



Summit Downtown, Inc.

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To: Summit Downtown, Inc. Board of Trustees
From: Tony Melchionna
Date: February 24, 2016
Re: Summit Downtown, Inc. Board of Trustees
February 24, 2016

Members Present: Pat Angelo, Bob Conway, Lori Dahl, Sandy Lizza, Tony Melchionna, Nora Radest, Michael Rogers, Richard Sun, Susan Taylor, and Beth Welsh. Staff: Marin Mixon and Kathryn Best.

Members Absent: Kevin Smallwood.

Guests: None

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Tony Melchionna

Tony Melchionna asked if there were any edits to the January 2016 Minutes.

Since no edits were suggested, Bob Conway moved that the January 2016 minutes be approved, Susan Taylor seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

CHAIRPERSONS REPORT – Tony Melchionna

Tony let everyone know that SDI and the Suburban Chamber of Commerce wrote a letter together to the Common Council asking for a permanent parking holiday to be established on Small Business Saturday, the Saturday after Thanksgiving. SDI received confirmation from the city clerk that the letter has been received. The letter has been referred to the General Services Committee where it will be discussed before going to the whole Common Council.

Sandy Lizza suggested that SDI strengthen their case by adding more facts to the letter. She suggested perhaps adding how many other towns currently offer free parking in December, which towns, and whether the businesses saw an increase in sales, etc.

Beth Welsh did say, anecdotally, that when the issue was discussed at the Suburban Chamber meeting, businesses from New Providence and Berkeley Heights joked that they would prefer Summit to continue to charge for parking. That way it sends Summit shoppers to their towns.

When asked, Michael Rogers said that Morristown bags the meters from Thanksgiving to Christmas. There's a strictly enforced 2 hour limit. Patrons still had to pay if they parked in the lots or the decks.

Tony then acknowledged the closing of the movie theater and the opening of West Elm in late 2016. Discussion followed.

COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS

FARMERS MARKET – Bob Conway

Bob let everyone know that Harold's job description has been updated, but it doesn't include any additional responsibilities. Once he signs the job description, it will serve as his contract. If you have any thoughts, please let Bob or the office know. Sandy Lizza and Richard Sun suggested putting the market's selling hours in the job description. Bob and Marin agreed to do so.

The market guidelines have also been updated, to reflect the 'best practices' established by Bob's research on other farmers markets. They are a little more organized and straightforward with an updated mission statement and health section. Susan looked over the new guidelines and approved them. The vendors sign the market guidelines, and that serves as their contract for the season.

Bob informed everyone that there has been a movement to open the market early on April 17. Bob and Marin have established that at least 22 vendors must commit to the early date to make it work. There's certainly demand from the customer side as well. Every customer Bob has asked at his store has said s/he would definitely come to the market if it opens early. Bob and Marin hope to make a definite decision on the opening date by the end of the week.

Richard said that he has been blown away by how highly regarded Summit's farmers market is. He went to the Morris County Winter Market, and everyone raved about the Summit Farmers Market.

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ZONE LOAN – Marin Mixon

Jef Bueler from Main Street NJ let SDI know there will be money available in the Downtown Business Improvement Zone Loan (DBIZ loan) fund this year. Last year, no funds were available. This year, there's approximately \$1 million available. As far as Jef knows, Summit would be the 5th community applying for a DBIZ loan. Marin thanked Michael Rogers and Michael Fabrizio of Morristown for their help and guidance during this process.

If SDI applies for a loan over \$100,000, 100% of the loan must be matched. SDI would have two years to complete the project. Repayment would not start until SDI draws down 100% of the loan.

SDI has received a plan from Tony Summers for the tree wells and gardens. There are two separate plans: one for mostly shaded tree wells and one for mostly sun tree wells. The plants are different heights and are salt and drought resistant. Sandy said she has looked at the plans, and from her experience, coreopsis is not hardy and wouldn't make it in the tree wells.

Marin clarified that tree wells currently maintained by businesses, like Fiorino's tree wells, won't be disturbed. Sandy asked that Marin clarify the City's role with regard to the tree wells. Marin is still waiting for an official commitment from Paul Cascais, but the current plan is for the City to plant the new plants and water the tree wells regularly throughout the season. The tree wells will need to be watered very frequently when the new plants are planted to insure they survive. SDI will maintain the tree wells.

