

DOWNTOWN BRIDGEPORT

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

The Board of Commissioners of the Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) hereby fix and call the Annual Meeting of Holders of Record Taxable Interests in Property in the DSSD. The meeting will be held on **Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at the Soundview Penthouse, located at 855 Main Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604. The meeting will begin at 4:00 p.m.** All Holders of Record of Taxable Interest in Property in the Bridgeport DSSD are invited and required to attend. The meeting is open to the public, and all community members are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

The meeting is called for the election of members of the Board of Commissioners of the District and for the transaction of other business as outlined in the agenda for the meeting as follows:

- I. Call to Order and Presentation of the Roll, and Recognition of Guests
- II. Proof of Service of Notice of Meeting to Owners
- III. Establishment of a Quorum
- IV. Election of Commissioners
- V. Community Presentations
- VI. Report from the City
- VII. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- VIII. Presentation and Hearing of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Proposed Annual Budget
- IX. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: April 9, 2025, Regular Meeting
- X. Adoption of the Schedule of Regular Meetings for the Fiscal Year 2026
- XI. Treasurer's Report
- XII. Election of Officers
- XIII. Old and New Business
- XIV. Adjournment

ELECTION OF COMMISSIONERS

Under the Bylaws of the Bridgeport DSSD, the District is managed by a thirteen-member Board of Commissioners, nine of whom are property owners and four of whom are leaseholders, in addition to an ex-officio member who is the Mayor of Bridgeport. Each year, a slate of property owners and leaseholders are voted in for a three-year term on the Board of Commissioners.

At this initial meeting to elect leaseholders as Commissioners, two leaseholders shall be elected for a three-year term, one leaseholder shall be elected for a two-year term, and one leaseholder shall be elected for a one-year term. In future elections, all Commissioners irrespective of type shall be elected for three (3) year terms at the annual meeting of the membership in the year the term expires.

Who Votes: Only Holders of Record of Taxable Interest in Property within the District are eligible to vote. A list of the names and addresses of record holders within the District is accessible on our website:

colorfulbridgeport.com/what-we-do under Our District and Services.

The percentage voting interests allocable to any taxable parcel consisting of a condominium form of ownership pursuant to the Connecticut Common Interest Ownership Act (Connecticut General Statutes

47-200 et. seq.) shall be subdivided on a per condominium unit basis by multiplying (a) the taxable parcel's voting interest prior to becoming a condominium by (b) the percentage that the condominium unit owner owns in the condominium's common elements as set forth in the applicable declaration of condominium. If a property is owned by a corporation, partnership, unincorporated association, or other form of entity, such entity may select an officer, partner, or agent to vote on its behalf.

The Ballot: At the coming election, three (3) property owner Commissioners and four (4) leaseholder Commissioners are to be elected. The property owner members of the Board whose terms are expiring include Commissioner Javier Ceja, Commissioner Jason Cohen, and Commissioner and Chair Philip Pires. For a complete list of the Bridgeport DSSD's current Board of Commissioners, visit colorfulbridgeport.com/who-we-are. **Enclosed in this mailing is a single ballot on which you may vote for both property owner and leaseholder candidates.**

Nominations: An online nomination form was open from March 5 to April 2, 2025, for all prospective property owner and leaseholder candidates to indicate their interest in serving on the Bridgeport DSSD Board of Commissioners. All prospective candidates were required to provide proof of ownership or their written lease within the DSSD service area. The ballot with the verified candidates is enclosed.

In addition to the slate of candidates on the enclosed ballot, an owner may nominate someone for a position on the Board of Commissioners by being present at the Annual Meeting and nominating your nominee at such time. In order for the floor nomination to be accepted, the candidate must provide proof of either property ownership or a written lease within the DSSD boundaries.

When to Vote: At the Annual Meeting, an election will be conducted. You may mail or email your ballot in advance of the meeting, vote in person at the meeting, or you may give your proxy to any third party to vote on your behalf for any nominee or any other matter that may come before the meeting.

It is very important that you attend the meeting since the Annual Meeting cannot occur without a quorum in person, by proxy, or ballots received in advance. The required quorum consists of a majority of the Holders of Record of Taxable Interest in Property within the District. Holders of Record of Taxable Interest in Property in the District are strongly encouraged to mail or email in their ballots ahead of the Annual Meeting.

If you have any questions about the nominating or voting process, please contact Bridgeport DSSD President and CEO Lauren Coakley Vincent at (203) 908-3622 or by email: lauren.dssd@colorfulbridgeport.com.

COMMISSIONER CANDIDATE GUIDE

PROPERTY OWNER CANDIDATES

There are three (3) property owner Commissioners of the Board whose terms are expiring. Below is a snapshot of their background, connection to Downtown Bridgeport, interest in serving the neighborhood, and properties they represent in the District.



