BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
April 9, 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 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
Fred Frassinelli, AMS Real Estate
Andy Toledo, City of Bridgeport (Ex Officio)

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

Guests
Alicia Cobb, Art Simplicated
Ira Jacoby, Felner Corporation
Tamekia Lemus, Downtown resident
Sarah Lopez, Office of Senator Chris Murphy
Lynn Mosher-Howell, Rapha Massage
Sarah Roy, CTrides

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Mr. Pires opened the meeting by welcoming guests Alicia Cobb of Art Simplicated, Ira Jacoby from the Felner Corporation, Tamekia Lemus, Downtown resident, Sarah Lopez from the Office of Senator Chris Murphy, Lynn Mosher-Howell of Rapha Massage, and Sarah Roy from CTrides.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Iassogna made a motion to approve the Minutes of the March 12, 2025, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Frassinelli seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IV. TREASURER REPORT

Treasurer Gross was not in attendance, so the financial report was moved to the next meeting.

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent presented the draft fiscal year 2026 budget and companion narrative for board discussion, which will be presented for vote and approval by the membership at the 2025 annual meeting on May 14, 2025.

V. REPORT FROM THE CITY

Mr. Toledo provided updates on the Charter Revision Commission, that the City of Bridgeport will join the CT Municipal Redevelopment Authority, that a tax increment financing (TIF) will be established for the area of the proposed soccer stadium, and that the DSSD should look to meet with the chairs of the City Council Budget Committee regarding the request for funding directly from the City.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent gave an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team's performance report for the month of March, which reflected an increase in sanitation instances over the past month (15%) and over the previous year (18%) due to an uptick in the stickers removed and alcohol containers and trash bags collected. The team saw a decrease in the amount of time devoted to beautification work from the previous month (88%) and from the same time period in the previous year (95%) due to seasonal weather changes. The Public Safety category reflected a minimal increase from the previous month (2%) and a large increase from the same month in the previous year (120%) due to the number of panhandling diversions. Finally, there was an increase in the number of interactions in the Public Engagement category from the previous month (14%) and from the same month in the previous year (29%).

Ms. Coakley Vincent then gave updates on the Colorful Bridgeport content in March, including the Women's History Month interview series, What's Happening events and board expansion announcements, and the website relaunch. Finally, she shared an update on the success of the annual fundraising outreach and various sponsorship opportunities.

VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Executive

Mr. Pires reported on the combined Executive and Finance Committees meeting that was held on April 2, 2025. The Committees discussed progress in contacting property owners with land development agreements in the DSSD service area to resolve past billing discrepancies. The Committees reviewed the draft fiscal year 2026 budget and narrative work plan. Finally, the Committees set 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 March 28, 2025. The Committee discussed strategies to recruit volunteers for upcoming Colorful Crew projects. The Committee then provided feedback on the tree bed planting plan.

C. Public Safety

Commissioner Iassogna reported on the Public Safety Committee meeting that was held on March 28, 2025. The Committee discussed recent safety issues in the Downtown.

D. Special Events and Marketing

Ms. Cobb reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on April 1, 2025. The Committee reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content from the past month and previewed content for the upcoming months, including the Women's History month videos, the website relaunch, and the board expansion outreach. The Committee brainstormed content ideas for upcoming months and recommended edits to the new decorative light pole banner designs. Finally, the Committee shared recommendations for the fiscal year 2026 budget pertaining to community event partnerships.

E. Elections

Ms. Heilmann reported on the Elections Committee meeting that was held on March 25, 2025. The Committee reviewed the number of submissions from the Commissioner Nomination Form, as well as the property owner contact information to share with the prospective candidates. The Committee then revised the format of the annual meeting notice and ballot to incorporate the new information about leaseholders.

Ms. Coakley Vincent and Ms. Heilmann then walked through preparations for the annual meeting, noting that the date was set for Wednesday, May 14, 2025, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Penthouse at Soundview (855 Main Street) with catering by Rum & Tequilla Fusion. Community presentations would include a Downtown safety update from Bridgeport Police Chief Porter and project progress from the Bridgeport Harbor Station developers. They then previewed the ballot with property owner and leaseholder commissioner candidates that would be sent to all Downtown property owners.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Sarah Roy shared an overview of the CTrides Drive Less Climate Challenge, an exciting annual campaign that challenges people across the state to take action against climate change by driving less and using alternative transportation like trains, buses, carpools, vanpools, biking, walking, or telecommuting. The 2025 DLC programming runs from April 1 to May 15, 2025 and aims to reduce harmful emissions while fostering a more sustainable future.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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