

**Summit Downtown, Inc.**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**May 26, 2021 8:00AM**  
**Virtual Meeting with Video and Audio**

**Members Present:** Matthew Strauss, Leslie Herman, Nora Radest, Karen Schneider, Bob Conway, Greg Vartan, Antonietta LaVecchia, Ray Merritt, , Lauren Decker. Staff: Nancy Adams and Amanda Lynn

**Members Absent:** Michael Rogers, Allison Daubel, Kim Hamilton, Claire Toth, David Naidu

**Members of Public:** Solstreet representatives Lisa Smith and Larry Hirsch; Tony Melchionna

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Bob Conway

Minutes were presented for approval. The April minutes were moved by Ray and seconded by Karen and unanimously approved.

**COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS**

**Solstreet Presentation** – Lisa Smith & Larry Hirsch presented the concept for these Solstreet benches are information kiosks with solar powered phone chargers and information on e-panel (like a big Kindle) that is remotely controlled and updated in real time. They are portable and flexible and can be relocated if desired. 8 bolts into the sidewalk makes moving easy. Power outages don't impact them because they are solar powered. Durable aluminum weather-proof construction. One panel is exclusively for promotion of whatever the city or downtown wants promoted, the other two are for advertising that is approved by SDI or the City. Advertising revenues are shared. If there are no advertisers for the month, they will put a static Summit-themed picture or logo, whatever we decide. These would be good for places like across from the Starbucks by the Train Station seating area on Union Place, City Hall, Overlook Hospital, etc. They can also be painted as desired by Summit. There is no cost to the City or SDI if they were to decide to do this. The Board and the City will discuss at our next meeting.

**Finance Report** – Bob Conway

In Claire's absence, Bob asked for comments or questions on the financials, we got our first checks from the city. No questions, approval of financials moved by Karen Schneider and seconded by Leslie Herman.

**Office Space** – Bob said the current office space is inadequate, invisible and cramped. The front office in the same building has opened up for lease. Karen reported that the current lessee is paying \$2,050 for the existing space and in her discussions with Ed, the landlord, negotiated the increase each year and having it equal to CPI or cost of living. Karen negotiated a lease of \$1,900/month with a 2% annual increase or CPI whichever is less and Ed agreed. Karen reported that the office space real estate market is rather soft, so we were able to negotiate and get a fair and good price. Karen said that Ed was originally going to be asking \$2,500/month and bigger escalation because of the renovations he's doing to the space. Leslie asked how big the space is, Nancy reported that this would be much larger and we'd be able to use an office for storage of the boxes and equipment currently lining the walls of the existing office. Nancy reported that Claire (on vacation) did say that we operate with a surplus so our budget would allow for the increase, and that for a downtown management organization to have a street level front facing office is great for exposure of the organization to the public and to businesses and usually difficult to get because typically ground floor is retail. Nora Radest commented that this sounds like a great deal and the existing office is deplorable and if the money is feasible she is not opposed at all. Greg Vartan offered that the Council did just approve the SDI budget and this increase was not included and while he's in agreement that SDI has done an incredible job and the space would be better for everyone, but he is uncomfortable with the increase because it wasn't in the budget they just approved. Bob pointed out that this opportunity just came up and was not planned for during our budget work. Matthew would like Karen to renegotiate a longer term if possible, but it sounds like a good opportunity anyway. Current rent for the existing office is \$695/month, this would be \$1,900/month. Matthew pointed out that office space especially ground floor is significantly higher, so this is a good deal. Ray Merritt motioned to accept the lease and move to the new office, Nora Radest seconded, all were in favor.

**Farmers Market:** Bob reported the Market has been VERY busy this year. Basically, our take on the CDC guidelines that if people are unvaccinated they should wear a mask, if vaccinated they don't have to. We will not be mandating masks any longer and will remove the signs at the entrance. He mentioned he spoke with Nora about doing vaccines at the Farmers Market and they are working out the logistics at Overlook to see if they will be able to do that. Lauren Decker thinks this would be a great idea.

**Business Requests –** Nancy reported that there have been requests for structures in parklets and it is becoming evident that there needs to be a more formal process for SDI to have input in anything like this or the horse trough redesign for example, that Buildings and Grounds get formal and more official input from SDI. Aaron Schrager is in favor of a more formal process for input from SDI. She asked if the Board is okay with this, all agreed. Greg Vartan agreed it's a good idea.

**Events:** Amanda updated the Board that Summit Street Sounds starts next week on Thursday and Friday nights in June and July. She also explained that she's scheduling family style entertainers for Thursday nights in June in place of Family Fun Night. Street Sounds runs 5-8pm. Arts + Cars is in planning stages; Investors is sponsoring the main act for \$3,000 which is great! We are adding art in windows and connecting artists with businesses.

**DCS/SDI Updates:** Tony Melchionna came to report on the monthly meeting with Aaron Schrager, Nancy & Mike Caputo. More downtown cleaning will be done on Mondays and Fridays with some concentration on tree wells. The DPW finished building the new shed at Lot #1 for the Farmers Market and it looks fantastic. No updates on the horse trough. Veterans banners will be up till September. Nancy will be working with Aaron on plantings for the tree wells. Tony asked what was going on with the highline, maybe Greg can speak to that. Tony thinks there should be more uniformity with designs of parklets and onstreet outdoor dining and tent usage and maybe there should be a committee to figure it out. We can't just have everyone doing what they want. Nancy suggested that the Design & Beautification Committee could be the reviewing committee and could come up with guidelines. Greg said he thinks guidelines would be really helpful for SDI to come up with and the city to approve.

**Summit Public Arts:** Leslie reported that the installation at the Village Green will be completed this Saturday at 11am. SPA is coming up with artists and SDI will help coordinate for September displays. Leslie looked into the electrical boxes and it's better to wrap them than paint them, so she's going to look for companies and will report back.

**Common Council Updates:** Greg reported that SDI's budget has been approved and the city's budget will hopefully be adopted on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The Parkline is being discussed at the next council meeting; the city has an agreement with Union County that there a pedestrian bridge put out to bid and the Parkline Foundation will pay for it so it'll be discussed again by council for approval this summer or fall. Council will vote to opt out of selling marijuana products in the city, Greg will be voting no. Greg reported that the Gates at the DeForest lots are at the end of their life and the city will be removing them rather than spend the money to replace them. So, likely the gates will come out and pay kiosks will be installed to replace the existing. All DeForest lots will become one zone for Parkmobile, which is great. Greg asked for input from the Board and is hoping to have construction done in August to have the littlest impact because so many are away. Generally, the Board is in favor of getting rid of the gates, although there may be some issues as we move forward with regard to employees parking. To that point, Matthew advised the City be more proactive informing downtown employees where to park and how to get a permit; Greg agreed.

**Public Input:** None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15am.

The next BOT meeting is June 30, 2021 via Zoom.