

Summit Downtown, Inc.
Board of Trustees Meeting
March 26, 2025, 8:00AM
In-Person/Zoom Meeting

Members Present: Karen Schneider, Claire Toth, Bill Robb, Ray Merritt, Antonietta LaVecchia, Mayor Elizabeth Fagan, Beth Welsh, Kristen Scalia, Delia Hamlet, David Bernat, Peter Llyod. Staff: Amanda Lynn, Nancy Adams

Members Absent: Tammie Baldwin, Annette Dwyer, Leslie Herman

Members of the Public: Bob Pawlowski, Nanette Kryston

David Bernat called the meeting to order at 8:06am. He asked for approval of the minutes, Ray moved approval, Bill seconded, all in favor.

COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS

Financials – Bill Robb

He reported that we are making a transition to QuickBooks online from desktop. He stated that we have been working with the accountant to get all the accounts properly recorded. He stated account balances and said we are in a strong financial position. Beth asked questions about the process of payments and Amanda clarified the online system versus online payments.

Event Updates – Amanda

Amanda reported that Spring Fling is coming up April 4-6. There are 45 businesses participating and the passport is ready to go. The passport is a new digital platform to help track event participation and gather data. Performance invitations for Street Sounds have been sent. Family Fun Night is in progress with new additions. Karen Schneider commented that her and Brownie Points would be sponsors again. Amanda noted how important the sponsors are to the success of the event.

Marketing Committee Update – David

The marketing plan was distributed via email and it lays out what is currently being done and some new additions. There is a separate plan for business engagement. He spoke of the stakeholders event which had over 50 people in attendance. He noted how it helped make new connections and create collaborations with other businesses. He was very happy with the event and looks forward to making enhancements for the next one. Beth stated she thought it was a great success and brought the business community. The next one maybe June 4 at The Elks club.

DCS/SDI Updates – Nancy

There was a meeting with Aaron and Mike Caputo.

- Discussion about tree wells. Wickets will all be removed and plantings will be made to help people notice the curbing. As trees die there will be decisions made about grating and how the new tree well is handled. Not all tree wells need to be the same.
- Discussion about trash and recycling schedules and issues
- Working on a more concise plan for solutions and enforcement of trash and recycling issues. Mayor Fagan noted that DPW had been out cleaning up more.
- Use of the market lights and improvements needed
- Claire noted that there will be an Earth Day cleanup and some of it will be downtown.

Summit Public Arts – Leslie is absent so there is currently no report

Common Council Updates – Delia noted that there was a public meeting for the planning board to update the master plan. She stated she had some wanted to work on wayfinding and seeking out grants. Bill asked how often the master plan is updated, Elizabeth noted around 10-15 years. Elizabeth said the bushes installed looked good in Lot #1. Karen suggested they be trimmed. Beth asked about the paint on the traffic light sign, it was completed by DPW.

Public Comment – Bob Pawlowski spoke about the perennial flowers in the tree wells, he asked about the roses being used. Nancy stated they had been there in the past, but no new ones were included in the plant selection. Beth noted the roses had been in town a long time and that each tree well was not the same ecology for plantings. Extended discussion about the care of roses. Bob revisited his question about removal of the tree curbing. Delia stated that the curbs could not be taken out at this time. As tress need to be removed each one will be analyzed for the best plan for replacement. Extended discussion about the types of solutions for the curbs including grating. Beth stated the reasoning behind the design of the tree wells and the health of the trees. Further discussion about garbage issues, Nancy said we are working with the city to identify possible locations for new trash bins. Nancy also spoke of increased communication about the rules and regulations for the business, the city is also working on the same initiative.

Bob then brought up questions about our change in insurance. Nancy relayed that last year after some extended issues with insurance requirements Michael Rodgers suggested we obtain our own insurance. We will be providing the city with documentation on the insurance for events. He asked if we will still be requiring COIs for all event participants. Bob suggested that we get indemnification clauses. He said that COIs could possibly not be accurate. He further elaborated on this issue. Nancy noted that we were requiring all the same insurance as previously required by the city. A separate issue is the removal of SDI from the GIF. Mayor Fagan asked why there was a change and more cost. Nancy stated the issues that we had with the city and their requirements. Nanette Kryston suggested that all insurance carriers should be called to verify coverage. Bob again noted additional endorsements that should be required. David suggested an internal insurance audit; Nancy noted the labor involved in gathering all of this information.

New Business – David stated that Antoinetta was going on to the marketing committee and Peter was going off. Antoinetta then brought up some suggestions to increase foot traffic with influencer marketing. Amanda noted that we would be using NJHipSturbia for Spring Fling marketing. Amanda elaborated that there was not a specific hyper local person available for this type of marketing, but she would continue to research other options. Antoinetta then suggested focus groups with local realtors on how to best reach the new audience in Summit. She also suggested realtors purchasing gift cards at a discount. David stated we should discuss all these ideas in the marketing committee meetings. He also noted that if we needed a new person to help execute the new ideas and initiatives, we could explore that with the committee and the board. Kristen noted that News 12 was in town last week.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10am.

The next BOT meeting is at 8AM April 30, 2025, at City Hall.