

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
March 8, 2023
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:

Commissioners

Phil Pires, C & W Associates II, Chair
David lassogna, M&T Bank, Vice Chair
Bob Schneider, Jimmy's A & N, Secretary (Ex Officio)
Javier Ceja, Downtown Strategic Group
Philip Kuchma, Kuchma Corporation
Max Pastor, Bordentown DB, LLC
Andy Toledo, City of Bridgeport (Ex Officio)

Staff

Lauren Coakley Vincent, DSSD President

Guests

Albert Benejan, Bridgeport Board of Education
Alicia Cobb, Art Simplicated
Eleanor Guedes, Primrose Companies
Ian Sacarny, Crestwood Management
Constance Vickers, 881 Lafayette Condos

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pires called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Mr. Pires opened the meeting by welcoming guests Albert Benejan from the Bridgeport Board of Education, Alicia Cobb of Art Simplicated, Eleanor Guedes from Primrose Companies, Ian Sacarny of Crestwood Management, and Constance Vickers, a property owner at the 881 Lafayette Condos.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner lassogna made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 8, 2023, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Kuchma seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IV. TREASURER REPORT

In Treasurer Gross' absence, the January 2023 financial report was moved to the April board meeting agenda.

V. REPORT FROM THE CITY

Mr. Toledo provided updates on the various development projects in the Downtown, including open RFPs for the Golden Hill Street residential site and the Davidson property. He noted that the Lafayette Circle realignment project needed to go through another round of design revisions per the State Department of Transportation's requirements, that the Congress Street Bridge was on schedule to proceed, and that the Bridgeport Transit Center streetscape enhancement project did not currently include wayfinding signage as part of the installation.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DSSD President + CEO Lauren Coakley Vincent shared the Colorful Bridgeport campaign's February content highlights, including the collaboration with Kindred Thoughts Bookstore to celebrate Black History Month and the tailored newsletter that shared events and included the full list of Black owned and led restaurants, shops, services, and other cultural destinations located in Downtown Bridgeport. She noted the well-attended grand opening of In The City Lounge that the DSSD organized and secured media coverage for in collaboration with restaurant owner Paul Brown. Ms. Coakley Vincent relayed the various meetings with City Council Members and CT Office of Tourism Director Noelle Stevenson that took place over the month.

Ms. Coakley Vincent provided an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team's performance report for the month of February, which reflected a slight decrease (8%) in sanitation instances over the past month mostly due to a drop in the alcohol containers and trash bags collected; and a 27 percent increase over the same period in the previous year, mostly due to a jump in trash bags and empty alcohol containers collected. The team saw a decrease (93%) in the amount of time devoted to beautification work from the previous month, and no change to the same time period in the previous year. The Public Safety category decreased by 46 percent from the previous month due to a drop in instances of panhandling, and stayed steady (1% decrease) over the same month in the previous year. Lastly, there was an increase in the amount of public engagement over the past month (2%) and as the same time the previous year (120%) in the hospitality assist and business contacts metric categories.

Finally, Ms. Coakley Vincent shared preparations in place for the upcoming annual meeting. The Commissioners whose terms were expiring were Fred Frassinelli, Phil Kuchma, and Ryan McClay. The meeting will be held in person only from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. on May 10, 2023. Ms. Coakley Vincent asked for recommendations on venue and topics for the community presentations.

VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Executive

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on March 1, 2023. The Committee met with representative from The Bananaland to discuss approaches to improving the DSSD website, including key functionalities that were missing such as a dynamic map and ways to restructure the site to save editing and updating time. The Committee then reviewed preparations for this year's annual meeting, including the slate of Commissioners up for re-election, possible venues for the meeting, and which community presentations to request. The Committee also set the agenda for this month's board meeting.

Ms. Coakley Vincent asked the board and meeting attendees for input on sections and functions of the DSSD website that could be improved.

B. Physical Conditions

Mr. Iassogna reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on March 3, 2023. The Committee reviewed the proposed planting plan for the ground planters and tree beds in the spring. A representative from Groundwork Bridgeport presented the proposed plantings and installation timeline for the tree beds, along with key points on maintenance under multifaceted urban conditions. The Committee also discussed the possibility of installing additional bioswales, as well as the landscaping plan for Post Office Square.

C. Public Safety

Mr. Iassogna reported on the Public Safety and Security Committee meeting that was held on March 3, 2023. The Committee discussed recurring Downtown safety topics, including lighting, police presence, parking enforcement, compliant business practices. The Committee planned for the next Coffee with a Cop to be scheduled in April with a focus on the dining and nightlife/entertainment businesses in the Downtown. The Committee decided to schedule the next meeting as a walk around to visit various businesses and check in regarding safety issues or concerns.

D. Special Events and Marketing

Ms. Cobb reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on March 7, 2023. The Committee reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content for the past month, including the Black History Month video collaboration with Kindred Thoughts Bookstore. The Committee reviewed the planned Women's History Month content, as well as the 2023 decorative light pole banner designs. Finally, the event planning subcommittee members gave updates on the upcoming Jane's Walks and PARK(ing) Day events.

Ms. Coakley Vincent previewed three street light pole banner concepts and asked the board and meeting attendees for input on the preferred design for this year.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Kuchma raised the need for local and state elected officials to attend DSSD meeting to share plans for proposed legislation, citing the recent push to extend operating hours for bars and nightlife businesses to 4:00 a.m.

Ms. Guedes offered updates on the two Primrose Companies residential projects underway in the Downtown. She noted that the former Holiday Inn property would be open as of June 1st for occupancy, and that Congress Plaza Commons was looking to open for occupancy at the end of the summer.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 4:57 p.m.