

**Summit Downtown, Inc.**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**December 7, 2022, 8:00AM**  
**In-Person/Zoom Meeting**

**Members Present:** Bob Conway, Kimberly Hamilton, Councilman Greg Vartan, Karen Schneider, Mayor Nora Radest, Antonietta LaVecchia, Tony Melchionna, Leslie Herman, Claire Toth, David Bernat, Councilwoman Lisa Allen, Ray Merritt. Staff: Nancy Adams and Amanda Lynn

**Members Absent:** Michael Rogers, Lauren Decker

Chair Bob Conway called the meeting to order at 8:05am.

**Approval of Minutes – Bob Conway**

October minutes were presented for approval. The approval of the minutes was moved by Ray and seconded by Tony and unanimously approved.

**Financials – Claire Toth**

Claire reported that we haven't got our last assessment check in, but we are on target even though we look a little thin right now. 990s are not ready yet but will be soon; it's essentially finished but she just needs to review it. Waiting for some comments on the budget, but it's okay because the city doesn't approve it until mid-year anyway. She said we have become a much more professional organization thanks to the staff, and we thank them for their work. Approval of financials was moved by Ray and seconded by Tony, unanimously approved.

**Board Elections – Bob Conway**

Bob reported that Karen Schneider, Claire Toth and David Bernat were all reelected to the Board for another 3-year term and Beth Welsh was elected to fill Kimberly Hamilton's seat, this is Kim's last meeting and Bob thanked her for her participation on the Board.

**Orange Bollards and Barricades Downtown – Bob**

Bob reported that many of these have been taken down. Marjorie Fox reported that they are going to be doing more enforcement because the city has been getting many complaints about how ugly they all look and Tony added the best way to deal with the safety issues and illegal parking is to have enforcement, not lots of bollards.

**Board Meeting Dates for 2023 – Bob**

Bob reported that the meeting dates for next year are again the last Wednesday of the month except for July/August meeting and the November/December meeting which will be one combined meeting each. Tony asked if this is the first time, we've combined November and December, Bob explained that because of the holidays and the League of Municipalities, it's difficult to have two Board meetings for each month; this works out better for business members and elected officials. The calendar for 2023 was unanimously approved by the Board, Nancy will submit to the city.

**Maple Street Presentation – Bob**

Bob reported that Nancy and the hired consultants presented at the Common Council meeting and we're not going to discuss it again at this meeting, but members can watch the meeting which went until after midnight. Council will opine on the issue in the new year.

**Event Updates – Amanda**

Amanda reported that the holiday season events are underway and there's a nonstop line at the horse & carriage rides and the downtown has been busy so far during the events. The weekend of Dec 17<sup>th</sup> is the really big holiday weekend with the horse and carriage rides, ice carver in the promenade, music throughout downtown and the end of the Scavenger Elf event; we've had a great response to the scavenger hunt and horse & carriage rides in particular. We'll start making event and holiday plans for next year soon. Amanda noted that we had to change the stuffed elf this year because the old one was discontinued so we found this one; Nancy noted that Amanda had to redo all the graphic design with the new elf and in fact December is a heavy month for graphic design between the increase in advertising to promote downtown during the holidays and the elf brochure, etc. We advertised in

print in The Collection, Summit Times and the Ticket section of the Star-Ledger along with digital on TapInto, Village Green and of course social media.

