

Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, ~~September 23, August 26,~~2020
330 Main Street, Middletown, CT. 06457

Attendees: VIA ZOOM MEETING

Marie Kalita (Chair)	Sandra Russo-Driska (DBD Coordinator)
Diane Gervais (Commissioner)	Kevin Elak (Health Department)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)	Capt. Rich Davis (MPD)
Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)	Chris Holden (Public Works)
Jen Alexander (Commissioner)	Cathy Duncan (Chamber)
Mary Ann Perrotti (Commissioner)	Tom Murano (PCD)
Gary Nagler (Commissioner)	Trevor Davis
Tom Ford (Commissioner)	Ann Marie (Button Wood Tree)

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order by Chairwoman Kalita at 8:32 AM.

Police Report –

Capt. Davis reported that he hoped we noticed an increased police presence and improvement with aggressive panhandling. He noted he worked a few Friday evening's himself and that his patrolmen were speaking with certain individuals that needed to understand the actions police would now take if behavior did not change.

Diane commented that mornings were an issue especially with one regular individual on a bike. Capt. Davis stated he would make sure his patrolmen knew to address this in the morning and to watch out for this activity. Sandra noted that during the meeting with the Mayor the Chief commented that he was stretched thin with patrol and so the Mayor offered to have extra officers on Thurs-Sat evenings to help with the outdoor dining. Hopefully if this is shown to work, more funding can be approved for other shifts.

Planning Report -

Tom Murano reported that there is still funding available for \$10,000 CDBG grant loans to small businesses. Sandra will work with him to get this information to businesses. He noted he will be meeting with the CT Restaurant Assoc. to discuss options for extending outdoor dining this Fall.

Parking Report – Roger was not able to attend meeting.

Public Works –

Chris Holden reported that the sidewalk project in the south end in front of DaVita is complete. (Gary asked that holes left in front of The Inn be filled) . He also remarked on the intersection issues with Mohawk and is working with the Chamber and Sandra and Jeff at the Chamber met with Mohawk and DOT to address the issues and it has improved. Sidewalks are getting addressed. Sandra and Rick Romano will do monthly

inspections down Main St to keep on areas that need repair or replacement. Tree project is waiting on report from Jane Harris.

Graffiti was discussed. Sandra had already informed Public Works of graffiti on garbage and recycle containers. Sandra will walk Main Street for additional issue, if commissioners see issues, Marie asked to report them to Sandra for a master list of items.

Health Department -

Kevin reported no major issues. Masks are largest problem especially with businesses and restaurants. He noted Sandra met with him and we discussed the regulations (Sandra emailed a list out to all restaurants and will follow up with small hand out).

He stated Wesleyan is doing an exceptional job in controlling COVID. Quarantine is over and students able to downtown using proper precautions. Students seem to be following guidelines very well.

Jen asked about positivity rates. Kevin reported Middlesex County is less and 1%. The state has overall risen to above 1%, which is being closely monitored but was expected given educational facilities opening.

Middletown has had a few clusters, none are business related, and contact tracing is being done and individuals have been very cooperative.

Chamber of Commerce –

Cathy reported she disseminated flu clinic and the City's new See,Fix,Click initiative. People are excited to have a resource to report issues like potholes, graffiti, blight, etc and stay knowledgeable. She gave information on 2 women's collaborative leadership events next week. She also updated on upcoming events including virtual breakfast meeting and speakers including the December meeting featuring Gov. Ned Lamont date TBD. (Note: Information and details on all events are available on Chamber website)

Minutes

Marie noted to change March to Marc under commissioner reports.

- Motion by Marc to approve minutes as amended.
- 2nd to motion by Mary Ann
- Minutes accepted.

Treasurer's Report

- Motion made by Marc to approve report.
- 2nd to motion made by Jen
- Treasurer's report accepted.

Commissioners Reports

Jen-

Updated on website. She and Sandra have spent time working on items and the designer will be making changes as well. She noted that she felt social media was going great and was happy with the focus and that Instagram is now connected to Facebook and that we should advertise our social media sites.

She suggested we reach out to Clifton Watson at the Jewett Center at Wesleyan and Michael Kingsley at the Patricelli Center at Wesleyan for assistance with reaching students with our social media.

Diane suggested the use of FB Messenger-especially with restaurants

Diane-

Reported that everything is going ok. DBD cards are selling fairly well, not crazy but pretty steady. She reported that she needed to purchase a small receipt printer and will send in receipt for reimbursement.

Marie

The chair broke from reports to be able to cover the rent and committee issues.

Committees:

Marc asked that everyone begin thinking about the March election.

Maire will email all commissioners the committees list and asks that everyone take a look and note any ideas, changes or revisions they would like given Sandra's new role and responsibilities. It was also discussed to bring on non-commissioners as committee members to then possible run for the board.

Discussions will take place over email regarding committees and ideas for recruiting new individuals.

Rent:

Marie referred to the email sent to all commissioners stating that Steve requested a one- year lease and increase from \$550 to \$1,150.

After discussion, it was concluded that there are options to move the office.

1. Tom Ford has suite space.
2. Trevor Davis has offices for \$400-\$600 per month with option to use a conference room
3. Sandra will check with Patrick Harding on options
4. Gary offered space at the Inn if needed for any reason.

Mike suggested that Sandra should set appointments to look at the spaces and options and report back as to which would work best. Commissioners concurred and Marie asked for information to be gathered by next week and shared via email.

Marc-

Marketing is working on 3rd ad for CT Magazine. This will focus on retailers. Working on layout to get as many in as possible. Hoping for minimum of 9 and up to 15. Sandra asked to include our social media tags in the ad.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Ann Marie from Button Wood Tree noted a drum concert at Harbor Park tomorrow evening and hoped this was a precursor to streaming concerts. Sandra asked her to send any info on events so they could be posted on social media.

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by Jen
- 2nd by Tom
- Meeting adjourned at 9:35 AM ~~Adjourn approve~~