

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
January 13, 2020
Meeting Minutes**

The DSSD Board of Commissioners Meeting took place at the offices of the Bridgeport DSSD, 938 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604, and via Zoom video conference.

In attendance:

Commissioners

Phil Pires, C & W Associates II, Chair
Kim Morque, Main State Ventures, Vice Chair
Eric Gross, John Broadcannon, Treasurer
Bob Schneider, Jimmy's A & N, Secretary
Karolyn Egbert, Trefz Corporation
Fred Frassinelli, AMS Real Estate
David Iassogna, People's United Bank
Philip Kuchma, Kuchma Corporation
Max Pastor, Bordentown DB, LLC

Staff

Lauren Coakley Vincent, DSSD President
Nicholas Davila, DSSD/Block-By-Block

Guests

Paul Antinozzi, Antinozzi Associates
Jorge Cruz, Bridgeport City Council
Darlene Darlena
Chris DeAngelis, Cabezas-DeAngelis Engineers & Surveyors
Matt Meyer, Crestwood Management
Ian Sacarny, Crestwood Management

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 Paul Antinozzi of Antinozzi Associates, City Council Member Jorge Cruz, Ms. Darlene Darlena, Chris DeAngelis of Cabezas-DeAngelis Engineers & Surveyors, and Matt Meyer and of Ian Sacarny Crestwood Management.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Kuchma made a motion to approve the Minutes of the December 9, 2020, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Gross seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IV. TREASURER REPORT

Treasurer Gross provided an explanation of the January 2021 financial report as provided by the bookkeeper. The Bridgeport DSSD ended the month of November 2020 with \$88,397 in assets, of which \$173,358 was cash spread across two bank accounts. Liabilities totaled \$35,795, all of which were Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses. Net Assets at the end of the month totaled \$38,103. The accrued revenue was \$245,158 – primarily City of Bridgeport tax payments. Expenses for the same period totaled \$274,642 – primarily for streetscape maintenance, and then evenly spread across marketing, creative placemaking, and administration of the organization. Accrued revenue for the period fell short of expenses by \$29,484. Commissioner Morque made a motion to approve the January 2021 financial report. Commissioner Frassinelli seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

V. REPORT FROM THE CITY

Mr. Roach was not in attendance to present a report from the City, so this agenda item was tabled to the next board meeting. In his absence, DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent gave limited updates on the Intermodal Transportation Center construction request for proposals, street parking meter repair, and the possibility of a tax deferral or low interest rate program for late payments.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Coakley Vincent walked through a review of calendar year 2020 programmatic outcomes and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the DSSD's activities. She noted that the year's presented unprecedented challenges with the pandemic, civil unrest, and civic discourse were felt

strongly at the local level; and Downtown Bridgeport's community of residents, business owners, office workers, and stakeholders persisted in the face of much adversity. Some of the Bridgeport DSSD's highlights from the past year included:

- The district's five (5) Downtown Ambassadors interacted with 3,347 with visitors and business owners, collected 8,468 trash bags, removed 448 instances of graffiti and stickers, maintained 51 planters with plantings that established the Downtown as a CT Pollinator Pathway site, and installed 35 banners on decorative light poles.
- The Colorful Bridgeport integrated marketing campaign engaged 9,777 social media followers, distributed 43 newsletters and curated guides to its community of 2,400 newsletter subscribers, and planned 15 public events that attracted an estimated 4,000 attendees all properly within COVID-19 safety protocols. Finally, three public artworks projects were initiated over the year.
- The DSSD's COVID-19 response included distributing \$40,000 in direct grants and technical assistance to Downtown Bridgeport businesses; sending out 35 business alerts sent with information about emergency operations, support for local businesses, and available disaster recovery resources; hand delivering 204 paper applications for DSSD, City, and State grants; and representing Downtown Bridgeport on City and CT Region 1 Long-term Recovery Committees.

Ms. Coakley Vincent closed her 2020 review by emphasizing that the 42 City departments and local organizations with whom the DSSD partnered over the past year on projects and daily activities were critical to the success it was able to achieve.

Ms. Coakley Vincent then opened the meeting for a freeform discussion of city-wide economic development strategy and Downtown revitalization strategy in particular. Mr. Kuchma kicked off the conversation asserting that the district's entertainment destinations and restaurants have been able to survive the financial challenges presented by the pandemic, and that they were a key asset. He urged the group to think about how to organize and build collaboration between the various venues and restaurants to be prepared for the returning customers attracted by the Harbor Yard Amphitheater and general lifting of COVID-19 safety protocols. Mr. Frassinelli agreed and added that artisan businesses should be a special sector focus for supportive programming, as well. Councilmember Cruz noted that there were conversations taking place at the City Council about city-wide economic development strategy. He voiced his support for focusing on services to entertainment sector businesses. He added that he will urge the City to become more proactively involved in marketing Downtown businesses.

The group concluded the economic development discussion with a focus on public safety and how critical a consistent perception of safety in all Bridgeport neighborhoods would be to the success of any economic development efforts. Commissioner Lassogna urged the group to share any safety incidents or crime reports with the DSSD's Public Safety Committee so that it could advocate directly to the Bridgeport Police Department for better services.

VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Chairman/Executive

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on January 6, 2021. The Committee discussed sending out the request for proposals for contracted work in Marketing, Accounting, and Auditing services; as well as the fiscal year 2022 budgeting process; and the possible gateway design competition proposed at the Zone Committee December meeting. The Committee also set the agenda for the board meeting in January.

B. Physical Conditions

Mr. DeAngelis reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on January 8, 2021. The Committee reviewed the calendar year 2020 clean team performance statistics, discussed the status of the [Downtown Ambassador RFP](#), and briefly touched on upcoming projects for 2021.

C. Public Safety

Mr. Lassogna reported on the Public Safety and Security Committee meeting that was held on January 8, 2021. The Committee reviewed the calendar year 2020 public safety team performance statistics, discussed the status of the [Downtown Ambassador RFP](#), and briefly touched on upcoming projects for 2021. Mr. Lassogna also shared a recap of the recent meeting with Bridgeport Police Department leadership about improving collaboration between BPD and the DSSD.

D. Special Events and Marketing

Mr. Morque reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on January 5, 2021. The Committee reviewed the calendar year 2020 Colorful Bridgeport campaign statistics and programming outcomes, discussed the content of the [Marketing RFP](#), and mapped out upcoming projects for 2021 including the Color It In murals and possible lighting installations.

E. Zone Bridgeport

Ms. Coakley Vincent reported on the Zone Bridgeport Committee meeting that was held on December 16, 2020. The Committee met with Bridgeport Planning Director Lynn Haig and OPED Deputy Director Bill Coleman to discuss feedback on the proposed zoning map, as well as the DX1 Downtown Core and DX2 Downtown Support zoning snapshots. The Committee provided detailed input on topics including the possibility of creating a cultural district or entertainment zone in the Downtown, hosting a gateway design competition, and approaches to encouraging flexibility for ground floor uses within the Downtown zoning types.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 5:00 p.m.