

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
January 10, 2024  
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)  
Javier Ceja, Downtown Strategic Group  
Max Pastor, Bordentown DB, LLC  
Karolyn Egbert, Trefz Corporation  
Fred Frassinelli, AMS Real Estate  
Andy Toledo, City of Bridgeport (Ex Officio)

**Staff**

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

**Guests**

Chris DeAngelis, Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers  
Ira Jacoby, Felner Corporation  
Ian Sacarny, Crestwood Management  
Ed Schneider  
Maisa Tisdale, Mary & Eliza Freeman Center

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Phil Pires called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

**II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS**

Mr. Pires opened the meeting by welcoming guests Chris DeAngelis of Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers, Ira Jacoby from the Felner Corporation, Ian Sacarny of Crestwood Management, Ed Schneider, and Maisa Tisdale from the Mary & Eliza Freeman Center.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner David Iassogna made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Minutes of the November 8, 2023, DSSD Board Meeting. Commissioner Fred Frassinelli seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Eric Gross made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Minutes of the December 13, 2023, DSSD Board Meeting as presented. Commissioner Egbert seconded the motion. Mr. Pires abstained, and the minutes was unanimously approved.

**IV. TREASURER REPORT**

Treasurer Eric Gross provided an explanation of the October and November 2023 financial reports as provided by the bookkeeper. The Bridgeport DSSD ended the month of November 2023 with \$222,276 in assets, of which \$200,312 was cash spread across two bank accounts. Liabilities totaled \$160,520, encompassed by a mix of Accounts Payable, Refundable Advances, and lease liability. Net Assets at the end of the month totaled \$85,690. The accrued revenue was \$583,570 – primarily City of Bridgeport tax and contract payments. Expenses for the same period totaled \$662,383 – primarily related to streetscape maintenance and creative placemaking of the organization (\$545,137). Accrued expenses exceeded revenue for the period by \$78,812. Mr. Frassinelli made a motion to approve the November 2023 financial report. Ms. Egbert seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

DSSD President + CEO Lauren Coakley Vincent referenced the Fiscal Year 2023 audit presentation made by Paula Lathrop of Fiorita, Kornhaas, & Co. at the December 2023 board meeting. In that presentation, Ms. Lathrop shared that the DSSD has good financial controls and that the general purpose financial statements present fairly, in all material

respects, the financial position of the DSSD as of June 30, 2023, and 2022, and the results of its operations and the changes in its fund balances for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. Mr. Gross made a motion to approve the audit. Mr. Iassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

## **V. REPORT FROM THE CITY**

Mr. Andy Toledo provided updates on signage at the train station, the status of the State Street blinking light letter to Connecticut DOT, the timeline to complete requested tree trimming, and the City's plans for recruiting the open positions in the Departments of Public Facilities, Planning, and Economic Development. In addition, Mr. Toledo shared an update on the City's position on the UI Fairfield to Congress Railroad Transmission Line 115-kV Rebuild Project.

## **VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Ms. Coakley Vincent gave an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team's performance report for the month of December, which reflected a negligible decrease (1%) in sanitation instances over the past month and an increase over the previous year (25%) due to a fluctuation in the alcohol containers and trash bags collected metrics. The team saw a decrease in the amount of time devoted to beautification work from the previous month (94%) and from the same time period in the previous year (83%), both due to a drop in the quantity of leaf bags collected and block faces weeded. The Public Safety category dropped by 18 percent from the previous month and 70 percent from the same month in the previous year due to a drop in panhandling. Finally, there was a small decrease in the number of interactions in the Public Engagement category from the previous month (3%), but an increase from the same month in the previous year (18%).

Ms. Coakley Vincent reported on the Shop Locally, Give Colorfully holiday season promotions. The annual shopping guide was complemented by a business highlight video series created by local director Edwin Escobar and funded by UI/Avangrid. The videos featured dining, culture, service, and shopping businesses in the neighborhood.

## **VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

### **A. Executive**

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on January 3, 2024. The Committee finalized the DSSD's formal letters to UI, the CT Siting Council, and Governor Lamont regarding the UI Fairfield to Congress Railroad Transmission Line 115-kV Rebuild Project. The Committee began drafting a letter to City Finance Director Kenneth Flatto regarding funding for additional public safety services. The Committee reviewed and discussed the results of the board composition survey. Lastly, the Committee finalized the agenda for this month's board meeting.

### **B. Physical Conditions**

Mr. DeAngelis reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on December 29, 2023. The Committee discussed next steps to enhance street lighting in the neighborhood, the possibility of staffing maintenance services at the Sliver by the River, and locations where welcome signage would be most impactful in the district.

### **C. Public Safety**

Mr. Iassogna reported on the Public Safety Committee meeting that was held on December 29, 2023. The Committee heard updates from Bridgeport Police Chief Porter about recent public safety and quality of life issues in the Downtown, including that the Police Department has now dedicated two cars to the neighborhood in the

late-night hours. The Committee discussed individual business owners to recruit to join the Committee, who could add new perspectives to the Committee's work. Chief Porter also shared that he was hosting a public safety forum with Downtown residents on January 6<sup>th</sup> and that all Committee members were encouraged to attend.

#### **D. Special Events and Marketing**

Ms. Coakley Vincent reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on January 9, 2024. The Committee discussed ideas for connecting with large tenant with the neighborhoods and individuals to recruit to join the Committee, who could add new perspectives to the Committee's work. The Committee then reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content for the past month, the planned release of the Color It In murals video series in January, welcome signage concepts. Finally, the Committee brainstormed ways collaboration partners for Black History Month and Women's History Month, as well as the list of events for the DSSD to undertake in 2024.

### **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Coakley Vincent asked the group to provide input to be shared with MetroCOG regarding reuse and planning for the PSEG Bridgeport Harbor Station Site. She shared that MetroCOG had partnered with Colliers Engineering & Design to analyze the existing site conditions, short-term and long-term processes, procedures, and associated costs for site redevelopment and reuse that consider the economic viability of future uses, and the social and environmental objectives of the community. The group brainstormed the following short list of redevelopment concepts and scenarios that considered job creation, tax generation, quality of life, and amenity provision for the residents of the South End and the entire City of Bridgeport:

- Invest in public art to beautify the physical assets that will remain on-site, such as the iconic smokestack.
- Return the portion of the parcel that was originally Little Liberia to the historic preservation initiatives currently active and in place.
- Connect the parcel to the South End community and reconnect with Downtown, either with a walking path or some other version of open access.
- Revisit and enhance the Resilient Bridgeport recommendations to use the site as a protective barrier to climate change impacts for the South End.
- Extend Seaside Park into the parcel.

### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 4:46 p.m.