

Summit Downtown, Inc.

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To: Summit Downtown, Inc. Board of Trustees
From: Tony Melchionna
Date: June 29, 2016
Re: Summit Downtown, Inc. Board of Trustees
June 29, 2016

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

Members Absent: Pat Angelo.

Guests: Paul Cascais – Director, Dept. of Community Services
Dr. Robert Rubino – Summit Common Council
Aaron Schrage – City Engineer/Deputy Director, Dept. of Community Services

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 May 2016 Minutes.

Since no edits were suggested, Sandy Lizza moved that the May 2016 minutes be approved, Lori Dahl seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

CHAIRPERSONS REPORT – Tony Melchionna

Tony announced, with much sadness, that the Executive Committee received and accepted Marin's letter of retirement. She will stay with SDI until her replacement is hired and trained this fall. A press release will be going out later today. Marin will be greatly missed; she has been an invaluable asset to SDI.

A search committee will be formed. Emi Havas has expressed interest in being on the committee, as has Mayor Radest. Jef Buehler, head of Main Street NJ, will also have an active role in the process. The new Executive Director will shadow Marin for 3 or 4 weeks. Marin put together a binder of materials from Main Street NJ specifically designed for Executive Director search committees and transitions.

Tony thanked Paul and Aaron saying that the new LED lights are fantastic. During their monthly meeting Tony, Paul, Aaron, and Marin discussed new holiday decorations for the downtown light poles. They established that the new decorations will need to be phased in over a series of years, not done all at once. Sandy suggested decorations that are wintery, but not necessarily holiday-themed. That way they could be left up after January 6. Marin agreed, saying the office has investigated some snowflake decorations.

Tony thanked Greg Drummond for an excellent Cars & Croissants. The weather was beautiful, there was a great turn out of both spectators and participants with cars, and everything went very smoothly. He also thanked the Summit High School Drumline for performing.

Sandy asked if the Farmers Market noticed any increased business that day. Marin said that Harold Lefkowitz noticed people from the show walking into the market. Bob Conway said the market was busier.

Lori agreed with Tony saying it was an incredible, well-attended, high-end event, yet so many stores were closed. She spoke with lots of people downtown that day, and many of them commented on how many stores were closed. Sandy said SDI needs to market this event to our own businesses in terms of how many people and cars will be in the downtown. Tony said that Zappia's and Beacon Hill Tavern opened for the Car Show in past years, and they said they didn't even usually break even. But, the banner across Springfield Avenue does help. SDI is continuing to work with the City, Beth Welsh, and the new owners of the Bank of America Building to get the banner back up. Beth agreed that the banner is very important. We've trained the residents to look there. Since there's no banner, they assume there aren't any events going on.

COMMITTEE/PROJECT REPORTS

FINANCE – Lori Dahl

Lori said that all the finances are in order. SDI just received the Clean Communities grant money. It will show up in next month's finances.

Lori asked if anyone had any questions. Sandy asked where the money for the PGA is. Lori answered that the "events" category is for non-planned events that come up after the budget is approved. The PGA falls under that category. Sandy suggested pulling the PGA money out into its own category and labeling it so it's clear. Seeing no additional questions, Lori moved that the May 2016 financials be accepted as presented. Susan Taylor seconded the motion and the financials were approved unanimously.

Lori let everyone know that the Executive Committee was aware of Marin's retirement, and that has been built into the budget.

BY-LAWS CHANGES – Susan Taylor

A few months ago, changes to the by-laws were discussed. Sandy asked that the language surround "diligent search" be clarified. Regarding the search, the Nominating Committee has regulations. For example, they must do a mailing to property owners, give proper legal notice, etc. So, the language will be changed to "pursuant to procedures set forth by the Nominating Committee".

Additional changes:

- The trustee terms will be shortened from four years to three years. This change was not reflected when the Common Council approved the last round of revisions last year.
- The notification period for the Nominating Committee will be changed from 120 days to 90 days.

Susan Taylor moved that the changes to the By-Laws be approved and submitted to the city with the addition of the "pursuant to the procedures set forth by the Nominating Committee" language. The motion was seconded by Lori Dahl and passed unanimously.

RETAIL RESOURCE UPDATE – Marin Mixon

Jessica is away, but her monthly recap was included in the board packet. She is working on strategic marketing initiatives based on some of Summit's most prominent themes: design, fitness, and food.

15 businesses have signed up to be included in the Scout Guide. The photo shoot will be this July. The trifold will be printed for the event this fall. The trifold will be in the Spring 2017 edition of the North Jersey Scout Guide.

Jessica is also working on a potential fitness crawl event. She is continuing to keep in touch with the brokers and property owners. She is also keeping in touch with the three potential businesses for the downtown: a book store, a lingerie store, and a burger place.

EVENTS – Marin Mixon

SDI is discussing doing a joint event with the Suburban Chamber and ThisIsIt. Beth Welsh supports this concept, saying they did the Berkeley Heights street fair last week, and it was fabulous.

Michael Shapiro and Marin received an initial contract from ThisIsIt to do a street-fair-like event on September 18. Both Michael and Marin had significant concerns with the contract, and have communicated their concerns to ThisIsIt. They're awaiting a revised contract. Marin is very happy to be working with the Chamber on another event.

The Street Fair for next year has been set for May 18 if we elect to continue to work with Daryl Walker. SDI made \$6200 from this year's street fair. Sandy reiterated her position that the Street Fair should not be done again unless it is vastly different. Bob suggested speaking with Daryl to see if he's able to accommodate the changes that SDI wants to make to the event.