## **COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS**

### **DCS/SDI Updates – Tony, Nancy**

Tony reported that the sewers are running okay still. The bike shelter is still not here but coming in spring hopefully. Lisa Allen commented about her concerns with litter and garbage downtown. The city cleans up every Mon & Fri downtown. Tony reported that the city has increased enforcement downtown for illegal and double parking so we're able to get rid of some of the ugly bollards. Parklets are down and Maple St is open. PSEG is going to ripping up the streets downtown @ March 3, 2023. There was a little discussion on crime increases regarding car thefts, but 99% of them are people leaving the key fobs in the cars. DPW will restripe the loading zones and the no parking areas in the spring. Furniture in Lyric Park and promenade will be removed soon, before the first snow. Tony had an idea to move some handicap spots on the south side (train station) of Union Place to allow for room for a loading zone, it may help with lots of the illegal parking by trucks delivering, etc. Aaron Schragger will look at it to see if that would work. Aaron reported that the lights stringing between the trees lining the sidewalks downtown are beginning to need to be adjusted for growth of trees, Nancy will meet with the arborist to assess. Tony thinks they look fantastic, but maybe it's time to remove them? The board disagreed and wanted the lights to stay up year-round.

### **Design Committee Updates – Claire**

None.

**Summit Public Arts – Leslie** wants to try to do a 3-D mural somewhere downtown and coordinate with the SPA and SDI; she included some examples (attached) and looking at 10' high, 15' wide, 20-25' long. Looking at locations downtown like the Strand, but it doesn't have vertical space but maybe on the floor, another place was her building on Summit Ave, the brick building next to the senior center; wants ideas from Board members to suggest.

**Common Council Updates – Greg** gave updates on parking ordinances that were voted on at last night's meeting: Broad St by Salerno Duane along the right side westbound there will be 17 employee parking spaces along there. Union Place north side along where the stores are parking spaces are being changed to 30-minute spaces all along Union Place from Summit Ave to Maple. 15-minute spaces are being added downtown, most along Springfield Ave. Tony expressed his support for the shorter time spaces for turnover and to push people into the longer-term parking lots. The parklet ordinance was introduced at last night's meeting which removes all parklets from being permitted on Union Place, allows them for other streets except Summit Ave (county road) and will charge \$2,500 per parking space with a maximum of two spaces in front of the restaurant, from May 15 – October 15<sup>th</sup>. Nora asked what justifies the fee not being prorated for the 5 months it's used instead of charging a full year's expected spot revenue. Greg responded that it was for staff review time and such, Nancy said that there's also an application fee to cover staff, Greg stated there was also liquor fees for licensed restaurants. Amanda asked about the parklet by Tito's and Batavia, Greg responded that this would remain because it's a public parklet that is not restricted and both restaurants invested in the beginning of that parklet into its construction; it also existed before the pandemic. Tony asked what's to stop a business from using parking spaces for selling wares, Greg responded it's only permitted for food establishments. Tony expressed that he doesn't like using parking spaces for outdoor tables, he thinks the parking space is more valuable and most people don't like it. Ray disagreed and said as the resident SDI rep that he's heard from many, many residents that the outdoor parklets and areas for outdoor seating is wildly popular with residents. Discussion ensued with Ray pointing out that the majority of people in town who are happy with something like parklets, will not turn out to council meetings on a rainy Tuesday night to say so, only the small and vocal opposition will turn out. Antonietta pointed out that the parklets on Union Place were great for the restaurants but not for the quick in-and-out businesses like hers; she supports the parklets but thinks there should be balance and the city should charge. Nora commented that originally the parklets were for the restaurants, but it was also for the people who wanted to go out but were still not comfortable going inside; she also stated that as long as she's lived here, she has noticed a dramatic difference of people who are visiting our downtown are not the same people as they were 30 years ago, the city needs to understand that the demographic living here and coming into town is much younger than it used to be. Karen mentioned that the DeForest lots are not full, so there's room for parklets. David pointed out that looking at the nationals opening here and realize that parking is less important than it used to be; if you don't think Madison Reed did their due diligence in research before deciding to open here, you're wrong. The fact that businesses are coming into town and thriving is important to recognize. Tony pointed out that the majority of downtown is mom-and-pop stores. Greg noted that practically speaking, there could be maybe 3 restaurants that can use parklets. More discussion ensued; Bob supported no parklets on Union Place but thinks the \$5000 is going to end up being no parklets.

**New Business – None.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20am.

**The next BOT meeting is at 8AM January 25th, at City Hall.**

Possible sites for 3D mural:

