



Summit Downtown, Inc.

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To: Summit Downtown, Inc. Board of Trustees
From: Tony Melchionna
Date: January 30, 2015
Re: Summit Downtown, Inc. Board of Trustees
January 30, 2015

Members Present: Bob Conway, Lori Dahl, Annette Dwyer, Toni George, Rich Lorensen, Sandy Lizza, Tony Melchionna, Kevin Smallwood, Susan Taylor, Robert Weakley, and Kathryn Werlein.

Chris Cotter and Mayor Dickson entered at the end of the meeting since they were at another meeting in preparation for the Common Council meeting later that day.

Members Absent: Al Dill and Beth Welsh

Guests: Ms. Amy Cairns Harrison – Communications Specialist, City of Summit
Aaron Schragger – Engineer, Department of Community Services
Beth Kinney – Director, Department of Community Services
Raymond Gonzalez – Founder and Owner, ITO, Inc.
Paul Cascais – Superintendent, Division of Public Works

Tony Melchionna called the meeting to order at 8:06 am.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Tony Melchionna

Tony Melchionna asked if there were any edits to the December 2014 Minutes.

Sandy Lizza asked that the sentence that reads “Sandy suggested...necessary” be removed from paragraph 8 on page 4.

With that edit, Sandy moved that the December 2014 minutes be approved, Bob Conway seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRPERSONS REPORT – Tony Melchionna

Tony Melchionna called everyone’s attention to the “Shop Amazon” banner that the Summit PTO put up on the front lawn of Summit High School during the holiday season. He said he received calls from downtown merchants who were troubled by the banner. The merchants wanted to remind everyone that they’re the people the schools go to for tricky tray donations.

Annette Dwyer, knowing that the Board would have an opinion on the matter, emailed the PTO. She has heard back, and the PTO said that they understand the Board’s concerns and are open to a proposal on how SDI can help the school district and still support the downtown. Annette said that she would like to work on that proposal. Marin also said she would like to be involved.

Amy Cairns Harrison suggested making this project part of a larger campaign and talking to other organizations looking to fundraise, such as the Fortnightly Club, etc. This way they know that our

organization is against using Amazon and is willing to work with them to find a solution that benefits their organization and the downtown. Sandy suggests that we write an official letter to the PTO from the Board, and Tony said he would.

COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS

FINANCE – Lori Dahl

Lori Dahl let everyone know that they received two packets. One contains the December Finances and the other is the whole 2014 year. The December financials look in-line.

A few changes were made to the 2014 year-end financials. Even though we spent \$5000 less than was budgeted for the Car Show, since we made less on sponsorships and entry fees, we were still down \$11,000. The money budgeted to redo the website wasn't spent since we will be doing that in the future. It looks like we're \$7500 off, but because of those two changes, we're only about \$2500 off of our projected 2014 budget.

Lori moved that the December 2014 Financials be accepted, the motion was seconded by Bob Weakley and Susan Taylor and passed unanimously.

ELECTION AND 2015 OFFICERS – Kevin Smallwood

No new requests to run for an officer position were made through January 15th. The current officers have offered to serve again. We are, however, able to have nominees from the floor, and with that, the floor was opened for nominations.

Toni George thinks that a minimum of 50% of the Executive Committee should be property owners. Moving forward, she suggests that SDI should have a more active recruitment of property owners. She asked how nominating works.

Lori, Tony, Rich, and Kevin are on the nominating committee. Annette asked if the election was announced. Marin and Kevin answered that it was announced at the last Board meeting and an announcement was put in the newspaper.

Annette suggests that the vice-chair should be a successor for the chair position and agrees that the Executive Committee should be proportionally the same composition as the rest of the Board. She asked if there would be a way to keep the current officers for now while we figure out when more people could help the nominating committee to find more people and teach them the ropes.

Kevin answered that he would love to have a succession plan, but as of now, there aren't people willing to fill those positions. Lori reminded everyone that members of the Nominating Committee aren't the only ones able to go out and talk to people about being officers, they're just the ones who officially put the slate together.

With no nominations made, Kevin put the current slate of Tony Melchionna for Chair, Kevin Smallwood for Vice-Chair, Lori Dahl for Treasurer, and Susan Taylor for Secretary up for a vote. The slate passed with Toni George opposing it and Annette Dwyer abstaining from the vote.

BYLAW CHANGES – Susan Taylor

Susan announced that the issue of our by-laws would be introduced at the Common Council meeting later in the day January 30th. Since it's an ordinance, no discussion would be held at the council level at that meeting. There will be discussion a vote on February 24th.

Annette would like to suggest another possible Board composition:

4 property owners

2 retail business owners

2 upper/lower (1 of each)

2 political (1 council member and the mayor)

1 city administrator (non-voting)

=10 voting members

If an odd number is needed for voting purposes, she suggests adding one seat with no designation.

Kathryn Werlein pointed out that the Board needs people on it with the right skills

DOWNTOWN PROJECT 2015 – Aaron Schragger

Aaron Schragger announced that the design phase for the downtown project is on-going. The work will likely begin in June and will take place mostly at night. The project will include lighting, curbs, sanitation, ADA compliance, and sewers. He would like SDI to provide one contact person with whom he can directly correspond. Tony suggested Marin, and Marin accepted.