Sandy asked who maintains the roundabout. Marin answered that the City currently maintains the roundabout. Sandy suggested including the roundabout in SDI's landscaping plans to make it look really beautiful and lush. Marin said that it had never come up before, but SDI would look into it.

Marin let everyone know that Jef suggested focusing our loan application on "photo op" type projects. He indicated that the conduit might not be the best project to apply for funds for.

Michael Rogers answered that there's a story to be told for the conduit. There's an interesting opportunity to control the infrastructure and to monetize it in the future. This is the future. Self-driving cars need data, and this conduit would pave the way to make the amount of data they need available. Mayor Radest said that they have talked to Newark about this issue, and they said they've received a lot of NJ Biz coverage for their conduit.

Tony asked how the monetization and management of the conduit would work. Michael answered that that would need to be figured out in the future. Sandy let everyone know that there has been no discussion at the council level about the conduit. The conduit is an SDI issue that would benefit the businesses.

Marin passed around Aaron's project estimate for the conduit. Marin and Tony thanked him for his hard work to get this estimate done last night in time for this morning's meeting.

The board reached a consensus to apply for the loan.

FINANCE – Lori Dahl

Lori Dahl let everyone know that the January 2016 Financials will be presented in March after SDI votes on the 2016 budget.

The 2016 budget has been sent out to all the trustees. Instead of reading everything, Lori suggested starting with everyone's questions.

Tony called everyone's attention the bottom line which is a \$65,000 deficit. If this budget is approved, Lori and Tony will meet with the City Treasurer and back that number into the SID tax to find the new SID tax rate.

Sandy suggested that SDI will be raising the SID tax, we should think about securing some sponsorships in order to generate some additional revenue. Lori said that SDI used to get sponsorships, and those used to be built into the budget. But, since we've stopped getting them, they've been taken out of the budget.

Kathryn Best said that she just designed an event sponsorship packet for SDI in the last two weeks. She has just begun sending it out. In the first week, she has secured \$6,300 in sponsorships. But, soliciting sponsorships takes a lot of time to email, call, follow up, etc. Time spent on securing sponsors is time that can't be spent on other tasks such as working on the loan application, grants, investigating tree well plantings, day-to-day operations, planning events, writing newsletters, etc. She needs to hear from the Board if sponsorships should be a priority. No supported or opposed the statement.

When asked what large expenditures had been removed from the budget since the last meeting, Lori answered that the tree wells and new website costs had been removed from the 2016 budget since they can be funded using the surplus. Any other changes are listed on the first page in blue.

Mayor Radest asked how much money had been allotted to the PGA tournament. Lori answered that SDI allots \$5,000 for an extra event. This year that extra event will be the PGA.

Lori moved that the 2016 budget be accepted as presented. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Sandy thanked all the trustees for their hard work on the budget. She acknowledged that it is a difficult process. She believes that SDI has good reasons for the tax increase to tell the stakeholders. She would be willing to help draft and review a statement to be sent to the stakeholders once the tax increase is approved by Common Council.

Tony agreed, reiterating the Mayor and Councilman McTernan's point from January, saying SDI used to be a volunteer board, and that just isn't the case anymore. If we don't have the volunteers to get the work done, we will have to pay for it to get done.

Sandy said that the City's budget will likely be introduced at the March 15th Common Council meeting. They will vote on April 5.

SUBURBAN CHAMBERS UPDATE – Beth Welsh

The next First Friday will be held on March 4. The Tying Communities Together Dinner will be held on March 16 and will honor Mayor Dickson, Summit P.A.L. and several other deserving individuals and organizations.

COMMON COUNCIL UPDATE – Sandy Lizza

The master plan reexamination will be done by the first week in November. The city has hired Topology, a very creative firm to take an inclusive approach to the process.

One area to be addressed is the CRBD. There will be a liaison specifically for the CRBD. SDI should put some thought into who that should be.

Sandy mentioned that at the Meet the Mayors meeting, Mayor Harding mentioned that urban planners aren't including parking decks in their plans anymore because they believe there will be driverless cars in the not-too-distant future.

The two owners of Exhale came to Council to introduce themselves.

Downtown project work will probably begin again in the middle of March, but it will depend on the weather. Work on the streets will begin closer to June. We are waiting to receive the materials for the decorative crosswalks and the roundabout.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC INPUT

None

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Lori Dahl. It was seconded by Bob Conway and the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 am.

The next Trustee meeting is March 30, 2016