

Middletown Downtown Business District

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 27, 2021

363 Main Street, Suite 404, Middletown, CT

Attendees

Jen Alexander (Chair)

Diane Gervais (Commissioner)

Marie Kalita (Commissioner)

Marc Levin (Commissioner)

Patrick Harding (Commissioner)

Tom Ford (Commissioner)

Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)

Patrick Harding (Commissioner)

Cassandra Day (Press)

Kevin Elak (Health Dept)

Jeff Pugliese (Chamber)

Mike DeSena (PD)

Trevor Davis (363 Main LLC)

Cathy Duncan (Chamber)

AnnMarie Cannata (Buttonwood)

Sandra Russo-Driska (DBD Coordinator)

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

CITY PARTNER UPDATES:

Mayor-Absent

Police-

Mike DeSena reported not too much is new. 6 new officers started. 4 are in field and 2 at the academy. Kevin White will be retiring this Friday. Panhandling seems down on Main St however it has moved to the outskirts of town at the highway entrances. He noted he felt James and the PD working together has made a difference with the panhandling, however. He announced a road race on Sunday and said there would be street closures. After the road race, Halloween will be the on their radar patrolling while kids are out. Jen asked about the off ramp at Rte 17 by the hospital and the panhandlers there. Mike said he would make sure they were out of that area.

Public Works- Absent

Economic Development/Parking-Absent

Jen reported there was a Parking meeting and discussion took place on removing meters on Main Street and metered lots go to kiosks. The members spoke against this move and the Mayor is reconsidering from what she understands. There will be a change in the parking enforcement time. It was 8a-8p, it will now be 8a-4p.

Kevin Elak reported that they are meeting the next day with City Hall regarding the tents down at Harbor Park and coming up with a plan on how to assist the people living there in finding a place to stay especially with winter approaching. He stated the area is also dangerous with the embankment, but they were trying not to just kick them out without a contingency plan. James is also working to help move people. The warming center will be opening soon, and Columbus House will also be used. The model would be to use the housing as emergency shelter and move people along into Eddy Shelter and permanent locations. Covid is now focused on boosters and available for anyone who has had full vaccine doses. The Chamber is running a flu clinic on November 9 from 10-2. Will also have Covid shots.

Jen asked Kevin to follow up with the City on the garbage piling up downtown and our request to the Mayor and Public Works to have Saturday pick ups and not allow the piling up.

COMMUNITY PARTNER UPDATES:**St. Vincent's-**

Sandra reported update on last meeting noting that the City approved the funding for the outreach program through June 30th. Committee discussed James' interaction with the businesses and PD has found his service very helpful. Sandra offered to continue having the meetings even though the City would now be funding the program, and all agreed to continue as is.

Chamber of Commerce –

Jeff Puglise said he appreciated the parking update and will put it on the CBB agenda for 11/4. He noted the needs of the membership at the Chamber have changed. Most are now in recovery mode or in positive transitions. The Chamber is starting to return to in person meetings. CBB will be virtual this winter all other divisions will be in person. The member breakfast will return to in person this December with the governor. ARPA is working with River Cog on how to disseminate the funding and assist with grants and loans. The Arrigoni Bridge project is back to 2 lanes in each direction and should be wrapped up by Spring. Holiday on Main is in full planning mode and the tree lighting will be in person. MEWS is doing really great work promoting ideas of individual and moving those ideas forward.

Jen mentioned the Innovative Corridor Grant and Community Challenges Grant that are going to be available and asked for a meeting. Jeff said he would set the meeting up.

Wesleyan- N/A**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- Motion made Marc to accept October 2021 minutes
- 2nd made by Diane
- All in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Advertising/Promotion-

Jen reported 3 photographers have taken photos of busy sidewalks for use going forward in our promotional content.

Tom Ford was thanked for sending his crew to wash window at Irreplaceable Artifacts.

She also noted the influencer project did not appear to be moving in the direction we hoped so it was being tabled for now.

Beautification- Jen mentioned the sidewalks needing cleaning. She asked Tom Ford and crew to consider the project and send us a quote.

Gift Cards – Diane noted the gift card company was staying the same and they agreed the lower price point on the cards for our new order.

Special Projects- Nothing to report.

DBD Coordinator Report-

Sandra noted that 3 businesses have ribbon cutting ceremonies: Chi Lash, Clean Heart Juice Bar, and Mood Studio.

925 Report-

Trevor mentioned he met with Domenick Dimartino, Bill Vassiliou, JR Hargraves, and Mike Stone. They discussed what Middletown needs. The main item that came out of it was St. Vincent's needed to be moved off Main Street. He would like to get an agreement from the DBD, Chamber and City to partner and agree on moving it and get Maryellen on board. Discussion followed.

Jen noted we could place on agenda for next meeting.

Ann Marie asked if the city would enforce the new law to not smoke closer than 25 feet from the door of a business. It would help if they did because then the clients at St. Vincent's would not be able to hang out there.

She noted someone defecated on the mat at Buttonwood and this is a problem because they are allowed to hang out and smoke. She suggested a penalty could be to have to work it off rather than a fine they can't pay.

Discussion followed.

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Tom Ford announced a new tenant going in. Classic Africa, African Safari in Plaza Middlesex.

Adjournment:

- Motion made by Marc to adjourn at 9:27 am
- 2nd by Marie
- Meeting adjourned