Aaron continued that in addition to the standard project, the crosswalks at Kent Place Boulevard and Woodland Avenue will be moved forward since they are currently recessed. They hope to spruce up Bank Street and make some changes so that Promenade Park is more noticeable.

Marin asked how much the project will impact traffic. She mentioned that the Morris Ave. Bridge may also be closed. Are there plans in place yet for diverting traffic? She would like to prepare the merchants as much as possible.

Aaron answered that there isn't a plan in place for traffic diversion for the downtown project yet, but they will try to minimize the impact. But, through SDI's liaison and monthly meetings, SDI will have input and will be kept up to date. Aaron asked SDI to point out any other projects that the Board feels should be included in this project. Beth Kinney agreed and asked that anyone with concerns raise those concerns to Aaron through Marin. Kevin asked if SDI could have a list of items included in the project so that we can know which of our suggestions are already being addressed. Aaron answered that that could be done.

Sandy asked if all the crosswalks will be completed at the end of the project, and Aaron answered that they would be. Sandy asked if the alleyways would be addressed. Aaron answered that alleyways are a separate item in the capital budget. Physically, they could also bog down the project. If it works with the timing, then we could do them at the same time. But, all in all, alleyways are separate from the project. As far as timing goes, in a perfect world, the work would begin after the Car Show. It will take 1-1.5 months to design the project.

Tony asked for an update on the historic plaques. Paul Cascais answered that the one that will be located at the Train Station will be installed in the Spring or during the Downtown Project since the ground is frozen now. Tony also asked Paul when he plans to clean the snow out of the downtown. Paul answered that they hoped to be able to remove it all that night.

DOWNTOWN BIKE RACKS – Bob Weakley and Marin Mixon

A group walked around in December to visit spots where bike racks will go. Most of the spots belong to NJ Transit. Verbally, the NJ Transit people assented to allowing the bike racks to be put there. They requested a written plan, and one has been sent to them. We're hoping to hear that we have their approval soon.

MARKETING AND BRANDING – Kathryn Werlein, Marin Mixon, and Raymond Gonzales, ITO, Inc.

Marin introduced Ray Gonzales of ITO, Inc. She thanked Ray, Kathryn Werlein, Kathryn Best, and Amy Cairns Harrison for their help. A first draft of the branding work was shared with the Executive Committee last week. The Marketing Committee appreciates the Board looking at the branding with an open mind.

Kathryn Werlein said that she's excited that the branding work is happening around the same time as the city project since we will be trying to create a consistent branding for the town.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED PRESENTATION FOR ALL INFORMATION PRESENTED ON BRANDING.

Included in branding presentation is an elevator speech that distills the essence of Summit in to a short, standardized paragraph. Please memorize this speech so that we can put a consistent message out.

A long discussion followed, and Ray agreed to work with the Marketing Committee to incorporate the Board's suggestions. In the coming weeks the Ray and the Marketing Committee will be meeting with small groups of Common Council members and City employees to introduce them to the branding. The new branding will be re-presented at next month's Board of Trustees meeting.

A sub-committee to work on the 20th Anniversary Celebration for the Farmers Market is being formed. Please let Marin know if you would like to be a part of that committee.

Kathryn Werlein clarified that the potential for hiring a retail resource person is separate from the new branding. The Marketing Committee is starting to explore this option as it could help Summit to achieve the right mix for the type of lifestyle we're touting. They hope to have more information for next month's Board meeting.

COMMON COUNCIL – Sandy Lizza

The DeForest lights will be turned on soon as will the flashing beacon in front at Broad Street and Elm Street. Bids have been opened for the Morris Avenue Bridge, although it isn't clear if there's enough money to make the repairs.

Mayor Dickson answered that there likely is not sufficient money to fix the bridge. It will likely be closed before there's money to fix it.

OTHER BUSINESS

This will be SDI's last year of supporting The Lego Event, which will be held March 15th at Washington School. The Historical Society hopes to move it downtown eventually. The Taste of Summit will take place on March 22nd.

Robert Weakley said that there are a significant number of vacancies downtown. Vacancies send a message that we don't want. He believes that a retail recruiter should be a front burner issue and hopes to focus more on the issue at next month's Board meeting. Marin said that the Executive Committee is exploring the details of working with Joe Goetz. Tony added that the vacancies are blessings in disguise. Some businesses have been unable to seriously consider moving to Summit as an option because they require larger spaces. Now that we have some larger vacancies, we will be able to attract some businesses that weren't previously within our reach.

Sandy said that last month, Marin sent out statistics about vacancies downtown. She asked that Marin send those statics out each month. Marin said that she would be happy to provide those statistics each month. She's able to keep tabs on the 1st floor retail businesses plus fitness establishments. Currently the downtown is at 93.6% occupancy for first-floor retail.

PUBLIC INPUT

None

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mayor Dickson. It was seconded by Lori and the meeting was adjourned at 9:51 am.

The next Trustee meeting is February 25, 2015