



## **Summit Downtown, Inc.**

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**To:** Summit Downtown, Inc. Board of Trustees  
**From:** Tony Melchionna  
**Date:** February 25, 2015  
**Re:** Summit Downtown, Inc. Board of Trustees  
February 25, 2015

**Members Present:** Chris Cotter, Lori Dahl, Mayor Dickson, Al Dill, Annette Dwyer, Toni George, Sandy Lizza, Tony Melchionna, Kevin Smallwood, and Susan Taylor.

**Members Absent:** Bob Conway, Rich Lorensen, Robert Weakley, Beth Welsh, and Kathryn Werlein

**Guests:** Beth Kinney – Director, Summit Department of Community Services  
Dr. Robert Rubino – President, Summit Common Council  
Robert Steelman – Broker, 4a Realty, LLC

Tony Melchionna called the meeting to order at 8:07 am.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Tony Melchionna**

Tony Melchionna asked if there were any edits to the January 2015 Minutes.

Marin alerted everyone that Sandy Lizza contacted the SDI office the previous day with three minor edits:

- on page three, first paragraph of "Downtown Project 2015" "88" is changed to "ADA"
- on page four, third paragraph, "exited" is changed to "excited"
- on page four, first paragraph of "Common Council" section "Union Place and Maple Street" is changed to "Broad Street and Elm Street".

With those edits, Sandy moved that the January 2015 minutes be approved, Kevin Smallwood seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **CHAIRPERSONS REPORT – Tony Melchionna**

Tony Melchionna began by introducing Councilman Al Dill, our new Common Council liaison, saying we were all happy to have such a well-established, involved new member on our board.

Tony also acknowledged the wonderful open channels of communication that are being established between SDI and people like Paul Cascais, Beth Kinney, Chief Weck, Rita McNany, and Aaron Schrager. He said that this is the first time we, as a board, have achieved such open communications with these city entities. He believes it to be agreeable and beneficial to both SDI and the city.

## **COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS**

### **FINANCE – Lori Dahl**

Lori Dahl announced that the SDI office received the first quarter SID tax check from the city the previous day. Marin reminded everyone that SDI receives \$45,000 in the second month of each quarter in SID tax money.

The finances are in line with what was expected and the spreadsheets have been updated. Lori asked if there were any questions.

Seeing no questions, Lori moved that the January 2015 Financials be accepted. The motion was seconded by Kevin Smallwood and Mayor Dickson and passed unanimously.

### **MARKETING AND BRANDING – Marin Mixon**

Marin let everyone know that although Kathryn Werlein was unable to attend this month's Board meeting, she put together a report to update everyone on marketing and branding efforts (see attached). Marin said that the updated branding presentation has been sent out. She's glad that it has been well-received. One way of making sure our branding fulfills the promises it makes is to refresh the streetscape and make sure our downtown looks its best. A list of improvements included in the upcoming downtown project was sent out with the Board packet. (see attached). Beth Kinney has asked for additional input for the downtown project. If you have any input or projects you'd like to see addressed, please tell Marin or Beth Kinney.

Marin asked Beth Kinney what the decorative work for Promenade Park and Lyric Park would entail. Beth answered that the plans were currently being worked on. Sandy asked if alleyways would be included in this project. Beth answered that the alleyways are in the 2015 budget, but will likely be completed in early 2016. The downtown project has been fast-tracked so it can begin in June 2015.

Marin asked if temporary traffic plans are in place yet. Beth Kinney answered that there would be traffic diversion plans, although most of the work that will disrupt traffic will be done at night. Marin requested that SDI receive the traffic plans as soon as they're complete so the merchants can be notified. Beth said that her monthly meetings with SDI representatives will serve to keep everyone in the loop.

Dr. Rubino asked what design firm would be working on the project. Beth answered that most of the design is being done in-house by Aaron Schrager and Rick Matais.

In the past few weeks, the Marketing Committee had been communicating with Joe Goetz of JGSC. JGSC is a retail recruitment outfit with a signature 7 step approach. Unfortunately, Joe would not sign a confidentiality agreement. The Marketing Committee did not feel comfortable allowing Joe's firm to survey hundreds of people about Summit without being held to a confidentiality agreement. When SDI requested a sample of his work, Joe sent the office a complete report of all the survey results he obtained while working with South Orange. Susan Taylor, the Board's legal counsel, confirmed that she could not allow the Marketing Committee to sign a contract without a confidentiality clause.

Although JGSC has been eliminated as a possibility, the committee still believes a survey conducted by a reputable group is the best first step. The committee has also been speaking with a Summit resident who has experience with retail mix and merchandising. Plus, she has connections with companies she's dealt with over the years.

A slightly altered version of the brochure SDI printed last year is being created for residential realtors. Toni George asked if she could see it before it's printed so she can give her input as a realtor. Marin said of course. Beth Welsh asked if the brochure will be sold, and Marin said that it will be sold so that

SDI will recoup the printing cost. Beth also asked if there would be a brochure done to attract new tenants to the downtown. Marin answered that it's been suggested that the full brochure may not be the ideal print publication for that purpose. Tony said that creating a subcommittee of realtors, tenants, and landlords has been suggested to him. Marin said she would sit on the committee once it is created.

