

Middletown Downtown Business District

Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

363 Main Street, Suite 404, Middletown, CT

Attendees

Jen Alexander (Chair)	Jeff Puglise (Chamber)
Marc Levin (commissioner)	Capt. Mike DeSena (PD)
Matt Lefebvre (Commissioner)	Trevor Davis (363 Main LLC)
Patrick Harding (Commissioner)	Cathy Duncan (Chamber)
Katies Hughes-Nelson (Commissioner)	Kevin Elak (Health Dept)
Tom Ford (Commissioner)	Anne-Marie Cannata (Buttonwood)
Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)	Sandra Russo-Driska (DBD Coordinator)
Marie Kalita (Commissioner)	Joseph Samolis (Econ. Dev./Parking)
Diane Gervais (Commissioner)	Dep. Chief Rich Davis (PD)
	Amy Albert (Buttonwood)
	Chief Erik Costa (PD)
	Cassandra Day (Press)

Meeting called to order by Jen at 8:32 a.m.

CITY PARTNER UPDATES:

Mayor- Not present

Police-

Capt. DeSena reported activity has been lower engagement with the homeless now that winter has set in. Warming centers are not as busy with calls for service as in the past. Bike officers are trying to stay on the beat depending on weather conditions.

Marc complimented the noticeable uptick in police presence downtown and in the businesses.

Chief Costa reported that he has embedded 2 personnel to respond to mental health calls.

There has been an increase in manpower. Five new officers in post academy, entry level, and five lateral officers will be in lace by mid-February in field training. Focus in downtown to increase foot patrols that he heard the business community asking for in his visits and conversations.

Public Works-Not present

Economic Development/Parking-

Joe Samolis reported they are very busy with parking items, meter replacement, looking at policies.

CDBG process for annual entitlements is underway

ARPA Committee now has an application available to apply for funding. The criteria and application can be found at: ARPA@middletownct.gov

He went on to discuss the Harbor Park building project of new businesses moving forward with renovations and also the River Front Project and the public sessions and discussions are all moving forward in the next weeks and months.

Jen discussed the ARPA funding and the project the DBD has submitted last year. Joe stated that everyone, including city departments need to apply for funding for projects so they can accurately keep track of the funding and who receives it.

Joe noted the final rule from Federal Government came down with respect to what is applicable to ARPA funding and what is not. The committee has decent flexibility.

Discussion followed with Jen speaking to assisting building owners as much as possible with sizeable matching grants.

Joe noted the categories as being 1. Revenue Replacement, 2. Premium Pay, 3. Economic Impact/Public Health, 4. Infrastructure (Water/Sewer and Broadband ONLY)

He then stated that economic impact can be used to benefit property owners that do not have capital to invest.

Health- Not present

COMMUNITY PARTNER UPDATES:

St. Vincent's-

Sandra reported the committee meeting held Jan 25th went very well. Commissioners received James' report of activity. Maryellen is planning on presenting a plan for a permanent warming center building that will also have year-round facilities such as bathrooms, showers, and laundry to name one. The main concern is that funding be placed in the city budget to fund the Outreach Manager Program for the next fiscal year. Maryellen will look into that with the Mayor and report back to the committee for the February meeting.

Chamber of Commerce –

Jeff reported they are working with municipal partners on the pandemic front. They had an allotment of testing kits they worked out a process for handing out to the business community and focused on those that had many people coming in and out the door.

The Chamber also has N95 masks for deployment. He stated that the City always includes the business community in their supply of masks, wipes, sanitizer, etc and makes them available at the Chamber.

A booster clinic was held last Friday at the Chamber.

They have transitioned back to virtual meeting due to the Omicron surge. They will resume in person when it is safe to do so.

Busy week last week: Held an Affordable Housing in Pandemic seminar with 75 people in attendance

There will be a legislative breakfast coming up with the Speaker of the House.

Cathy noted they were still busy with gift cards doing \$1300 so far in January.

Sandra asked Cathy to look into sending the snow notice out to all businesses with the impending storm coming. She stated she would check with Public Works and send it out to all the downtown businesses.

Wesleyan- Absent

The commission discussed at length the ARPA funding and options for applying. Jen stated it is probably not a great idea to try for a Street Scape Plan, but that a matching grant program that assists building owners in improving their properties would be something that could be approved.

She noted last time funding included awnings, signs, facades, etc.

Also, it was discussed that we have plenty of subsidized housing but need more market rate and discussion on allowing interior renovations was held.

After discussion on facade grant and suggestion from Tom that building owners have a 1/3 match, the motion is as follows:

- Motion made by Marc to investigate a Facade Improvements Matching Grant for the Downtown Business District including buildings from Main to Dekoven and to Broad Sts, with the Chamber and City and building owners would match 1/3 of the improvement costs.
- 2nd by Marie
- All in favor

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Motion made Marie to accept Dec. 2021 minutes
- 2nd made by Tom
- All in favor

TREASURER'S REPORT:

- Motion made by Marc to accept
- 2nd made by Mike
- All in favor

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Advertising/Promotion- Marc state he and Diane would meet when the time is right to continue with promotion.

Beautification- Planter bids were discussed. Marc suggested obtaining 3 bids from landscapers. Tom noted Atria in Cheshire should be included as they do Hajjar Properties. Sandra noted she was planning on sending to Winterberry Gardens and would look into others.

Gift Cards – Sandra reported that we did \$7,740 more than prior holiday season and we had many companies purchasing cards for their staff.

DBD Coordinator Report- None

New Business: Annual Meeting

Jen asked for commissioners to serve on a Budget Committee for the 2022-2023 FY budget that would be presented at the March meeting. Marc, Diane, and Tom all volunteered to be on committee with Jen.

Sandra would send out a meeting notice.

925 Report- Quick discussion on a few items was held

Adjournment:

- Motion made by Marc to adjourn at 9:33 am
- 2nd by Tom
- Meeting adjourned