

**Summit Downtown, Inc.**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**February 22, 2023, 8:00AM**  
**In-Person/Zoom Meeting**

**Members Present:** Bob Conway and Beth Welsh on Zoom, Greg Vartan, Karen Schneider, Mayor Nora Radest, Antonietta LaVecchia, Tony Melchionna, Lisa Allen, Claire Toth, David Bernat, Ray Merritt. Staff: Nancy Adams and Amanda Lynn

**Members Absent:** Leslie Herman, Lauren Decker, Michael Rogers.

**Members of the Public:** Delia Hamlet

Vice Chair Karen Schneider called the meeting to order at 8:05am.

**Approval of Minutes** – Karen Schneider

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

**Financials** – Claire Toth

Claire presented the December/year end financials for approval. For the year, the financials show we ran a deficit but that is because money was spent for items for which we received a grant, but hadn't received grant reimbursement as yet in 2022; had we received the grant money we would've run a surplus. The Board was not sent the December financials for today's meeting because they were sent for the December meeting, so those financials will be re-sent and voted on by email by the Board. Claire went over the January financial report which, aside from some advertising expenses, was basic operating expenses for administration. January financials were moved by Ray and seconded by David, all approved. Tony made a statement for the record that he felt the money spent on the traffic report and Maple St study was a waste of money. (These projects' expenses will be reimbursed by the grant.)

Claire reviewed the proposed budget which includes a 2% assessment increase. She noted that years ago the practice was not to raise the assessment at all, then when it was needed a big assessment jump would have to be done so for the last several years, a 1% assessment increase was built into the budget instead. Also, there was no assessment increase at all for the last 3 years during Covid, so raising it 2% would get us back toward regular procedure. Tony objected to the 2% increase as did Beth and Karen. Claire will look at the budget again and look at making adjustments to bring back to the board for a vote in March.

**2023 Committees** – Karen

Karen reported that the committee assignments were passed out and those members who had not alerted Nancy to their desired committees were put on the same one(s) as last year. Tony asked to be moved off Design & Beautification and onto Budget Committee instead. He then asked if, since there were non-Board member volunteers on some committees, could he volunteer as a non-Board member for the Farmers Market Committee; the Board disagreed because he is in fact on the Board.

**Event Updates** – Amanda

Amanda reported that "I Love Summit" is running now for the month of February and has been very well-received. It features the faces of the businesses in downtown in a social media campaign, created to drive engagement to our social platforms and website. This also helps to remind customers of stores and the wonderful services Summit has to offer. The HillTop Bunny promotion is coming too, starting March 27<sup>th</sup>; it is another virtual event and will feature a hidden stuffed bunny throughout downtown for consumers to "find". The bunny is posted on our social media channels with customers submitting their guesses for a chance to win a large Easter basket with gifts and a \$250 Summit VISA gift card, again drawing customers downtown. Design Day is being reimagined as Design Week to take place April 21-28 during which design businesses will be spotlighted for in-store events and specials. Amanda reported we've been booking acts for Family Fun Night (FFN), which is Thursday June 8<sup>th</sup> from 4-8pm. During the budget discussion, it was reported by Claire that Council discussed SDI paying the city for lost parking revenue for events like FFN. Nora and Greg stated that it was discussed but not all Council members weighed in and there was no decision; they are asking for data from Parking Services. David reported that not just for parking but for sponsorship, he will help SDI staff reach out to some larger corporations (like Atlantic Health and BMS) to sponsor events to help augment costs like parking and other expenses for events like police and DPW. Bob said that FFN is really an event for the community more than anything and brings a lot of people downtown. Greg noted that even though he's not the prime target audience, he has attended and then gone to dinner like many of the attendees do that evening. Beth noted that it's ridiculous for the city to charge SDI for lost parking revenue for one afternoon

(noon- 6, event runs till 8pm but there's no charge for parking anyway after 6) and since this event serves their community maybe the city should take it over and move it to the Green; Nancy noted the budget for FFN is over \$15,000. Tony suggested the event be moved to a Sunday. Nancy said it was created to replace Girls Night Out and to bring people downtown during the week and a lot of businesses benefit from the families coming downtown; partners like The Connection, The YMCA and the Library provide a lot of kids' activities too and are able to promote themselves to the community.

## **COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS**

### **DCS/SDI Updates – Tony**

Tony stated that he, Nancy, Mike Caputo, Aaron Schrager, Lisa Allen meet once a month ahead of the board meeting. Tony reported that the sewers are running okay still. Mondays & Fridays downtown is blown and swept, there is a walking crew that cleans up around town. Discussion about the Edison lights on the trees, the current servicing vendor is not returning. Nancy said she met with Aaron to evaluate and create a plan to inspect and service the lights; they will pay the city to adjust the lights instead of an outside contractor. Lisa Allen brought up that she'd like SDI to use some Design & Beautification money for planting flowers in the tree wells. Extended discussion ensued (actually during the financial report but for the minutes we're reflecting it here) with Ray adding that there are about 160 tree wells, so the thought is to keep what's healthy and fine and plant supplemental flowers in those wells maybe twice a year. Nora asked Lisa who would be doing all this planting; Lisa is looking to engage community groups and kids to work on this. Karen mentioned that last year \$8,500 was spent on supplemental planting of perennials in about 60 tree wells and Bob added that some was done the year before and that it's always a work in progress. Lisa, Ray and David will work on this more going forward with Nancy and with Aaron Schrager's department as well as the landscape company SDI is already working with.

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

No report.

### **Summit Public Arts – No report.**

### **Common Council Updates – Greg**

Council is working on the timeline for a decision on whether or not to close Maple St to vehicles again this year awaiting memos from public safety, looking at a legal path with the state, and determining a fee structure that will likely be similar to the outdoor café fee structure. Council is focusing on a difficult budget year and trying to keep the tax increase below 2% but it will likely meet the state maximum.

### **New Business – None.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03am.

**The next BOT meeting is at 8AM March 22, at City Hall.**