

**Middletown Downtown Business District**  
**Wed. March 24, 2021**  
**Annual & Regular Meeting of the Downtown Business District**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees: VIA ZOOM MEETING**

Marie Kalita (Chair)	Sandra Russo-Driska (DBD Coordinator)
Diane Gervais (Commissioner)	Katie Hughes-Nelson (Perk on Main)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)	Roger Beliveau (Parking Dept)
Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)	Maryellen Schukerow (Dir. St. Vincent's)
Jen Alexander (Commissioner)	Cathy Duncan (Chamber)
Tom Ford (Commissioner)	Matt Lefebvre (Middlesex Music)
Patrick Harding (Commissioner)	Trevor Davis (363 Main LLC)
	Kevin Elak (Health Dept)

**PROPERTY OWNERS (ONLY) PRESENT:**

Patrick Harding-Representing 100 Riverview Center  
Cathy Duncan- Representing Chamber Building  
Katie Hughes-Nelson- Representing 344 Main Street  
Mike DiPiro – Representing 505 Main Street  
Tom Ford- Representing 11 parcels of property in the District  
Diane Gervais- Representing 395, 418, 420 Main Street Buildings  
Trevor Davis- Representing 363 Main Street  
Marc Levin- Representing 404 Main Street

**ADOPTION OF 2021-2022 BUDGET (Attached)**

Motion made by Marc to accept the budget as proposed  
2<sup>nd</sup> by Jen  
All in favor

**ELECTION OF COMMISSIONERS /SLATE PRESENTED:**

7 Commissioners, 2 Alternates

Jennifer Alexander- Kidcity  
Marc Levin- Malloves Jewelers  
Tom Ford- Hajjar Development  
Diane Gervais- Amato's Toy and Hobby  
Patrick Harding- Harding Development  
Matt Lefebvre- Middlesex Music Academy  
Katie Hughes-Nelson- Perk on Main  
Mike DiPiro- Guilmartin, DiPiro, Sokolowski (Alternate)  
Marie Kaliita- (Alternate)

Motion made by Marc to accept the slate of candidates.

2<sup>nd</sup> made by Tom Ford.

All in Favor.

Diane commented that she hopes she speaks for the Board in thanking Marie for her hard work as Chair the last 3 years and especially the last year.

Diane also noted that Gary and Maryann are also leaving the Board and thank them. Sandra noted she delivered the thank you gifts.

Motion made by Patrick to adjourn the annual meeting at 8:42 am

2<sup>nd</sup> made by Jen

All in favor.

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The chair called the regular meeting of the DBD to order at 8:42.

Marie noted this would be the final meeting for Gary Nagler and Maryann. She thanked them for being wonderful partners to the DBD. Gary offered his help anytime the DBD may need. Rumor has it Maryann is retiring, and we wish her well!

Clarification made that the terms for all the new commissioners begin effectively after this meeting beginning in April. Commissioner terms are for 2 years, officers will be for 1 year and re-elected.

Motion made by Marc to set mill rate at same amount of 2.18 mills

2<sup>nd</sup> made by Mike

All in favor.

Marie noted Jen and Sandra will forward proper paperwork to the City of the adoption of the budget and mill rate.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Marie noted the slate of officers is as follows:

- Jen Alexander-Chair
- Marc Levin-Vice-Chair
- Patrick Harding- Treasurer
- Katie Hughes-Nelson- Secretary

Motion made by Marc to accept slate of officers

2<sup>nd</sup> by Patrick

All in favor. New officers elected.

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

Maryellen Schukerow, St. Vincent's, Roger Beliveau, Parking Dept. Kevin Elak, Health Dept. Cathy Duncan, Chamber, Capt. Davis, MPD

**PARKING:**

Roger reported not much new to tell about. People beginning to come back to downtown. Fred is leaving the Dept. on April 30<sup>th</sup>. 2<sup>nd</sup> part timer that has left. They won't be hiring anybody until 1<sup>st</sup> of the year.

**CHAMBER:**

Cathy reported on meetings coming up: Legislative Leadership, CBB meeting, Skilled Communicator Workshop, Team Building ZappyHour. Please sign up!

**HEALTH:**

Last week was last clinic in Middletown. In Cromwell today running a clinic. Doing a weekly clinic every Tues. at AME Cross St. Zion. Vaccinating homebound persons at the same time. Offering them J & J. Call Health Dept. for people who cannot leave their homes. Vaccinated 45 people in homes to date. Targeting certain communities. Sbona Towers, etc. Individuals that are not as mobile.

Cases are in a bit of an uptick. Went from orange to red risk level. Will hear more about it in the next few days. Not sure why it is happening. Most likely UK variant which is much more easily spread, and restrictions loosen up. Must strike a balance and not do it too quickly.

Marie aske about clinics for younger age groups. Kevin noted they probably will be looking at that and will partner with CHC and drive through clinic on Vine St. They are increasing their output to 700 per day.

Marc asked how many seniors were vaccinated. Kevin noted at least 4,000 with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> doses. Marc commented how well organized it was run and saluted them.

**POLICE**

Capt. Davis noted an increase in foot traffic and getting busy downtown and walking units presence will increase as well. Looking forward to partnership with St. Vincent's and addressing the panhandling issue.

Sandra noted she and Capt. Davis, Chamber, Tom Murano walking Main Street to visit businesses.

**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 2021**

Motion to approve made by Marc  
2<sup>nd</sup> by Patrick  
All in favor

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mike noted balance is healthy. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of taxes will be in next months report. Under budget on all items with exception to gift card program for good reason.

Motion made to accept the Treasurer's Report by Marc  
2<sup>nd</sup> by Jen  
All in favor

**ST. VINCENT'S/PANHANDLING PROGRAM**

Marie noted that the subcommittee has been meeting and Sandra sent out information on a budget and report from Director Maryellen from St. Vincent's on having an outreach person work with the panhandlers.

Marc noted this was a no-brainer for approval and the presentation was excellent.

Maryellen noted he has identified the outreach-worker, a very impressive man and she believe he is perfect for the position. He will be well respected by those people causing issues. He needs to go through St. Vin's piloting process and attend training. Wants to get this off on the right foot. He will be able to approach individuals and he will have a company cell phone to call who he needs to, and a key to St. Vin's to get items such as food and socks if needed.

She would like to start with 20 hours and certain days of the week and go from there. She will report to us monthly and she is very excited about the program. Cell phone will be handed out so he can be called if needed.

Marie asked about how he will be identified. Maryellen will have him in a uniform.

Jen noted that we will be funding 6 months and the City will hopefully be matching those funds and we can evaluate where we are at that time.

Hours will be Thurs, Fri, Sat. 3-7. Diane asked about if hours will be set and can certainly be adjusted as needed.

Sandra suggested thinking about Fri and Sat nights to be later because diners are out later and she said absolutely no problem.

Marc thanked Maryellen for getting this program done quickly. Maryellen noted this is a pilot and she will be overseeing it herself. He will be introduced to all businesses, so everyone knows about the program. She noted that this person really understands the population. Sandra offered to go with her and Capt. Davis and police for intros.

Maryellen noted that Celeste has a mobile crisis unit and she just received a grant from Dept. of Health so that will be a great resource.

Marc made a recommendation that Maryellen bring the person to the next meeting to meet him.

Motion by Jen to approve funding of \$15,000 for St. Vincent's Outreach Program

2<sup>nd</sup> by Marc

All in favor

**MATCHING GRANTS PROGRAM FOR OUTDOOR IMPROVEMENTS:**

Marie described the program as set forth and researched by Jen for outdoor improvements such as tables, chair, plants, pots, lighting, etc. Cap of \$2,000 matching grant.

Tom asked if we would be reaching out to people that may need it. Sandra offered to do that.

Jen noted we would have a brief application on our website and we would get this all done very quickly and turn around the monies quickly. Jen put a round number of \$20,000 on it and if it works we can always approve more.

Jen suggested we do 5- \$2,000 grants or something like that. She does not want to discourage smaller dollar applicants. Diane worries about approving some and not others.

Jen suggested trying this and if it doesn't work we can take another look. Marc asked about an item like an awning and she said that that would be approved.

Sandra suggested a deadline on the grant. Jen imagined Sandra going to the businesses and helping them fill it out.

Marc recommends Marie, Sandra and Jen for the committee.

Discussion followed on how to proceed with grant applications/deadlines etc.

Motion made by Jen to approve \$20,000, 5 applicants up to \$2,000 matching, deadline of April 21<sup>st</sup>.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Patrick

All in favor.

#### **PLANTERS/BANNERS**

Proposing to add planters to Main St. currently have 42 throughout the downtown. Earth Planters work really well and are on sale right now at \$299 each. We also need potting mix and more plants. Will increase plant cost annual but will make Main St look nicer. New plugs for existing planters.

Marie motioned to approve \$5,000 for new planters

2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom

All in favor

Diane reported that we would like to make downtown look brighter all year long. So banner would be put up in between seasons. Quick pricing showed \$20,000 should cover it.

Marie asked if we have commitment from the City for brackets. Jen reported she is trying to communicate with Chris Holden. CHC had banners up for their anniversary and would have to be anchored top and bottom. Triangular is better but we have a lot of research work to do. More of a May then April project.

Marc mentioned the Pride flags. Cathy from Chamber noted that American flags and Pride flags will both be up at the same time.

Discussion followed on timing of flags flying and when banners can go up.

Jen noted we would like 2 rounds of banners and will do research. Marie noted not to forget the side streets.

Motion to approve \$20,000 for a banner project for DBD

2<sup>nd</sup> by Diane

All in favor.

#### **VIDEO PROJECT**

\$10,000 budget was suggested by Jen and discussion followed on possible videographers and the process and whether the DBD wanted to engage in this project at this time. The item was tabled to investigate a deeper proposal and link to videos from possible perspective videographers.

#### **GIFT CARDS**

Diane note gift cards are selling well and that the Pratt purchased seems to have inspired other businesses to follow!

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn made by Marc at 9:35 a.m.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Marie

All in favor.