

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
August 9, 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 Iassogna, M&T Bank, Vice Chair  
Eric Gross, John Broadcannon, Treasurer  
Fred Frassinelli, AMS Real Estate  
Callie Gale Heilmann, Made in Bridgeport, LLC  
Philip Kuchma, Kuchma Corporation  
Max Pastor, Bordentown DB, LLC  
Andy Toledo, City of Bridgeport (Ex Officio)

**Staff**

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

**Guests**

Alicia Cobb, Art Simplified  
Chris DeAngelis, Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers  
Kathy Maher, The Barnum Museum  
Sue Purefoy  
Ian Sacarny, Crestwood Management

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pires called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

**II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS**

Mr. Pires opened the meeting by welcoming guests Alicia Cobb of Art Simplified, Chris DeAngelis of Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers, Kathy Maher from The Barnum Museum, Sue Purefoy, and Ian Sacarny from Crestwood Management.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Kuchma made a motion to approve the Minutes of the July 12, 2023, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Iassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**IV. TREASURER REPORT**

Treasurer Gross provided an explanation of the June 2023 financial report as provided by the bookkeeper. Note: these financial statements have not yet been audited. The Bridgeport DSSD ended the month of June 2023 with \$204,496 in assets, of which \$147,398 was cash spread across two bank accounts. Liabilities totaled \$59,301, most of which were Accounts Payable and Deferred Revenue. Net Assets at the end of the month totaled \$145,195. The accrued revenue was \$1,130,967 – primarily City of Bridgeport tax and contract payments. Expenses for the same period totaled \$1,107,357 – primarily related to streetscape maintenance and creative placemaking programming (\$845,731). Accrued revenue for the period exceeded expenses by \$23,610. Commissioner Frassinelli made a motion to approve the June 2023 financial reports. Commissioner Pastor seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**V. REPORT FROM THE CITY**

Mr. Toledo provided updates on how to formally submit the request that the State DOT change the State Street blinking lights to regular signals during late night hours, that the City was responsible for tree bed maintenance at the train station, and that the high speed ferry terminal would be operational by the fall. On the development plans for 404-410 State Street (former CT Post building), he did not have updates but committed to sharing more information in a follow up correspondence.

**VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent shared a recap of the Colorful Bridgeport campaign's July content highlights, including the Downtown Farmers Market vendor features, other community

events, and the decorative light pole banner installations. Ms. Coakley Vincent detailed the list of significant meetings and service projects over the past month, including a meeting with Congressman Jim Himes regarding the impact of ARPA funding in the neighborhood, the leadership of the New Haven Town Green DSSD regarding the public art program, and planning for Downtown Bridgeport to be the CT Main Street Center's Spotlight on Main destination for spring 2024. She provided an overview of the concerns held by the DSSD's Special Events and Marketing Committee related to the City of Bridgeport's proposed logo options, as well as a recap of the discussion held with the City's Communications Director.

Ms. Coakley Vincent gave an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team's performance report for the month of July, which reflected an increase (12%) in sanitation instances over the past month due to a jump in the bills/stickers removed, and alcohol containers and trash bags collected. There was an eight percent increase over the same period in the previous year, due to increases in the same categories. The team saw a significant decrease (63%) in the amount of time devoted to beautification work from the previous month, as well as from the same time period in the previous year (49%) both related to the weather-related impacts on the number of hours devoted to watering plantings. The Public Safety category increased by 50 percent from the previous month and 18 percent from the same month in the previous year, both due to an increase in the instances of panhandling. Finally, there was a small increase in the number of interactions in the Public Engagement categories from the previous month (5%) and from the same month in the previous year (25%).

Finally, Ms. Coakley Vincent walked the group through the DSSD's progress towards addressing the recommended action items from the Downtown Bridgeport Business Needs Assessment report, released in August 2022. The action areas included quality of life, lack of coordinated citywide marketing, maximizing ground floor use, business support services, public space activation, and parking/wayfinding. She then asked the meeting attendees to participate in a short exercise prioritizing the topic areas to the top three where the DSSD should continue to take action. The priorities were as follows: Quality of Life - Public Safety, Business Support Services, Public Space Activation

## **VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

### **A. Executive**

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on August 2, 2023. The Committee discussed the debate over the City of Bridgeport's recent logo options, the progress towards addressing the items on the Business Needs Assessment Recommendations action list, and progress on the various Color It In: Corners public art program sites. The Committee also finalized the agenda for this month's board meeting.

The Committee reviewed requests for sponsorship from the Barnum Museum for their National Historic Landmark event on August 24<sup>th</sup> and the Bridgeport Film Festival's activities planned to take place in the Downtown. The Committee discussed creating an application process that would be publicly available on the DSSD's website for interested groups.

The DSSD Board of Commissioners discussed the sponsorship requests, as well as the request from the 50<sup>th</sup> Hip Hop Festival planned for September 3<sup>rd</sup> at McLevy Green that came in after the Executive Committee meeting. Mr. Pires made a motion to approve the following allocations:

- Barnum Museum National Historic Landmark event on August 24<sup>th</sup> - \$1,000
- 50<sup>th</sup> Hip Hop Festival at McLevy Green on September 3<sup>rd</sup> - \$500
- Bridgeport Film Festival Downtown events on September 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> - \$500

Mr. Iassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

### **B. Physical Conditions**

Mr. DeAngelis reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on July 28, 2023. The Committee walked the district with Ms. Coakley Vincent and Downtown

Ambassador Operations Manager Charles Suarez-Penn, identifying areas where additional detailed cleaning was needed, as well as sites for special or seasonal beautification projects.

**C. Public Safety**

Mr. Iassogna reported on the Public Safety and Security Committee meeting that was held on July 28, 2023. The Committee met with Bridgeport Police Chief Roderick Porter to discuss recent public safety and quality of life issues in the neighborhood, in particular the Police Department's efforts towards curbing illegal parking were highlighted. The Committee also heard reports from the Ambassador team regarding quality of life and safety concerns observed during the weekly public safety shifts.

**D. Special Events and Marketing**

Ms. Cobb reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on August 1, 2023. The Committee reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content for the past month, including the Greater Bridgeport Pride video series, What's Happening events videos, and Downtown Farmers Market season announcements. The Committee reviewed plans for upcoming events and progress updates for each of the Color It In: Corners public art sites. Finally, the Committee discussed whether to take up some of the recommended actions related to events and marketing from the CT Main Street Center district evaluation.

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

The Board revisited the discussion of when to take a site visit to Downtown Hartford's Pratt Street. The option of Fridays in October was recommended. Ms. Coakley Vincent will send out a Doodle poll to identify the best date.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

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