

**Summit Downtown, Inc.
Board of Trustees Meeting
October 25, 2017 8:00AM
City of Summit City Hall, Whitman Room**

Members Present: Pat Angelo, Bob Conway, Andrew Genualdi, Tony Melchionna, David Naidu, Michael Rogers, Karen Schneider, Kevin Smallwood, Claire Toth, and Beth Welsh. Staff: Nancy Adams and Kathryn Best.

Members Absent: Susan Alexander, Joseph Hamilton, Nora Radest, and Richard Sun.

Guests: None

Tony Melchionna called the meeting to order at 8:05 am.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Tony Melchionna

Minutes were presented for approval. Bob Conway moved that the September 2017 minutes be approved. Claire Toth seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRPERSONS REPORT – Tony Melchionna

Tony thanked everyone who came to SDI's stakeholder meeting. It was well-attended, and Tony remarked that it was exciting to see new businesses in attendance.

The downtown's vacancy rate is under 4%, which is something to be proud of. Tony thanked Nancy for successfully recruiting Greene Street, an upscale consignment business that opened at 408 Springfield Ave. Nancy thanked Beth for being such a proactive property owner. Nancy also informed the Board that The Cashmere Sale will be open in the old Red Balloon space as a popup from Oct. 30-Dec. 2.

COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS

FINANCE – Claire Toth

Claire informed the Board that the finances are pretty in line with what was budgeted. Discrepancies are mainly due to changes in categories and mindsets. The surplus funds to pay for the wreaths weren't released until the beginning of this month.

There will be a budget meeting at 10am this coming Monday. If any trustee has a pet project/event, attending the budget meeting is the best way to make sure there's money for what you're hoping to do. Claire said that she personally would like to see the creation of a walking tour brochure to highlight Summit's historic features.

Beth Welsh asked for clarification on the Clean Communities Grant. Nancy answered that she has received bills, but has not received the check from the City yet. Michael Rogers said that the City did receive the grant, but he's not sure the City has received the check yet.

Tony refreshed everyone's memory that Gil Owren, a previous SDI trustee, applied for the Clean Communities grant. Every year, any money left over is returned to the City. SDI has repeatedly asked that the money be spent, hopefully on something beneficial like a new green machine or power washing for the downtown. Tony feels strongly that we should continue to handle the money received from the Clean Communities grant the same way. It may be more paperwork, but SDI was responsible for getting the grant, and thus should have a say over how the money is used.

Michael Rogers said that the City has no intention of taking the money away from SDI. Grants have specific uses, and the City would have to continue to use the money in a way that is allowable under the grant guidelines. That being said, he feels that the grant should be handled however is easiest. David Naidu agreed, suggesting SDI write a letter to the City and Common Council memorializing the process so there's no doubt how the money should be used in the future. Claire said that who controls the money and how the money moves don't have to be the same. Everyone here agrees that SDI controls the money.

Nancy told the Board that Aaron ordered the Pachysandra for the pilot program in the treewells.

BOARD ELECTIONS – Nancy Adams

Two seats are up for election this year: one first floor retail (Tony's seat; Tony is running for re-election) and an upper/lower floor business (Kevin's seat; Kevin is not running for re-election). Thus far, we have three candidates for the

upper/lower floor business seat: Vee, co-owner of the American Yoga Academy, David Giddleman, owner of The Woods Group in the Basset Building, and Matthew Pejkoivic, a VP at Morgan Stanley's new Summit office. Nominations are due by Oct. 27. Then, ballots will be mailed out. Completed ballots will be due by Dec. 12 at 4pm.

GIFT CARD PROGRAM – Bob Conway

SDI had another joint conference call with representatives from the Chamber, including Beth Welsh. As of now, we're trying to gather more data. We'd like to know how many gift certificates the chamber is selling annually and the total dollar amount of gift certificates sold and redeemed. SDI has contacted other downtowns that have gift card programs to get similar information. Nancy said that she has already received the numbers from Red Bank, but they didn't include the total dollar amount. Nancy will circle back to get that number.

Bob said that the industry standard is that 40% of gift cards aren't redeemed. Bob asked Beth if the Chamber knew what percentage of the gift checks were spent downtown (since they're treated as cash, and the spender is given change). Beth said that the Chamber can't determine that number.

Tony commented that this process is taking longer than anticipated and asked if it would be possible to have it up and running for the holidays. Nancy answered that it's too late to have it done for the holidays now. Bob added that had we moved forward in July, it probably would have been possible. A good goal would be to have the system up and running for teacher gifts in May.

When asked, Nancy said that based on her experience in Red Bank, the initial set up costs won't be recouped. Other than that, on an annual basis, the program pays for itself with the \$2/card fee. Red Bank said they budget about \$1,000/year for the program.

Bob asked Beth if she thought it would be reasonable to ask the Chamber to have the numbers we requested prepared in the next two weeks. Beth said that sounded reasonable.

