

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
February 12, 2025  
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  
Javier Ceja, Downtown Strategic Group  
Jason Cohen, Bordentown DB, LLC  
Karolyn Egbert, Trefz Corporation  
Philip Kuchma, Kuchma Corporation  
Fred Frassinelli, AMS Real Estate

**Guests**

Chris DeAngelis, Chris DeAngelis, PE, LLC  
Rebecca DeVos, The Bachata Experience  
Ira Jacoby, Felner Corporation  
Sarah Lopez, Office of Senator Murphy  
Blaze Lovell, Bridgeport Pride Center  
Kathy Maher, The Barnum Museum  
Yolanda Petrocelli, Read's Artspace resident  
Taj

**Staff**

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

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pires called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

**II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS**

Mr. Pires opened the meeting by welcoming guests Chris DeAngelis of Chris DeAngelis, PE, Rebecca DeVos from The Bachata Experience, Ira Jacoby from the Felner Corporation Sarah Lopez from the Office of Senator Murphy, Blaze Lovell from the Bridgeport Pride Center, Kathy Maher from the Barnum Museum, Read's Artspace resident Yolanda Petrocelli, and Taj.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Kuchma made a motion to approve the Minutes of the January 15, 2025, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Iassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**IV. TREASURER REPORT**

Treasurer Gross was not able to attend, so this agenda item was moved to the next meeting.

**V. REPORT FROM THE CITY**

Mr. Toledo was not in attendance, so Ms. Coakley Vincent relayed updates sent via email on the provided updates on the Congress Street Bridge implementation status, revamped RFPs for Downtown development sites, and planned sidewalk repairs.

**VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent gave an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team's performance report for the month of January, which reflected no change in the level of sanitation instances over the past month and a small increase (6%) over the previous year. The team saw a seasonal decrease (85%) in the amount of time devoted to beautification work from the previous month and an increase (100%) from the same time period in the previous year due to fluctuations in weather patterns. The Public Safety category reflected an increase from the previous month (56%) and from the same month in the previous year (179%) due to an increase in panhandling. Finally, there was an increase (30%) in the number of interactions in the Public Engagement category from the previous month and from the same month in the previous year (22%).

Ms. Coakley Vincent walked through the spring planting plan for Downtown tree beds, ground planters at McLevy Green and Peacock Alley, and the beds at the Broad Street Steps. She then reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content from the previous month, including the What's Happening events newsletters and videos, Monthly Mosaic events calendar launch, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and the board expansion announcements. Finally, Ms. Coakley Vincent gave a high-level summary of the key takeaways and insights gained from her one-on-one with DSSD Commissioners and Committee Chairs.

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

### **A. Executive**

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on February 5, 2025. The Committee met with representatives from the City's Office of Planning & Economic Development about a possible site development partnership for Post Office Square and how to approach the Downtown property owners with land development agreements that do not currently pay into the DSSD assessment. The Committee set the timeline to draft the fiscal year 2026 budget and 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 February 7, 2025. The Committee provided input the 2025 planting plan for McLevy Green, the Broad Street Steps, and Downtown tree beds.

### **C. Public Safety**

Commissioner Iassogna reported on the Public Safety Committee meeting that was held on February 7, 2025. The Committee discussed persistent Downtown safety issues, including panhandling, graffiti, and illegal parking. Chief Porter noted that the Police Department is focused on removing abandoned cars, which has impacted their ability to get to illegal parking issues. He announced that a new class of officers graduated, which will bring the department closer to 300 officers. Of that new class, 12 officers will be neighborhood police officers assigned in pairs. He also shared that the hookah lounge ordinance passed, and he will send the ordinance language for DSSD to distribute. He was asked about the department's engagement with federal immigration enforcement and said that ICE gives them a heads up when they are in Bridgeport but don't ask for assistance. He also noted that regarding the unhoused population, they are collaborating with MetroNorth to assist individuals at the train station.

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

Ms. Coakley Vincent reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on February 4, 2025. The Committee reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content from the past month and previewed content for the upcoming months, including the Colorful Nights nightlife series, Black History and Women's History month videos, and the new website launch. Finally, the Committee approved the 2025 DSSD events calendar, including the Downtown Farmers Market, Jane's Walk, PAKR(ing) Day, Downtown Salsa Nights, Nature Nights outdoor movies, and Bridgeport Art Trail Public Art Crawl.

### **E. Elections**

Ms. Coakley Vincent reported that the Elections Committee prepared the agenda and presentation materials for the How to Run for a Commissioner Seat training planned for February 18, 2025.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

The Board of Commissioners provided input on the drafted request letter to the City of Bridgeport to include an allocation for the Bridgeport DSSD in the fiscal year 2026 budget.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 4:56 p.m.