

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
July 13, 2022  
Meeting Minutes**

The DSSD Board of Commissioners Meeting took place at the offices of the Bridgeport DSSD, 938 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604, as well as by video and telephone conference. In attendance were:

**Commissioners**

Phil Pires, C & W Associates II, Chair  
Eric Gross, John Broadcannon, Treasurer  
Javier Ceja, Downtown Strategic Group  
Karolyn Egbert, Trefz Corporation  
Fred Frassinelli, AMS Real Estate  
David lassogna, People's United Bank  
Daniel Roach, City of Bridgeport (Ex Officio)

**Guests**

Bill Coleman, City of Bridgeport  
Chris DeAngelis, Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers  
Jonathan Delgado, City of Bridgeport  
Bob Halstead, Bridgeport Community Land Trust  
Kathy Maher, The Barnum Museum  
Kim Morque, Main State Ventures  
Lynn Mosher-Howell, Rapha Massage  
Tim O'Connor, Retail Performance Solutions  
Vyette Sanoubane

**Staff**

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

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pires called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

**II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS**

Mr. Pires opened the meeting by welcoming guests Bill Coleman and Jonathan Delgado from the City of Bridgeport, Chris DeAngelis of Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers, Bob Halstead from the Bridgeport Community Land Trust, Kathy Maher of The Barnum Museum, Kim Morque from Main State Ventures, Lynn Mosher-Howell of Rapha Massage, Tim O'Connor of Retail Performance Solutions, and Vyette Sanoubane.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Gross made a motion to approve the Minutes of the June 8, 2022, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Ceja seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**IV. TREASURER REPORT**

Treasurer Gross provided an explanation of the May 2022 financial report as provided by the bookkeeper. The Bridgeport DSSD ended the month of May 2022 with \$123,610 in assets, of which \$170,335 was cash spread across two bank accounts. Liabilities totaled \$37,824, most of which were Accounts Payable and Deferred Revenue. Net Assets at the end of the month totaled \$85,786. The accrued revenue was \$648,917 – primarily City of Bridgeport tax payments. Expenses for the same period totaled \$668,940 – primarily related to streetscape maintenance and administration of the organization (\$507,605). Accrued revenue for the period fell short of expenses by \$20,023. Mr. Ceja made a motion to approve the May 2022 financial report. Commissioner lassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**V. REPORT FROM THE CITY**

Mr. Roach provided updates on the staffing changes in the Police Department, roads in the Downtown included on the late fall paving list, and the response received to the McLevy Hall development request for proposals. He then introduced Bill Coleman from the Office of Planning and Economic Development to provide updates on the Lafayette Circle redesign project, Congress Street Bridge construction, Pequonnock River Trail construction, and the timeline to wrap up the streetscape work at the Intermodal Transportation Center. Mr. Halstead encouraged the City to explore federal Department of Transportation funding to enhance the Pequonnock River Trail construction project to include protected bike paths along the route.

## VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent invited Commissioner Frassinelli to share an overview of recent commercial real estate activity and trends in the Downtown. Mr. Frassinelli shared insights on the popularity of smaller storefront square footage and interest in property acquisition, both of which are in short supply in the Downtown, as well as the roughly 36% vacancy rate for upper floor office space. He noted that there is interest in second floor conversions to residential and entertainment uses.

Ms. Coakley Vincent provided an overview of the Ambassador performance report for the month of June, which reflected an increase (27%) in sanitation instances, with the spending more hours clearing debris with the ATLV, removing more trash bags, and picking up more empty alcohol containers. The team saw a large increase (123%) in the amount of time devoted to beautification work for the second month in a row, which is normal for this time of year as the majority of plantings were installed and much weeding has been done. The Public Safety category decreased by 8 percent, mostly caused by a drop in documented instances of panhandling. Finally, there was an increase (25%) in the amount of public engagement over the past month in the hospitality assists category.

Ms. Coakley Vincent reported that the DSSD concluded the data gathering phase of the Business Needs Assessment process. The insights gathered from the three listening sessions, one-on-one interviews, and detailed surveys will be compiled into a final report to be shared widely, and used to convene economic development stakeholders serving Bridgeport businesses in late July. She noted that a new Call for Concepts ([accessible here](#)) focusing on activating Downtown public spaces was released and an information session and walk of the identified sites was held on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Coakley Vincent concluded her report by sharing a request for a letter of support for the Community Investment Fund 2030 grant application toward the acquisition of a Downtown building by a local workforce development nonprofit organization. The Board decided to decline the request, but would welcome a presentation about the project from the applicant organization. She noted that the DSSD was asked also to contribute information on a different application to the Community Investment Fund 2030, which would support the launch of a grocery market in a vacant Downtown property.

## VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

### A. Executive

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on July 6, 2022. The Committee discussed the DSSD's recent meeting with Governor Lamont regarding support for local businesses, next steps for the Downtown Business Needs Assessment process, and the Administrative/Leadership goals and strategies from the DSSD's strategic plan refresh. The Committee also set the agenda for this month's board meeting.

