

(DRAFT)

Middletown Downtown Business District

Meeting Minutes -Annual & Regular Meeting

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

363 Main Street, Suite 404, Middletown, CT

ATTENDEES:

Jen Alexander (Chair)	Sandra Russo-Driska (DBD Coordinator)
Diane Gervais (Commissioner)	Joseph Samolis(Economic Dev)
Matt Lefebvre (Commissioner)	Trevor Davis
Patrick Harding (Commissioner)	Cathy Duncan (Chamber)
Marie Kalita (Commissioner)	Kevin Elak (Health Dept)
Tom Ford (Commissioner)	JR Hargraves
Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)	Cassandra Day (Press)
Patrick Harding (Commissioner)	Maryellen Shuckrow (St. Vins)
	Sara Mendillo (Chamber)

The Annual meeting was called to order by Jen at 8:32 a.m.

BUDGET VOTE:

- Motion: Tom Ford made a motion to accept the proposed budget as presented.
- 2nd made by Mike DiPiro
- All In Favor.

Note: Only property owners are allowed to vote on the budget. The following were cast by proxy or owner:

Trevor Davis, Tom Ford, Cathy Duncan, JR Hargraves, Diane Gervais, Patrick Harding, Mike DiPiro.

- Motion made by Patrick Harding to adjourn the Annual Meeting.
- 2nd made by Tom Ford
- All in favor

Annual Meeting adjourned at 8:36 AM -- Jen called to order the Regular Meeting at 8:36 AM

Election of Officers:

Jen presented the current slate of offices to be re-elected for the next year. They are:

Jan Alexander- Chair

Marc Levin- Vice-Chair

Patrick Harding- Treasurer

Katie Hughes-Nelson- Secretary

- Motion was made by Marie to appoint the slate as presented.
- 2nd made by Mike DiPiro
- All in favor.

CITY PARTNER UPDATES:

Mayor- Not present

Police- Not present

Public Works- Not present

Health-

Kevin Elak reported they are keeping an eye on COVID and watching what happens in the weeks and months to come. The new Omicron variant BA2 is a concern and causing spike in cases in some European countries. Watching closing and staying prepared in the event we need to implement protocols again.

The warming center will close on March 31st and Columbus House is looking to place any individuals that may need housing.

Working on the Greater Middletown Opioid Task Force and bringing resources and providers together to get a better understanding of the issue. There will be a Narcan Training Class to be announced.

Jen asked about the Waste Water Testing for Covid and if we are doing that? Kevin noted he spoke with Joe Samolis regarding that program since he is a board member on the Mattabasset Sewer District.

CDC funding is available, and Kevin would like to participate in the program because waste water can project surges in cases and we do have it in a ½ dozen places in CT now. Kevin would like local data and is pursuing the testing.

Jen stated it would be great to know more locally so that we can prepare is the data goes in that direction.

Economic Development/Parking-

Joe Samolis reported there are major items related to parking. The Parking Advisory Commission met and held discussions on off street parking being needed especially in the north end. 31 Rapallo Avenue is looking to be purchased by the City. The seller is asking \$300k for clean up and land. A surface lot would be placed here.

Congregation Adath Israel has 20 spaces they will be renting again for the Housing Authority.

Meter replacements are 90% complete with the exception of a few side streets.

From the EDC side, the Master Riverfront Project is wrapping up the public input side of things and Cooper Roberson is looking to have a final report on that study in the next several weeks.

80 Harbor Drive property has encountered some issues that need addressing and the City is making certain the property is in the best condition for the businesses that will be occupying the space.

The CDC Waste Water Study is being looked into and they are looking at universities to possibly assist with the study.

Jen asked if the public input was over for the Riverfront. Joe noted they are cutting it off very soon and anyone with ideas can send them along.

COMMUNITY PARTNER UPDATES:

St. Vincent's-

Maryellen reported the dining room is fully opened and they are looking to add outdoor space to help with the congregating that occurs out front. Also working with landlords to help fund staffing for the park across the street.

Amazing Grace has gotten too busy with over 115 visitors in 4 hours. They need to open more and looking for a 3rd day hopefully beginning the first Monday in April.

The new building proposal is going well with the city. Looking to move the current building into the new building and is meeting with the Bishop today to receive approval. That building received a \$240k renovation and so they will look to repurpose it to possible retail space with office above.

Look to the city ARPA Committee for \$1.2 million in funding. Dept. of Housing is providing significant dollars which will pay for a full service elevator, warming center, hygiene facilities, and soup kitchen. There will then be only 1/3 left to raise and they are hoping to not need a capital campaign to wrap up the funding.

There is a 22 month timeline to complete and Winter 2022/2023 would be handled by Columbus House and the new center will be ready by 2023/2024 winter.

In studying Main Street with respect to retail and what is needed, a consignment shop and mental health coffee shop would be a good addition. No zoning issues with the new building and no density issues having the cemetery across the street.

The owner of the lots, Glen Salamone owns QSR Steel and will most likely erect the building. The building will be 10,000 s/f, have 3 floors and a basement and will back into CHC and St. Vins properties.

Met with the Mayor on funding for James and the Outreach Program and reminded him the City committed to funding the next year.

Cleaning crew is cleaning on Wednesday's. If we would like to add an additional day, she will need gift card for funding i

Wesleyan- Absent

Chamber of Commerce-

Cathy Duncan reminded everyone that Jeff has left for a great opportunity at Eversource and introduced his replacement, Sara Mendillo. She will handle Government Affairs and Economic Development.

Cathy announced several upcoming events at the Chamber and gave a reminder for the next CBB meeting on Thursday, April 7, which will be both in person and virtual.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Motion made Patrick to accept February 2022 minutes
- 2nd made by Marie
- All in favor

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Patrick noted there is nothing significant to report, with the exception of the Buds N Blossoms \$17k expense last month. Sandra noted she has formally requested the 2nd half tax payment of approximately \$70K.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Advertising/Promotion- Nothing at this time

Beautification- Jen reported 3 planter bids were received and reviewed by Jen, Katie, and Diane. Winterberry Farm was chosen, and Sandra will work with them to implement their planter program and we are looking forward to nicer and more robust presentations.

Gift Cards – Nothing to report. Sandra thanked Cathy and the Chamber for issuing cards whenever she was unable to.

Special Projects- Jen reported the Outdoor Matching Grant went out and we will be reimbursing businesses for basic outdoor items and décor up to \$500 with proof of payment. Sandra has initially sent it out but will follow up with businesses over the coming weeks. The application is on our website and very easy to fill out!

Jen has set up a meeting with Joe Samolis to see if the Cascade Project the DBD would present would be eligible for ARPA funding based on the guidelines she read. More to come.

DBD Coordinator Report- Sandra reported she will be walking with the Chief and PD reps next Tuesday, March 29th. She will be walking with Rick Romano checking sidewalks.

Sandra will send an email to Chris Holden regarding: Mulch color, garbage pickup, and new receptacles.

925 Report-

Discussion followed on the Bob's Building proposed development.

Adjournment:

- Motion made by Diane to adjourn at 9:37 am
- 2nd by Tom
- Meeting adjourned