

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**December 11, 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 were:

**Commissioners**

Phil Pires, C & W Associates II, Chair  
David Iassogna, M&T Bank, Vice Chair  
Callie Gale Heilmann, Made in Bridgeport, Secretary  
Jason Cohen, Bordentown DB, LLC  
Philip Kuchma, Kuchma Corporation  
Tony Sherwood, AMS Real Estate  
Andy Toledo, City of Bridgeport (Ex Officio)

**Guests**

Alicia Cobb, Art Simplified  
Chris DeAngelis, Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers  
Fred Frassinelli, AMS Real Estate  
Ira Jacoby, Felner Corporation  
Paula Lathrop, Fiorita, Kornhaas & Company  
Sarah Lopez, Office of Senator Murphy  
Alex Makar, Fiorita, Kornhaas & Company  
Karin Smith, Kindred Thoughts Bookstore

**Staff**

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

**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 Simplified, Chris DeAngelis of Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers, Fred Frassinelli of AMS Real Estate, Ira Jacoby from the Felner Corporation, Paula Lathrop from Fiorita Kornhaas & Company, Sarah Lopez from the Office of Senator Murphy, Alex Makar from Fiorita Kornhaas & Company, and Karin Smith of Kindred Thoughts Bookstore.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Cohen made a motion to approve the Minutes of the November 13, 2024, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Heilmann seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**IV. TREASURER REPORT**

Treasurer Gross was not in attendance, so the October 2024 financial report presentation was tabled to the next board meeting.

Paula Lathrop and Alex Makar of Fiorita, Kornhaas & Co. presented the findings of the Fiscal Year 2024 audit. They reported that the DSSD had 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, 2024, and 2023, 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. Cohen made a motion to approve the October 2024 financial report. Ms. Heilmann seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**V. REPORT FROM THE CITY**

Mr. Toledo shared that the City Council, in collaboration with the Legislative Director and heads of related City departments, were drafting ordinance language to establish restrictions on bring your own beverage nightlife establishments, such as hookah lounges. He announced that the City's Office of Planning & Economic Development was working with MetroCOG, the State's newly established Municipal Redevelopment Authority, and

Park City Communities to release a site reuse study request for proposals looking into mixed use opportunities at the Amphitheater parking lots, Lafayette Street and Railroad Avenue parcels, and 375 Main Street. Finally, Mr. Toledo provided updates on the status of the Congress Street Bridge funding application to the federal government. Ms. Lopez added that while the application is highly rated, there is some uncertainty whether the funding will still be available under the new administration.

Commissioner Kuchma inquired about the storefront improvement grants, specifically if there is a publicly available report regarding how much of the money has been spent. Mr. Toledo said he would get back to the Commission with those details.

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

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent gave an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team's performance report for the month of November, which reflected a small decrease (5%) in sanitation instances over the past month and a small increase (5%) over the previous year due to fluctuations in the number of bills/stickers, alcohol containers, and trash bags removed. The team saw a jump in the amount of time devoted to beautification work from the previous month (72%) and a decrease (17%) from the same time period in the previous year due to the amount of leaf bags collected. The Public Safety category reflected a decrease (21%) from the previous month and an increase (21%) from the same month in the previous year due to fluctuations in the number of panhandling diversions. Finally, there was a small drop (4%) in the number of interactions in the Public Engagement category from the previous month, and an increase (20%) from the same month in the previous year.

Ms. Coakley Vincent then provided a recap of the Colorful Bridgeport content in as well as the community events that the DSSD either led or supported in the month of November, including the Bridgeport Art Trail, Downtown Salsa Nights, and Holiday Tree Lighting and Vendor Market. Finally, she reported back on a series of coordination meetings held with various City departments on topics related to parking, public safety, leave removal, and quality of life concerns in public spaces.

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

### **A. Executive**

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on December 4, 2024. The Committee debriefed the special meeting regarding prospective board member recruitment. The Committee then reviewed the draft fiscal year 2024 audit. The Committee finalized the agenda for this month's board meeting. Lastly, the Committee went into executive session to discuss a legal matter involving the DSSD.

### **B. Physical Conditions**

Mr. DeAngelis reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on December 6, 2024. The Committee discussed the Downtown Ambassador team's preparations for snow removal and coordination with the City's Public Facilities Department as winter approaches. The Committee decided to compile a winter weather advisory resource for property owners and business owners to distribute.

### **C. Public Safety**

Commissioner Iassogna reported on the Public Safety and Security Committee meeting that was held on December 6, 2024. The Committee discussed recent safety issues in the Downtown, including illegal parking, graffiti, the unhoused population, and new lighting installations. Chief Porter offered to give a presentation to the Bridgeport DSSD and Downtown community on how 21<sup>st</sup> century policing has been implemented within the Bridgeport Police Department at an upcoming meeting.

**D. Special Events and Marketing**

Ms. Cobb reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on December 3, 2024. The Committee reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content and participation in events of the past month, including the Bridgeport Art Trail, the final Downtown Salsa Night, Downtown Public Art Crawl, McLevy Green Holiday Tree Lighting, and What's Happening weekly event newsletters. The Committee discussed plans for the upcoming Shop Locally, Give Colorfully holiday season promotions and events, as well as provided input on content plans for Black History Month and Women's History Month. Finally, the Committee reflected on the past year's activities and brainstormed new projects for the upcoming year.

**E. Elections**

Commissioner Heilmann reported on the Elections Committee meeting that was held on November 26, 2024. The Committee debriefed the special meeting regarding prospective board member recruitment. The Committee then determined the information to include in the Commissioner interest form. The Committee decided to draft an elections policy that outlines the process for all types of Commissioners, as well as create a template for the candidate guide.

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

The Commissioners reviewed and made additional revisions to the Bridgeport DSSD's bylaws pertaining to governance and board membership. Commissioner Heilmann made a motion to approve the bylaws as revised in the meeting. Commissioner Sherwood seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 5:05 p.m.