

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
November 8, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

The DSSD Board of Commissioners Meeting took place at the offices of the Bridgeport DSSD, 938 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604.

In attendance:

Commissioners

Phil Pires, C & W Associates II, Chair
David Iassogna, M&T Bank, Vice Chair
Eric Gross, John Broadcannon, Treasurer
Bob Schneider, Jimmy's A & N, Secretary (Ex Officio)
Jason Cohen, Bordentown DB, LLC
Karolyn Egbert, Trefz Corporation
Fred Frassinelli, AMS Real Estate
Callie Gale Heilmann, Made in Bridgeport, LLC
Philip Kuchma, Kuchma Corporation
Andy Toledo, City of Bridgeport (Ex Officio)

Staff

Lauren Coakley Vincent, DSSD President
Charles Suarez-Penn, DSSD/SMG

Guests

Alicia Cobb, Art Simplificated
Ira Jacoby, Felner Corporation
Kathy Maher, The Barnum Museum
Chris Russo, Russo & Rizio, LP
Ian Sacarny, Crestwood Management
Adam Wood, City & State Public Affairs

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pires called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Mr. Pires opened the meeting by welcoming guests Alicia Cobb of Art Simplificated, Ira Jacoby from the Felner Corporation, Kathy Maher from The Barnum Museum, Chris Russo of Russo & Rizio, LP, Ian Sacarny from Crestwood Management, and Adam Wood from City & State Public Affairs.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Kuchma made a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 11, 2023, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Iassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IV. TREASURER REPORT

Treasurer Gross provided an explanation of the September 2023 financial report as provided by the bookkeeper. The Bridgeport DSSD ended the month of September 2023 with \$98,250 in assets, of which \$250,268 was cash spread across two bank accounts. Liabilities totaled \$50,658, encompassed by a mix of Accounts Payable and Refundable Advances. Net Assets at the end of the month totaled \$47,591. The accrued revenue was \$276,351 – primarily City of Bridgeport tax and contract payments. Expenses for the same period totaled \$365,283 – primarily related to streetscape maintenance and creative placemaking of the organization (\$293,559). Accrued expenses exceeded revenue for the period by \$88,932. Commissioner Frassinelli made a motion to approve the September 2023 financial report. Commissioner Egbert seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

V. REPORT FROM THE CITY

Mr. Toledo provided updates on the train station signage project, that the Lafayette Circle Redesign project is at 60% design and on hold until 2025, that the State Street blinking light letter is currently under review by State DOT, the timeline for tree trimming

implementation, and information about the possible expansion of the South End NRZ to include the Downtown.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent gave an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team's performance report for the month of October, which reflected a small increase (6%) in sanitation instances over the past month and over the previous year (13%) due to a fluctuations in the bills/stickers removed, and alcohol containers and trash bags collected. The team saw an increase in the amount of time devoted to beautification work from the previous month (74%) but a decrease from the same time period in the previous year (43%), in both instances due to the quantity of leaf bags collected.

The Public Safety category stayed effectively steady from the previous month but dropped by 36 percent from the same month in the previous year due to the previous year's use of bicycle patrols. Finally, there was a small decrease in the number of interactions in the Public Engagement categories from the previous month (9%) and from the same month in the previous year (5%).

Ms. Lauren Coakley Vincent then invited DSSD members who attended the site visit to Downtown Hartford to share insights gained from the trip. She shared a recap of the Downtown Farmers Market 2023 season, gave an overview of the planned content for the holiday shopping season, and reminded attendees to save the date for the Bridgeport Art Trail weekend of activities and the Color It In Artists Reception on November 16th.

VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Executive

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on November 1, 2023. The Committee continued to discuss how to address the various vendor contracts that expire at the end of the fiscal year. The DSSD's program committees that work with those vendors will provide feedback before the next Executive Committee meeting to further the discussion. The Committee also continued to explore how to move forward on the elements of the CT Main Street Center's district assessment related to board composition. A survey will be sent out to all Commissioners and committee members to assess self-reported information that will be used to determine how to recruit additional or new members to the respective governance bodies that represent different constituencies within the downtown district and the community at large. Lastly, the Committee finalized the agenda for this month's board meeting.

B. Physical Conditions

Ms. Coakley Vincent reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on October 27, 2023. The Committee walked the district with Ms. Coakley Vincent and Downtown Ambassador Operations Manager Charles Suarez-Penn, identifying areas where additional detailed cleaning was needed, with a special focus on the new public art sites in the neighborhood.

C. Public Safety

Mr. Iassogna reported on the Public Safety and Security Committee meeting that was held on October 27, 2023. The Committee discussed recent public safety and quality of life issues, in particular a series of break ins at businesses in the neighborhood. The Committee brainstormed ways that street lighting could be enhanced and planned to walk the district at their next meeting to identify problem areas.

D. Special Events and Marketing

Ms. Cobb reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on October 31, 2023. The Committee reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content for the past month, including the Downtown Farmers Market vendor features and What's Happening events newsletters and videos. The Committee then reviewed the holiday season content plans, including the introduction of a Colorful Bridgeport mascot and video series collaboration with Edwin Escobar highlighting local businesses. The Committee reviewed the outcomes of the 2023 Downtown Farmers Market season, as well as plans for the upcoming Bridgeport Art Trail weekend of activities and the Color It In Artists Reception. Finally, the Committee brainstormed ways to incorporate gateway and wayfinding signage in the Downtown.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Adam Wood from City & State Public Affairs and Chris Russo of Russo & Rizio spoke with the board about a prospective development project at the Shoreline Star Greyhound site along the waterfront across from the Downtown to attract a Major League Soccer team, on behalf of the developer Andre Swanston. Mr. Wood and Mr. Russo gave an overview of the full project, and took questions about the timeline and potential impact on the Downtown.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 4:58 p.m.