

Summit Downtown, Inc.
Board of Trustees Meeting
February 23, 2022, 8:00AM
Virtual Meeting

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

Members Absent: Michael Rogers, Lauren Decker (excused)

Bob Conway called the meeting to order at 8:03am.

Approval of Minutes – Bob Conway

January minutes were presented for approval. The approval of the January minutes was moved by Ray Merritt and seconded by Karen Schneider, and unanimously approved.

Financials – Claire Toth

Numbers look like a typical January with a check deposited from VACNJ for Arts + Cars 2021, which shows up as Other Expenses under Arts + Cars. But everything else is fine, too early to get Farmers Market fees yet and SID assessment won't get sent to us until Council approves our budget. Karen moved the approval of the financials, Greg seconded, all approved.

Claire explained the situation with the audit forthcoming. Last month, the Governor signed a law that nonprofits with gross receipts of less than a million do not need to be audited, but that does not apply to nonprofits that receive public funding. So, our auditor dropped us along with other small nonprofits, so we need a new auditor. Nora suggested MSNJ might have some recommendations for auditors; Nancy will reach out to MSNJ.

Bylaws – Bob Conway

Bob explained that the Executive Committee is going to be taking a look at the Bylaws. They were last revised in 2016 and that was only to shrink the size of the board and reallocate seats between property and business owners and change the term from 4 years to 3 years. Some of the current committees in the Bylaws are outdated and we may need to update those and we'll look at other things. Ray is chair of the committee as the secretary, Karen is serving as our lawyer.

COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS

Event Updates – Amanda Lynn

Amanda explained that there are some good things coming up for the spring. First is HillTop Bunny Hunt where we put the bunny in various businesses and share pictures on social media for people to guess where they are and win a Summit VISA Gift Card for \$500. A fun interactive event for April. We also have Street Sounds coming up and Amanda put out a press release seeking new talent, so if anyone has anyone they think would be good they should send them our way; we're looking for 1 – 4/5 person group. Street Sounds will be Thursday and Friday nights in June & July and then again for Friday nights in September and October. Amanda is also booking entertainment for Family Fun Night, which is June 11th. Family Night In in February wasn't as successful as last year so we think it had something to do with coinciding with Super Bowl weekend and also people are in a different mindset where they want to go out now rather than stay in as last year. So we'll reevaluate it and see if we can change it up for next year.

Main Street NJ Transformation Grant Application – Bob Conway

Nancy reported that we applied for this grant through MSNJ, which is up to \$75k that has to be used up within 9 months. She applied for it to help pay for soft costs associated with possibly making Maple St a pedestrian way, also for the Promenade public art contribution and for the mural on Union Place. It was a total of about \$46,000 but they haven't heard back on that yet.

Great Places in NJ award – In December, Nancy applied for recognition for Downtown Summit as a Great Downtown from Great Places in NJ from the American Planning Association; we were notified we won the recognition. Nora thanked the staff and board for making the downtown so great and that the residents truly appreciate it. Nancy will work with Amy Cairns to do a press release and photo once she receives the award. Claire said it was a quick timeline that Nancy turned around pretty quickly to apply and hopefully we'll get that to augment our budget.

Nancy also mentioned wanting to do a photo op with Board members and Council members for the NJAPA award plaque to go out with a press release. Nora said Amy will send out a Doodle poll and we'll take the photo downtown for the award we received for Greatest Places in NJ 2021 – Downtowns.

DCS/SDI Updates – Tony, Nancy and Lisa are meeting next Monday with DCS for the monthly meeting. They meet the last Monday of the month, which normally is right before our Board meeting, but this month it's after, so no report.

Design Committee Updates – Nancy reported that she has sent a few façade grant applications for a couple existing businesses and one that moved to a new location. She also gave the application to a couple of new businesses forthcoming so she expects some to come in in the coming weeks/months.

A conversation about new businesses coming in or existing businesses moving around. Nancy said she thinks Calico Corners is going into the old Co-Co space, The Co-Co moved upstairs of Mondo on Springfield Ave. The Beautylounge is staying where she is but renaming the business My Love Story, The Collective moved to 101 Summit Ave. Christian Science Reading Room is moving outside the downtown into a church building, a new retailer is going into their old space next to Gregory's Coffee.

Summit Public Arts – Leslie reported that they're looking for some new people on Summit Public Art Board and asked if anyone knows anyone to let her know. She mentioned that SPA wants to coordinate a public art tour with the Street Sounds live music or something. Amanda will work with SPA to see if there's a way to coordinate with SPA's docent and help promote as an art & music walk combination. Leslie will work with Amanda. Tony suggested having the end of Maple St when it's closed for some artists to come and sell their wares; Amanda and Leslie will think about that too.

Common Council Updates – Greg reported that they approved the Maple St closure again this year from March 15 – Nov 30, regardless when it actually begins the closure, so it can start when weather permits. Council also unanimously approved letter of intent with Broad St West redevelopers which allows them to share details of the agreement. Basic facts he reiterated about the redevelopment project is that we need a new firehouse, we have an obligation to build affordable housing and we have to create a larger tax base. So, subdistrict #3 of the Broad St West project is all that's covered in this letter of intent and allows them to come out to the public to talk about the project, parking, financing and traffic. Nora added their doing the LOI to be able to share as much as possible with the public. She also added that the city has a substantial amount of old capital project debt service coming due and there is a need to up the revenue as much as possible. The revenue from the Overlook Hospital settlement that is going down by \$300k starting 2024, so working hard to cut the budget to minimize the tax levy while needing that increase in revenue needed. Lack of revenue now from parking and hotel tax revenue and less from the State. Greg added that parking contributes \$800k of revenue annually typically and obviously that was severely depleted the last couple years of pandemic. City committed \$1.4 million to Habitat for Humanity which built 12 houses; Broad St redevelopment project will produce 140 residential units, 21 of which are affordable; the city is working really hard to fulfill their affordable housing requirement and they're getting there. Greg mentioned that there are starting to have a conversation for 2023 the issue of businesses using public space and parking spaces for parklets/streeteries; they recognize that this is helpful to the businesses during the continuing pandemic but in 2023 they will need to charge for the loss of parking revenue by using parking spaces.

New Business – Nancy reported that the office hired a new part-time Marketing Admin who replaced Jane who had to leave because of Visa issues. The position is about 15 hours/week and the new person is Jennifer Rabulen-Bertram and she started last week and will be responsible for social media posts and customer newsletter plus assistance with events.

Bob reported we will meet in person at City Hall next month with a Zoom component too.

Public Input: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38am.

The next BOT meeting is at 8AM March 30, at City Hall.