY-ESF and AIA-CNY to determine the vision and needs for implementation to achieve a high-impact gateway appearance.

Mr. Fiorito thanked the committee for making the West Onondaga/Clinton Street area a priority for improvement.

B. Security Liaison Committee

Mr. Tripoli provided an update from the Security Liaison Committee. At their last meeting the committee identified key areas on a downtown Syracuse map where negative activity was being observed. Most of the concentration was around Salina, Jefferson and Warren Streets. The committee discussed the option of utilizing the resources of the Upstate's Police Department to partner with the Onondaga County Sheriff's or Parole officers to patrol outside the building. This would complement the work underway by the Syracuse Police. Mr. Tripoli noted that the Syracuse Police Department added additional officers in July and have already seen its positive effect. The Academy will be graduating 37 more officers by spring 2019. He noted that the proposed aggressive solicitation legislation by Chairman Ryan McMahan (modeled after a Rochester policy) has been temporarily pulled for an update to its language and will be re-submitted in October. The legislation will also be re-worked to include the multi-pronged component (engaging human services agencies) to help the panhandlers rather than just ticketing or making arrests. The new legislation will also clarify "aggressive solicitation" definition and enforcement. Mr. Tripoli encouraged the board to write support letters to Chairman McMahan to support the legal component to the multi-prong strategy.

Ms. Treier noted she will circulate to the board 1) the updated Aggressive Solicitation Legislation when it is ready; and 2) the support letter sent to Chairman McMahan and County Legislature by the Downtown Committee.

C. Communications Committee

Ms. Treier provided an update from the Communication Committee. She noted that the committee reviewed the current communication methods and material that the Downtown Committee currently utilizes including press releases, social media, website and metrics. Overall, the current approach and activity was good. There were a few suggestions to boost exposure for targeted events: Social Media (Facebook, Tweets): 1)

pay to promote events on Facebook, and 2) develop a social media editorial calendar to plan content. For newsletters, it was suggested to shorten the length by adding a link to the stories at the top of the page which has been done. Ms. Treier noted that the Downtown Committee is looking at how to make downtown more welcoming and inclusive, and infusing diversity into its own events. The committee will look for opportunities to join forces in the community to make that happen.

Ms. Treier announced that next Progress Breakfast scheduled is for November 1, and the theme will be “Building Connections” to highlight upcoming initiatives and projects that will bridge downtown to its surrounding neighborhoods. Speakers include Ricky Brown of Upstate Minority Economic Alliance (UMEA), David Nutting, CEO of VIP Structures who will present the Post Standard Building project; and Meg O’Connell of the Allyn Family Foundation will talk about their initiative at 484 South Salina Street. She also noted that the Downtown Committee wants to raise more awareness of its services and support it provides to downtown while supporting economic growth. The staff plans to be more intentional of getting the information out to the community through all forms of media.

D. Doing Business Committee

Ms. Zell presented an update of the Doing Business Committee. She noted following conversations she and Ryan Benz had with representatives with the City of Syracuse about the current permitting process and timelines with building projects, it was agreed to focus on the goal to streamline the process to remove the burden of city staff to review and approve smaller building projects. With the backing of the committee, a draft memo proposal was created and will be circulated among a larger committee.

Ms. Angrand added that the City has started to measure its performance and recommended the committee to reach out to Jake Dishaw, Director of Central Permit Office and Sam Edelstein, Chief Data Officer, to review its metrics to see where the holdups are in the current process.

Ms. Treier noted that after the memo is circulated and all feedback from the group is received, she will schedule a meeting with Nora Spillane to discuss the suggested changes to the permit process.

VI. Staff Report

A. Employee Appreciation Week

Ms. Maggiore announced that the Downtown Committee organized its first ever Employee Appreciation Week scheduled for September 17-21 (in progress as of the Board Meeting). The goal of the week is to celebrate the 29,000 employees who work in Downtown Syracuse, offering a series of free activities, events and giveaways, while also highlighting the variety of unique businesses that Downtown is home to. Each day of the week is themed around a different idea: Movin' Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Wellness Wednesday, Treat Yourself Thursday and the Friday Finale. Ms. Maggiore noted that all the daily activities and events (scheduled around lunchtime, as well as the early morning and evening) can be found on the Downtown Committee website.

B. Invest Health

Ms. Schroeder presented an update on the Invest Health program in which the Downtown Committee is one of the local team members. She noted that Syracuse has been one of 50 cities selected nationwide for grant funding to help improve health outcomes through targeted neighborhood investments. The Syracuse team chose to focus on increasing access to healthy food for people living in and around downtown Syracuse. According to PolicyMap data, poverty levels have increased around downtown Syracuse, and these same areas also face high rates of chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. The health maps overlap with “food deserts” on the southern end of Downtown Syracuse and adjacent neighborhoods, where grocery stores are in short supply. The closure of Nojaim’s supermarket last year expanded the extent of the downtown food desert. In order to address these challenges, the Invest Health team developed a two-pronged strategy: 1) Capital Improvements -- leverage grant funding in a target area for the purpose of expanding food-based retail; and 2) Community Engagement – residents were surveyed

(online and in person at the Centro Bus Hub) on their grocery shopping habits to determine what would drive them to come to a new food market, and what they might buy. Quality and affordability of food items were top priorities among survey respondents.

Ms. Schroeder commented that though downtown has experienced 77% population growth since 2008, and more than \$125 million in real estate investment on the South Salina downtown corridor (i.e. Hotel Syracuse Restoration, Centro Bus Hub, Central Library and Redhouse Arts Center), none of that growth has included healthy food retail in the downtown area. To meet this need while expanding entrepreneurship and housing options, the Allyn Family Foundation (through Syracuse Urban Partnership) bought the property at 484 South Salina Street and announced plans for a ground-floor public market and food hall. The new building (to be constructed by VIP Structures) will house 25,000 square feet of offices, three floors of mixed-income housing, and a public market/food hall on the ground floor. A groundbreaking is planned in spring 2019. The food hall will be designed around what the community wants and will offer prepared and pre-packaged foods by a variety of food service entrepreneurs, as well as fresh produce and other ingredients. Mr. Nutting added that it is the intent of the food hall to graduate the entrepreneurs into solo businesses and restaurant spaces. He noted that this week is the kick-off to introduce the project to the public and gather more architectural design input from them.

VII. Public Comments

Vice Chair Fiorito asked for any comments, and there were none.

VIII. Other Business and Adjourn

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Next Board meeting:

Tuesday, November 20, 2018

3:00 p.m.

(Location to be announced)