BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
September 9, 2026
Meeting Minutes

The DSSD Board of Commissioners Meeting took place via video conference. In attendance were:

Commissioners
Callie Heilmann, Made in Bridgeport, Chair
Barbara Sreckovic, Downtown Resident, Vice Chair
Jason Cohen, Bordentown DB, LLC, Secretary
Javier Ceja, Downtown Strategic Group
Alicia Cobb-Pharr, Downtown Resident
Gemeem Davis, Bridgeport Generation Now
Caardel Eaddy, Trefz Corporation
David Iassogna, M&T Bank
Phil Pires, C & W Associates II
Tony Sherwood, Mighty 190, LLC
Andy Toledo, City of Bridgeport (Ex Officio)
Bob Schneider (Emeritus)

Staff
Lauren Coakley Vincent, DSSD President
Vanessa Rivera, DSSD/SMG
Charles Suarez-Penn, DSSD/SMG
Marcella Kovac, DSSD/The Bananaland

Guests
Fred Frassinelli, AMS Real Estate
Ira Jacoby, The Felner Corporation
Kathy Maher, The Barnum Museum
Constance Vickers, City of Bridgeport

I. CALL TO ORDER
Chair Heilmann called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS
Ms. Heilmann opened the meeting by welcoming guests Fred Frassinelli of AMS Real Estate, Ira Jacoby from The Felner Corporation, Kathy Maher from The Barnum Museum, and Constance Vickers from the City of Bridgeport.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the Minutes of the August 12, 2026, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Sreckovic seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IV. TREASURER REPORT
Treasurer Gross was not in attendance. This item was tabled until the next meeting.

V. REPORT FROM THE CITY
Mr. Toledo provided updates on the ongoing road and utility work in the Downtown, noting that repaving and restriping would commence shortly after the road work concludes. He also reminded attendees that applications are open for City Boards and Commissions. Interested applicants should reach out to him directly.

Ms. Vickers shared an update on the timeline to go to contract and transfer funds towards the DSSD's continued removal of trash from sidewalk waste receptacles. She also noted that the environmental review for the Congress Street Bridge was approved, which was the final step before the construction phase could begin.

VI. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent gave an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team's performance report for the month of August 2026, which reflected an increase in sanitation instances over the past month (6%) and over the previous year (20%) due to the quantity of bills/stickers, alcohol containers, and trash bags removed. The team saw an increase (33%) in the amount of time devoted to beautification work from the previous month and a decrease (37%) from the same time period in the previous year due to fluctuations in the amount of weeding and watering of beautification sites. The Public Safety category reflected an increase (20%) from the previous month and a negligible decrease (2%) from the same month in the previous year due to the instances of panhandling. Finally, there was an increase in the number of interactions in the Public Engagement category from the previous month (50%) and from the same month in the previous year (51%). At the conclusion of the report, the DSSD's new Safety Ambassador, Vanessa Rivera, introduced herself to the attendees.

Ms. Coakley Vincent shared a brief overview of recent events and then introduced Ms. Kovac to provide an overview of the Colorful Bridgeport communication channels and advertising dashboard.

VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Executive

Ms. Heilmann reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on September 2, 2026. The Committee drafted a letter to the DSSD's landlord requesting a rent credit for the weeks that the office space has not been inhabitable due to the lack of proper A/C and air circulation. The Committee discussed different approaches the DSSD may take to committee purpose and roles in anticipation of the board's discussion and the upcoming strategic planning process. Finally, the Committee set the agenda for this month's board meeting.

B. Physical Conditions

Mr. Frassinelli reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on August 28, 2026. The Committee reviewed three proposals from prospective landscaping partners and submitted follow up questions for further input.

C. Public Safety

Commissioner Iassogna reported on the Public Safety Committee meeting that was held on August 28, 2026. The DSSD's new Safety Ambassador, Vanessa Rivera, was introduced to the Committee. Ms. Rivera gave an overview of the recent Bridgeport Police Department community CompStat meeting that she attended. In addition, the Committee discussed recent safety incidents in the Downtown, with particular attention to the unhoused population gathering at the Fairfield County Courthouse and overnight activity in McLevy Green.

D. Special Events and Marketing

Commissioner Cobb reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on September 1, 2026. The Committee reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content from the past month, analyzed the outputs from the first month of advertising content, and previewed the creative drafts for billboards and social media content in the coming months. The Committee then discussed the creation of a Lewis Latimer Light Festival in 2027 as a means to create a unique community event and celebrate the DSSD's 40th anniversary.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Coakley Vincent notified the group that the landlord had agreed to the requested rent credit and committed to installing new H/VAC equipment later in the week.

Ms. Coakley Vincent walked the group through the proposed new program committee purpose and focus framework, detailing the key changes from the existing structure:

- Shift from "oversight" bodies to project/action-oriented bodies
- Merge Public Safety & Physical Conditions into one that focuses on projects that support the work of the Downtown Ambassadors
- Change Special Events & Marketing to Special Events & Placemaking
- Report on meeting date/who attended, current projects status, and any help needed or challenges

The sole responsibility of the committees would no longer be to monitor staff and contractor performance, so that they could focus more on implementing the changes the committee members want to see in the neighborhood. Each committee would need to think through their purpose, what they are trying to accomplish, and how that fits within the DSSD's overall goals for the neighborhood. The program committees will discuss this at their next meetings, and the Commissioners will revisit the discussion under Old Business at the October board meeting.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Heilmann called for the meeting to be adjourned at 5:11 p.m.