Middletown Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes - Annual & Regular Meeting
Wednesday, May 25, 2022
363 Main Street, Suite 404, Middletown, CT

ATTENDEES:
Jen Alexander (Chair) Sandra Russo-Driska (DBD Coordinator)
Diane Gervais (Commissioner) Kevin Elak (Health Dept)
Katie Hughes Nelson (Commissioner) Trevor Davis
Tom Ford (Commissioner) Cathy Duncan (Chamber)
Marie Kalita (Commissioner) Kevin Elak (Health Dept)
Marc Levin (Commissioner) Annemarie Cannata (Buttonwood)
Chief Erik Costa (PD) Dep. Chief Rich David (PD)
Chris Holden (Public Works) Bobbye Peterson (EDC)

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

CITY PARTNER UPDATES:

Mayor - Not present

Police -
Deputy Chief Rich Davis reported that there is some rise in panhandling in the downtown area. A pamphlet and signage is being created with the city describing the should and should nots of panhandling for the public.

Chief Erik Costa reported that they are ready for the Memorial Day Parade and Pride events. Thinking about the families and community of Uvalde Texas. He deployed police to schools both public and private as a preventative measure and to ease parents’ minds. PD is enforcing the 15-minute parking spots to ensure patrons have access.

Discussion followed with Jen on the panhandling signage and working with Bobbye Peterson to develop the flyer. Dep. Chief Davis assured everyone the flyer would be shared for comments and suggestions before distribution.

Public Works -
Chris Holden reported the brown mulch has been installed along Main St. Kim O’Rourke would be meeting with Jen and Sandra to discuss new receptacles on Main Street. ARPA application was discussed for a street scape project that would include all of downtown. Jen requested if they went ahead that it include: planters, garbage can, bike racks, kiosks, benches, etc.
Discussion followed on benches and why we don’t have many, and the history behind them.

**Economic Development/Parking**

Bobbye Peterson reported they are working on ARPA funding with committee.

Working on the creation of the “Give Responsibly” signs. They will be in 8 x 10 size and provided to businesses and agencies for posting.

Working on filling positions in parking. Looking to hire a weekend person to do repairs and monitoring. Posting on the 3p-7p evening position. Looking to get back to pre-Covid staffing.

Gearing up for downtown events. EDC is partnering with event coordinators to be as helpful as possible.

Harbor Drive building is moving along to get online.

Discussion followed on a QR code for “Give Responsibly” signage and how to list agencies to give to, etc.

It was noted the goal of this campaign is to have patrons give money to the agencies that can make a difference for this population and not give directly to the panhandler.

Trevor Davis suggested a palm size card to hand out to people.

Jen mentioned possibly having a place on the downtown webpage that allows for donations.

Chief Costa noted that the signage needs to be a deterrent for panhandling and that it is discouraged so the street population stops asking.

Katie asked about a Venmo code since this has become a popular method of payment.

Marc noted that situations distract people like a mom and kids at a meter. No time to go to a website.

Jen noted the outreach worker James Thomas may be able to assist with this project and education of the public. She also asked about signage at intersections at route 9 entrances in and out of the downtown area.

Marie asked if the parking attendants could act as guides with this project and that we could get them hospitality training to assist visitors to the downtown and the DBD would pay for the training.

More friendly uniforms for the guides were mentioned.
Trevor asked for an update on Summer Sounds planned by Kisha and asked to confirm they were moved to City Hall.

Bobbye confirmed they are now at City Hall and can ask for an update as to why they were moved.

Trevor also noted the dates were moved and wondered why as well as asking for more advertising of the dates.

**Health-**

Kevin Elak noted there is quite a surge in public cases county wide. As community levels surge individuals need to consider masking up in warranted situations and in indoor crowded situations. He expects we should be plateauing, and rates should start to go down. There is no discussion on mandates currently. Asking everyone to just act responsibly.

He announced new federal government home Covid test being made available. Each household will get 8 this time and you go to government website to request.

Kevin discussed an Oxford test group partnering with area agencies for harm reduction and how they can help each other. He noted many OD’s happen in the downtown area. 2 Wesleyan students do a great harm reduction program. He noted seeing a ride in OD’s in Middletown. Some resulted in death. Kevin and the Chief are working on medical dispensary box at the PD as a tool to get unwanted medications out of homes.

**COMMUNITY PARTNER UPDATES:**

**St. Vincent’s-**
Sandra reported that the committee would meet tomorrow at 10 and more information would be available then.

**Wesleyan- Absent**

**Chamber of Commerce-**
Cathy reported Pride is on June 4th at 2pm the march and then 6:30 rally, concert 7-10. Cruise Nigh on Main is Wednesday, June 15th 4-8. Both events have websites to check out.

Breakfast meeting on Tuesday June 21st with last years Travelor’s champion, Harris English.

Career Fair at the Courtyard in Cromwell today from 10:30-1:30. CBB June 2nd is hybrid.
Cathy noted social security office has moved to Main Street extension off Main Street.

Letter from Restaurant Impossible for any location that might want to be on the show.

New flower boxes are being installed at the Chamber thanks to the outdoor grant from the DBD.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- Motion made by Marc to accept April 2022 minutes
- 2nd made by Marie
- All in favor

**TREASURER’S REPORT:**

- Motion made by Marc to accept April 2022 financials
- 2nd made by Diane
- All in favor

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Advertising/Promotion- Nothing to Report on Advertising/Social Media going great. Jen noted Sandra is keeping it looking great.

Beautification- Jen noted we will be discussing garbage cans with Kim O’Rourke as mentioned. More to come. Second day of clean up from St. Vins was added thanks to our donation.

Gift Cards – Jen reported that Sandra and our Wesleyan student did another round of checking for problems at businesses.

Special Projects-

Jen reported that we applied for the ARPA grant for building facades for $500,000. It is a 3 to 1 match and so property owners would pay 25%. It is only for the area of the building facing the street, and included funding for hiring architectural expertise as needed, and for staff administration. It covers church to church, deKoven to Broad and all side streets.

Tom noted he is having the facade at 179 Main done and can we set a date to clarify that it would be covered after a date certain.

Discussion of event and outdoor grant was quickly held. Beeman window project was noted.

Jen reported that in addition to the first 100K for the Storefront Project, we received an additional 100K.
**DBD Coordinator Report**

Sandra asked if we could close the Overdraft account at Liberty and merge into the Money Market account since it served no purpose at this time.

- Motion made by Marie to close the Overdraft account and merge into Money Market
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} made by Marc
- All in favor.

**925 Report**

Trevor reported the Bob's building closed and no work on tax abatement yet.

Jen stated she would be away the month of June, and Marc would be assuming the role for the next meeting.

**Adjournment: (at 9:32)**

- Motion made by Marc
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} by Tom
- All in favor