Javier Ceja, property owner of 1187 Broad Street and 40 Fairfield Avenue

Javier Ceja is an avid supporter of businesses in the neighborhood, especially the tenants of his two properties. He is not only invested in Downtown Bridgeport, Javier also spends the majority of his social, business, and chill time here.

Javier has been a Member of the Bridgeport DSSD's Board of Commissioners since 2022. He has served as a member of the Public Safety and Special Events and Marketing Committees during that time.

Contact: javiceja@gmail.com



Jason Cohen, property owner of 144 Golden Hill Street, 955-957 Main Street, and 991-1019 Main Street

Jason Cohen is an Asset Manager at Time Equities Inc. Over the last 10 years Jason has managed multifamily and commercial real estate assets across the country and now primarily focuses on Bridgeport, where he manages 175 rental apartments and approximately 97,000 square feet of commercial retail space in Downtown Bridgeport.

Jason's connection to Bridgeport started as a child, when he would often take the Bridgeport ferry to Long Island with his family and stop in to dine at Downtown institution Ralph and Rich's restaurant. Through his work, Jason is responsible for several buildings that house many residences and businesses in the neighborhood. It is his goal to do what he can to ensure the community is the best it can be for everyone.

Jason has been a Member of the Bridgeport DSSD's Board of Commissioners since 2024. He has served as a member of the Elections and Public Safety Committees during that time.

Contact: jcohen@timeequities.com



Philip Pires, property owner of 1115 Broad Street, 1135 Broad Street, and 130 Cannon Street

Philip Pires is an attorney with Cohen & Wolf practicing in the areas of commercial litigation, municipal law, and probate litigation for over 16 years. His law practice includes the representation of municipalities, taxing districts, and quasi-municipal entities. Cohen & Wolf has been present in Bridgeport for nearly 75 years and in Downtown Bridgeport for over 40 years. A resident of Fairfield, he presently serves as Fairfield's Town Attorney and previously served for six years on the Fairfield Representative Town Meeting, the Town's legislative body, including two years as the Moderator (Chair).

As a Downtown property owner and business owner with a longstanding presence in Downtown Bridgeport, Phil's firm is committed to improving the Downtown and he believes that the work of the DSSD is critically important. Phil has been a Member of the Bridgeport DSSD's Board of Commissioners since 2016. He served as its Treasurer from 2016-2017, as its Vice Chairman from 2017-2018, and as its Chairman from 2018 to the present.

Contact: ppires@cohenandwolf.com

LEASEHOLDER CANDIDATES

There are four (4) seats available for leaseholders of any kind within the District. Below is a snapshot of their background, connection to Downtown Bridgeport, interest in serving the neighborhood, what type of leaseholder they are, and in what Downtown property.



Alicia Cobb, residential leaseholder at 1042 Broad Street (Read's Artspace)

Alicia C. Cobb is an award-winning visual artist, body painter, teaching artist, and leader with original art works on many surfaces including canvas, walls, and people. Alicia is certified in therapeutic arts and facilitates professional development workshops, student workshops, student residencies, private lessons, and commissions.

Alicia's vast network within the creative community extends from 30 years of living in Bridgeport to her involvement with the Bridgeport Arts & Cultural Council, Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County (2022 ACE Award winner), and most recently as the CT Office of the Arts' 2024 Arts Hero. Alicia was introduced to the DSSD in 2017 through the Jane's Walk neighborhood tours, and deepened her connection in 2021 when she moved into the Read's building. She is dedicated and passionate about lending her voice as a resident and business owner to the growth of culture, commerce, and community in Downtown Bridgeport.

Alicia has been a Member of the Bridgeport DSSD's Special Events and Marketing Committee since 2018. She has chaired the Committee since 2023.

Contact: artsimplified@gmail.com



Gemeem Davis, commercial leaseholder at 1119 Main Street (Bridgeport Generation Now)

Gemeem Davis is the Vice President and Co-Director of Bridgeport Generation Now, an African American woman, and a third generation Bridgeporter. Gemeem is a graduate of Pratt Institute where she studied architecture and holds a BFA in film. After living in New York City for several years, she moved back home to Downtown Bridgeport in 2016 intent on making a positive

impact in her hometown.

Since getting involved with the DSSD in 2017, Gemeem has contributed to the creation of Jane's Walk, the Colorful Bridgeport campaign, "Color It In" mural project, the DSSD's annual "Banner" fundraising project, and more. When resettling in Bridgeport, Gemeem's decision to live and work Downtown was intentional and demonstrated her strong commitment to ensuring Downtown Bridgeport businesses thrive while improving residents' livability. She is committed to ensuring that Bridgeport business owners and residents live and work in a downtown that is safe, beautiful, and rich in cultural activities.

Gemeem has been a Member of the DSSD's Special Events and Marketing Committee since 2017.