The Committee then reviewed the language pertaining to Committees in the DSSD bylaws and proposed the following changes to ARTICLE FIVE: Committees for the Board's consideration:

Section 1. Standing Committees, Special Committees, and Committees of the District. The Chairperson may appoint from among the Commissioners standing committees, ~~each to consist of at least two (2) Commissioners except as otherwise noted. The Chairperson of each committee shall be a Board member.~~ Non-board members may serve on any Standing or Special Committee, except the Elections Committee ~~or the Executive Committee.~~ The actions and decisions of each committee are subject to approval of the Board of Commissioners, except as otherwise provided herein. Each committee shall keep minutes of proceedings and report to the Board.

Section 2. Standing Committees. The standing committees of the Board shall be as follows:

1. Elections Committee
2. Executive Committee
3. Finance / Budget / Tax Collection Committee
4. Human Resources Committee
5. Physical Conditions Committee
6. Public Safety Committee
7. Special Events and Marketing Committee
8. ~~Contracts Committee~~ – falls under Executive Committee functions

Mr. Ceja made a motion to approve the proposed text changes to the DSSD bylaws. Commissioner Frassinelli seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

The Executive Committee also discussed the projected fiscal year 2022 surplus of \$15,000 and its possible uses. Mr. Pires shared the Committee's recommendation with the Board to hold the surplus in reserve.

Mr. Pires shared that the DSSD had received two additional requests requiring board deliberation:

- Financial sponsorship Request from Bridgeport Film Fest. Mr. Ceja made a motion to commit \$2,000 to the Bridgeport Film Fest. Mr. Iassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.
- Downtown Placemaking contract change from the City's Office of Planning and Economic Development. The requested contract change would allow the DSSD to facilitate direct payments to artists and makers selected to work at identified sites. Mr. Coleman provided additional insights to the purpose and intent of the requested contract change. There was no longer a quorum of Commissioners at this point in the meeting. Chairman Pires requested that Ms. Coakley Vincent set up a special meeting to address this voting item.

#### **B. Physical Conditions**

In Mr. DeAngelis' absence, Ms. Coakley Vincent reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on June 24, 2022. The Committee discussed the relevant program-related goals and strategies from the DSSD's refreshed strategic plan, finalized the Colorful Crew communication materials, and touched on how to use the recently awarded PSEG Environmental Task Force and Community Development Block grants for beautification projects.

#### **C. Public Safety**

Mr. Iassogna reported on the Public Safety and Security Committee meeting that was held on June 24, 2022. The Committee discussed the relevant program-related goals and strategies from the DSSD's refreshed strategic plan, as well as possible changes to the public safety program. To that end, the Committee reviewed a proposal from SMG Corporate Services for enhanced safety services.

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

Mr. Morque reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on July 5, 2022. The Committee discussed the relevant program-related goals and strategies from the DSSD's refreshed strategic plan, concepts to activate vacant space, and reviewed recent and upcoming events, including the Downtown Farmers Market, Bridgeport Film Fest, and a second screening date for the Jane & Cesar's Way film.

### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
July 19, 2022  
Meeting Minutes**

The DSSD Board of Commissioners Meeting took place by video and telephone conference. In attendance:

**Commissioners**

Phil Pires, C & W Associates II, Chair  
Eric Gross, John Broadcannon, Treasurer  
Karolyn Egbert, Trefz Corporation  
David lassogna, People's United Bank/M&T Bank  
Ryan McClay, Forstone Capital  
Max Pastor, Bordentown DB, LLC

**Staff**

Lauren Coakley Vincent, DSSD President  
Julio Pardo, Downtown Placemaking Consultant

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pires called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

**II. DOWNTOWN PLACEMAKING CONTRACT CHANGE**

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent explained that the City's Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED) requested that the DSSD modify the Downtown Placemaking contract scope and work plan to allow the DSSD to directly pay artists and makers selected for identified sites for their design and labor fees. She further noted that as the OPED team presented at the board meeting, the DSSD would not need to amend the contract, and the City is able to provide the required funding up front to facilitate payments.

The Board asked questions about additional work that may be involved with this scope change, any additional costs to the DSSD that might be incurred if the scope change was approved, and what would be needed to facilitate payments to the selected artists and makers. Ms. Coakley Vincent noted that the DSSD has an existing public art service agreement template and an established invoicing process for vendors of this type. She anticipated the amount of hours involved would be about one hour per project/artist, or roughly 15 hours based on current projects in the Downtown Placemaking contract pipeline. She noted that Downtown Placemaking Contract Manager's responsibilities could be adjusted to include the contracting and invoicing facilitation tasks while remaining within the currently contracted amount of hours needed to achieve the project goals.

Commissioner Pires made a motion to approve the contract change as presented by Ms. Coakley Vincent. Commissioner lassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 9:15 a.m.