ITO, Inc., the firm that did SDI's new branding, is doing preliminary work on posters for the Farmers Market, Girls' Night Out, and Restaurant Week. We will also be contracting with ITO to create our new website. It will tie all of our efforts together.

Sandy suggested doing a little presentation and handing brochures out to the Newcomers Club. Lori suggested looking into [welcometoourneighborhood.com](http://welcometoourneighborhood.com). Dr. Rubino suggested looking into the Welcome Wagon.

SDI is still exploring the possibility of a fall event. Currently, SDI doesn't have the right group to run the event. It may have to be postponed until 2016. Mayor Dickson said that she likes the idea of a Fall Harvest Festival. She thinks it's an event that would be well-received by the people of Summit. Dr. Rubino suggested that the festival could possibly be combined with Founders' Day.

A committee has been meeting to plan for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season of the Farmers Market. The annual kick-off brunch will be held at 8:30AM on March 16 at food. Everyone is invited. Please RSVP if you'd like to come.

#### **BYLAW CHANGES – Susan Taylor**

Susan Taylor let everyone know that SDI's proposed bylaws passed at the Common Council meeting the previous night. They will become effective after being published. The next SDI Board of Trustees meeting will be the first to operate under the new bylaws.

Susan also said the Executive Committee feels that Mayor Dickson is a valuable member of the SDI Board, so she will bring her suggestion to change Article 1, A 2a that states "If the Mayor's designee shall be the ex-officio trustee said designee shall be appointed with advice and consent of Common Council" to the Bylaws Committee for their review.

#### **EVENTS – Marin Mixon and Kevin Smallwood**

A cookbook will be organized by Amy Cairns Harrison with recipes from the Summit Farmers Market vendors and farmers to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Farmers market. It will contain recipes from the vendors along with photographs, anecdotes, and history of the market. It will be sold for a nominal fee.

One Sunday each month there will be a special event at the Farmers Market, such as a Strawberry Festival, Apple Pie Contest, and pumpkin painting. One Sunday in September there will be a big celebration where we will close DeForest between Maple Street and Summit Avenue. There will be samples from the vendors, grilled food, and music.

Tony and the Mayor said that the Community Garden had a celebrity chef at one of their events. Perhaps we should look into having that person be one of our judges for our contests.

Kevin announced that SDI has been contacted by a British Car Club who would like to combine its show with our Antique/Classic Car Show. Marin has already talked to Dave Richel to make sure he's comfortable expanding the show onto Springfield Avenue, similar to the layout for Cars and Croissants. This will allow us to mix the show up so it won't feel stale with the same cars in the same places. Last year a category was added for military vehicles. We hope to work to increase participation for that category this year.

Dr. Rubino suggested having a category for “barn cars,” which are cars in the process of being restored, but are not complete yet. Kevin said that was an interesting idea and asked Dr. Rubino to provide him with someone to contact.

Annette Dwyer said that she thinks SDI is on a very positive track and is doing very well. She thinks it would be beneficial for SDI to look into doing a sort of ‘Summit Loyalty Card’. It could be handed out at events to encourage people to return to Summit. Then it would be up to each merchant how they would reward customers who presented the card. It would also be a good way to gather data on how events affect business downtown and remind merchants of how much SDI’s events help. Marin asked if Annette would help her work on the project, and Annette said she would love to. Dr. Rubino said for a program like this to be really successful, it needs to be smartphone-ready. A long discussion followed.

### **COMMON COUNCIL – Sandy Lizza and Al Dill**

Sandy said that the meeting the previous night was very productive. The Common Council agreed on goals moving forward. Some of the goals included addressing the new parking garage, a license plate identification system, improving the permitting process, and visually establishing major gateways so you know when you’re in Summit.

Al updated everyone on adding signage to the downtown. Ray from ITO is working with Aaron Schrager on the technical design aspects, but the Council will make the final decision. Al also emphasized the importance of adding more parking downtown. What will likely be the last of the feasibility studies is being conducted on the Park & Shop Lot #3 on DeForest Avenue. Tony agreed with Al saying that, as an organization, SDI agrees with the need for more parking and passed a resolution saying so in the past.

Sandy said that bids for the Morris Avenue Bridge have been received and are being evaluated. Mayor Dickson said that when the bridge was last inspected, it was rated a 2 on a scale of 1 to 100. Chris Cotter agreed that the bridge has been on the city’s to-do list for many years. Mayor Dickson and Assemblywoman Muñoz continue to push for the project.

### **SUBURBAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – Beth Welsh**

The Chamber had a very successful First Friday that was attended by all three mayors. The Tying Communities Together Dinner will be on March 26<sup>th</sup>. David Hughes, Cary Hardy, and Emi Havas are among those being honored

### **PUBLIC INPUT**

Robert Steelman wished to address the retail recruitment issue. He suggests that SDI talk to the three major brokerages in Summit and ask what their prospects say about Summit. He also suggested periodically checking in on the many new businesses that have opened in the last six months.

Mayor Dickson announced that Pinot’s Palette would be opening that Friday. The business has 35-40 parties booked already.

Lori announced that registration for the LEGO Event would open the following day. It will be held on March 15. All process benefit the Summit Historical Society.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Kevin. Lori seconded it, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 am.

**The next Trustee meeting is March 25, 2015.**