Contact: gemeem@bptgennow.org



Hugh Hallinan, commercial leaseholder at 263 Golden Hill Street (Downtown Cabaret Theatre)

Hugh Hallinan has been a part of Downtown Bridgeport's arts and culture scene for over four decades. Hugh started working at the Downtown Cabaret Theatre in 1980 and became Executive Producer and Executive Director in 2006. Since then, he has worked to uphold the theatre's legacy as a beloved, family-friendly venue known for its award-winning productions, popular concert series, and unique cabaret-style, bring-your-own-food-and-drink format.

Hugh has been a passionate advocate for the city's revitalization and the vital role the arts can play in that process. Despite challenges—from economic shifts to safety concerns—he remains committed to keeping the Downtown Cabaret Theatre a cultural anchor and a safe, welcoming space for audiences for years to come. Hugh wants to bring his commitment to Downtown Bridgeport and creative problem-solving to the DSSD Board to help drive real, visible change that makes the neighborhood safer, stronger, and more inviting for everyone.

Contact: hugh@dtcab.com



Tamekia Lemus, residential leaseholder at 955 Main Street (City Trust Apartments)

Tamekia Deshan Lemus is a 48-year-old wife, mother to seven young adults, grandmother to five beautiful grandchildren, and wife to Jaime E. Lemus. Tamekia founded three Connecticut enterprises: Designed by Meka Custom Made, which builds and customizes miniature dollhouses and keepsakes, Mother Daughter USA/International, a pageant for mothers and daughters who are looking to do more in their community, and Girls with a Crown United, a youth mentorship and empowerment program for young ladies ages 7-17. She has a degree in Elementary Education from Park University, having taught in Texas and New York.

Since Tamekia moved to Downtown Bridgeport in 2020, she has come to love the city, its history, the amazing people, and the endless opportunities that are offered here for small businesses to grow and be successful. Tamekia seeks to better Downtown from the perspective of a resident, business owner, and community volunteer, so that the neighborhood can continue to be a safe, clean, and prosperous environment that brings in more businesses, opportunities, and jobs.

Contact: designedbymeka@gmail.com



Lynn Mosher-Howell, residential leaseholder at 1115 Main Street (HSW) and commercial leaseholder at 25 Elm Street (Rapha Massage)

In 2015, Lynn Mosher-Howell moved into a Downtown Bridgeport apartment and opened an office for her business, recognizing that Downtown is very pretty and secure with great opportunity for quality massage. Lynn then made the move to a live-work space in the HSW building and immediately invested in making the storefront a beautiful space that is lit up every night with seasonal holiday displays. Rapha Massage is an award-winning practice, having won Connecticut Magazine's "Best of CT" in 2022 and 2024.

Since being Downtown, Lynn joined the Downtown Bridgeport Merchants Association, advocated at City Council meetings, and during Covid held a virtual trick or treat for the kids and put up a rainbow of lights. She also performs at comedy events, including at the Bijou and Stress Factory in recent years.

Lynn has been a Member of the Bridgeport DSSD's Special Events and Marketing Committee and Public Safety Committee since 2024.

Contact: raphamassagebpt@gmail.com



Nate Smith, residential leaseholder at 323 Fairfield Avenue (Apartments at 323 Fairfield)

Nate Smith has been a small business owner and resident of Downtown Bridgeport for the past nine years. Nate owned and operated a small take-out restaurant called Uncle Joe's from 2017 to 2020, then partnered with Vinnie Brand to run Gather Tap & Tavern until 2024. He currently owns Braxton's Restaurant Group, which includes catering, a food truck, and working towards opening Bridgeport's first upscale smokehouse scheduled to open the beginning of June 2025.

Nate is a strong leader, who wants to support and represent his community. His perspective is that Downtown Bridgeport offers great opportunity, but we suffer from a lack of diverse leadership. This is something he wants to help change by serving on the DSSD board, so that the broader community can be represented and their voices be heard.

Chef Nate was featured in the Colorful Bridgeport "Colorful Melting Pot" series during his tenure with Gather Tap & Tavern, attracting many foodies and visitors to the neighborhood.

Contact: nate@discoverbraxtons.com



Barbara Sreckovic, residential leaseholder of 855 Main Street (Soundview)

Originally from the west side of Chicago, Barbara Skreckovic moved to Connecticut in 2000 to run fitness classes for Aquarion Water Company. During that time, Barbara absolutely fell in love with the city, as it reminded her of Chicago and always felt like home. Later when she became a realtor and specialized in Bridgeport, Barbara joined the AMS Real Estate team to assist residents and business owners with their real estate needs.

Barbara participated in the BRBC's Leadership Greater Bridgeport Class 35, which gave her a strong understanding of the community's needs. As a passionate Downtown resident, avid MetroNorth rider, and someone who regularly walks her dog in the neighborhood, Barbara is focused on safety, transportation, supporting thriving businesses that serve the community, and cleanliness. She would like to join the DSSD Board of Commissioners so that she can continue to be actively connected to Bridgeport and involved in its growth, helping to make Downtown an even better place to live and work.

Contact: BarbaraS@amsrealestate.com