Kathryn went over the results of the survey of Girls' Night Out participants. 243 participants completed the survey. See attached for the full presentation. Some salient points:

- 90% of attendees surveyed went to the Welcome Center. Are we utilizing this to its full potential?
- 75% of attendees surveyed went into a business they'd never been in before. Success!
- 74% of those surveyed said they made a purchase. Success!
- Only 15% of those surveyed who made purchases bought something for Mother's Day. Is this a high enough percentage to ensure we hold GNO before Mother's Day, when the possibility of bad weather and conflicting dates is higher?

Marin let everyone know that SDI has asked the City for a permanent parking holiday on the Small Business Saturday, the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Every year, SDI asks the City to establish a permanent holiday. Every year, the City approves the free parking for that year only.

Sandy reminded the board that one of the City's concerns is the lost revenue. If this is a promotion for SDI and the downtown businesses, then shouldn't SDI pay for it?

Beth reminded everyone that commercial property is based on profitability. If there isn't enough parking, then rates and taxes will stay the same. If the City wants to make money on parking, then they should focus on becoming a commuter lot for surrounding communities. But, that won't make the downtown vibrant.

Kevin Smallwood added that the City has decided to make that Saturday a parking holiday for the last five-plus years. Why prolong the process? It's a way for the City to show goodwill to the downtown businesses. Dr. Rubino said that if they make it a permanent holiday, then it will just be expected, and the good will will go away.

Marin reminded everyone that Summit is hosting the Main Street NJ Downtown Institute at the Elks on July 26. We need volunteers for brief 1-hour shifts in the morning and at lunch time. Please sign up if you can help out.

The Junior League has started an initiative to provide food to children in need in August once their camps have ended but school hasn't started yet. G.I.F.T. will be donating select produce to the cause during August.

WINTER MARKET – Marin Mixon

Mayor Radest said that, personally, she thinks the Winter Market is a great idea. But, she feels strongly that the downtown businesses should be surveyed to gather their opinions on the subject. The survey would also be an opportunity to discuss how the businesses would like to communicate with SDI and with each other. Mayor Radest said that she would be happy to gather some volunteers to go door-to-door with the survey. That way we will have a higher response rate. If SDI declines to do the survey, then she will form a task force to do one. Sandy agrees with Mayor Radest. Mayor Radest acknowledges that it's a time consuming process. But, even if one-third are against the concept, majority rules, and SDI will re-evaluate after the one-year trial.

Susan agrees that there should be a survey, but that we need to be careful since so many of the merchants' gut-reaction is always 'no.'

Richard said that SDI will get feedback from the merchants on the market now or later. It's better to be proactive and get the businesses' feedback now. He also mentioned that Close.By/Summit has offered to do specific promotions like "Just bought bread at the winter market? Come buy cheese/meat/wine/etc. at this business."

Bob said that it will be important that the surveyors explain the concept properly and can answer any questions they receive. He also emphasized that we shouldn't set the precedent of letting one or two negative merchants derail a project.

Nora said that she and Marin will set a date to finalize the survey and discuss the details.

Lori said that she is against doing the survey. An educational piece is one thing, but if SDI had to ask the town's opinion on everything, nothing would get done. Tony agreed, saying that the SDI trustees are elected to represent the interests of the downtown merchants and property owners and vote on their behalf.

SUBURBAN CHAMBER UPDATE – Beth Welsh

The Tying Communities Together Dinner will be held March 22, 2017. The street fair done by ThisIsIt in Berkeley Heights was very successful. The Chamber will continue their Wine Down Wednesday series on the last Wednesday of each month. NJDTE is having performances at Reeves Reed Arboretum this summer the first one was absolutely magical. The other two performances are on July 27 and August 31.

DOWNTOWN PROJECT UPDATE – Aaron Schrager, Paul Cascais

Aaron Schrager re-presented Topology's presentation on Parklets. See attached for the presentation. Both malls and downtowns are competing with the internet for the same customers. Malls can put in Ferris wheels and all sorts of attractions. Downtowns need to be creative.

The council feels that the concept is worth trying. They're currently looking at two parking spaces in front of Tito's Burritos and Wings and Batavia Café. The parklet would cost approximately \$9-10 thousand. Tito's and Batavia together would fund half of that cost. They would also provide, clean, and maintain the tables and chairs in the parklet. The concept will be voted on at the next Common Council meeting.

Discussion continued.

Aaron said that the concrete work will begin on July 11. Paving will likely begin in September and will be done from 9PM to 5AM. The conduit work will likely be done August 1-25.

Tony said that he's notice that some businesses are putting their trash out into the freshly planted treewells. SDI needs to send an email out about that. Paul said that he has a flier specifically for educating businesses on proper trash protocol. He said that he would appreciate it if SDI would send that out. Marin agreed and asked Paul to send the flier to the office.

COMMON COUNCIL UPDATE – Sandy Lizza

The parking concierge contract has been extended to the end of 2016. It will be included in the assessment being conducted.

A resident came to a Common Council meeting because s/he was confused why the people benefitting from the decorative paving of Beechwood Road aren't paying for it. There will be a public meeting on the master plan at the Connection in September.

PGA UPDATE – Mayor Radest

The Mayor's PGA Taskforce is doing very well. They have collected lots of great offers from the businesses. Approximately 100,000 post cards will be printed. They are currently looking for volunteers to man the hospitality tent. DCP will be putting two putting greens out. The Taskforce is also investigating some kind of party with music on Beechwood Road, to be held on Thursday, July 28 (rain date Friday, July 29). They may close Beechwood Road for this event.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC INPUT

None

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Kevin Smallwood. It was seconded by Lori Dahl and the meeting was adjourned at 9:48 am.

The next Trustee meeting is July 27, 2016