BOARD EDUCATION SEMINARS – Bob Conway

Bob feels that it would be beneficial to have a seminar or two annually on placemaking or another topic useful to SDI board members. The Board consensus was that it sounds like a great idea.

EVENT UPDATES – Nancy Adams and Kathryn Best

Winter Farmers Market

Applications have been received, and the committee is meeting tomorrow to discuss.

Small Business Saturday

Nancy explained the Shop Summit Passport program: people will have to visit 8 different businesses (min. 4 retailers) to have their passport stamped. There will be several pick up/drop off locations, including City Hall, SDI, and downtown businesses. Completed passports will be due on Dec. 1, when we'll draw the winners. We hope to have a few grand prizes, large enough to entice people to take part in the program.

Holidays

Dec. 1 will be our holiday event, which we're calling Celebrate in Summit this year. There will be music, horse and carriage rides, free hot chocolate at Regal Bank, and the drawing for the Shop Summit Passport winners. There will also be music and horse and carriage rides from 1-4pm on Saturdays Dec. 9, 16, and 23.

David Naidu asked if SDI would be putting the Santa mailbox out in the Promenade again. Kathryn said that last year, the Board decided that it didn't want to spend its money or staff's time on answering the letters, so the box wasn't put out. In December, Richard Sun decided to put the box out, saying that next year, he would form a group of parents who would answer the letters. David said that, to his knowledge, no such group has been formed. Tony directed Kathryn to talk to Amy Cairns about the Santa Mailbox.

HOLIDAY PARKING REQUEST – Nancy Adams

Nancy wrote to Common Council and the Parking Authority asking for free parking in the downtown for the last two weeks before Christmas. Rita asked Nancy to amend the request to just asking for free parking at the 90-minute meters, which she did. The request will be discussed at Common Council's Nov. 1 meeting.

WEBSITE RFPS – Nancy Adams

The office has received 5 proposals. The Exec. Committee will be interviewing 3 of the firms in the first week of November.

HOLIDAY VALET PARKING FUNDING – Board vote

The Board voted via email to contribute \$3500 to market the City's holiday valet program, but we need an official vote. Kevin made a motion to contribute \$3500 to marketing the City's holiday valet program and Claire seconded the motion. Beth suggested a two-tiered marketing approach. The first message should be "Shop Summit" then the valet parking. The motion passed.

COMMON COUNCIL UPDATE – David Naidu

21 additional parking spots on Summit Avenue, past DeForest Avenue, were designated employee spots. Then, the doctors whose offices the spots are in front of, complained that their patients were having trouble finding parking. Now, 8 of those spots on the east side of Summit Ave. have been turned back to general parking. David brought this issue up to illustrate that he can't stand up for businesses on his own. If there's an issue that involves the downtown or its businesses, then SDI needs to be involved and speak up. If no one from the Board can attend, then the Board should write a letter expressing its views.

Michael Rogers said that SPAC has two representatives from SDI (Beth and Nancy). The issue was discussed extensively at SPAC. Just because there's silence at the Common Council meeting doesn't mean there wasn't involvement. David clarified: he knows SDI is involved, but their involvement often isn't seen by the public. SDI needs to be a voice in a more public way, and the best way to do that is at Common Council meetings. Michael asked the Board if they agreed with the way the spots on Summit Ave. are designated now.

Kevin answered that as a resident at Worthington House, he hates it. It's tougher for his guests to find parking now. Michael informed him that the employee parking is only Monday-Friday. Kevin answered that he didn't know that, and the City should be sure to inform the public. Discussion continued.

David informed the Board that the Planning Board approved the memorialization of comments on the Broad Street Corridor. The next step for the project is to go to Building and Public Grounds. Public input will be part of the process, and David hopes SDI will be involved as well. David wants everyone to be clear that the goal of the Broad Street Corridor is not to create a new downtown to siphon off business. The intent is to increase the number of people in and around the downtown. It should be a win-win. Other downtowns have something to bring people into the downtown, like Millburn's Paper Mill Playhouse, South Orange's SOPAC, etc. Summit needs something like that. Discussion continued. Nancy asked for a joint meeting with SDI, Common Council, and developers when the time is appropriate.

David asked Nancy where SDI's first-floor zoning change request is. Nancy answered that she hadn't heard anything more from Bill Anderson, but would reach out to touch base.

SUBURBAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE – Beth Welsh

Wine Down Wednesday will be at Dreamcatcher Repertory Theater. This Friday is the Chamber's fundraiser at the Elks. The 2018 Tying Communities Together dinner will be on March 22.

NEW BUSINESS

Nancy asked the Board if it felt having coffee at every meeting is necessary. Almost no one drinks it. Tony said we'll stop providing coffee and see if anyone misses it.

Pat Angelo said that Fios 1 is doing a show on Summit restaurants, which includes The Committed Pig, Summit House, and the Summit Diner. It will air on Nov. 30. Pat will forward Nancy an email with more info.

PUBLIC INPUT

None

Bob Conway made a motion to adjourn, and David Naidu seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:23am.

The next Trustee meeting is November 29, 2017.