

Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 25, 2015
330 Main Street, Middletown, CT

Attendees

Diane Gervais (Chair)	Cathy Duncan (Chamber of Commerce)
Jennifer Alexander (Commissioner)	Mike DeSena (Police Department)
Gary Nagler (Commissioner)	Sandra Russo Driska (City Council, Business Owner)
Tom Ford (Commissioner)	Geen Thazhampallath (Director of Parking)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)	Tom Marano (Planning Department)
Valerie Scribano (Commissioner)	Shane Grant (DBD Guide)
DiPiro (Commissioner)	Lisa Melaven (DBD Office)
Peter Harding (Commissioner)	

Minutes

- Motion made by Marc Levin to approve
- 2nd by Mike DiPiro
- Minutes accepted.

Treasurer's Report – Mike DiPiro

Mike reported we are under budget at this time, anticipating spending for the marketing campaign. There is a balance of \$93, 000.00 in our checkbook. We will be asking the City of Middletown for our 2nd installment of \$72,065.66 in a check form, to avoid the transfer fee to our account. Julia Hasbrouck from Accountables, LLC is acclimating well with our bookkeeping services.

- Financials approved
- 2nd
- Financials accepted

Planning- Tom Marano

This Friday, February 27th at noon, Tom will be hosting an informal marketing luncheon at Macori Restaurant. This will be a great opportunity to share what is going on and talk about new ideas, in promoting business in the downtown area. All are welcome.

Tom is working diligently with Charles Computer Service, and being able to receive free WII and high speed internet on Main Street.

He is also trying to build out “gig a bite” networks, which would be a driving force in the economic growth and development into the downtown.

Norman Bishop, from NLB, LTD has lost his lease in Main Street market. Please feel free to stop by and purchase a book, artifact in support of his business. Tom is also at the beginning stages of organizing a “cash mob” for the downtown businesses, where every six to eight weeks the business owners go into other retail stores and make purchases to support them.

Kelly Tourlette, community guide is out looking for advertisers and sponsors for the new guide coming out for Middletown. She is looking to do more with economic development and tourism.

Maintenance Report – Tom Ford

None

Beautification – Diane Gervais

Looking forward spring!

Marketing –

Reminder: Marketing meeting today, at 4:00 with Tag Team Business Partners. All are welcome to join us as we look into creative marketing ideas to bring to our downtown.

Police Report – Mike DeSena

The evening shifts has been spending quality time at the Holy Trinity Church’s warming center, dealing with different issues at hand. The police department has also been dealing with patrons soliciting local businesses because of the extreme cold weather conditions. There have been isolated incidences and arrests made for harassment and the use of counterfeit money. The local downtown businesses should have an emergency protocol in place, in working with the Middletown police department.

Public Works – William Russo

None

Parking Report - Geen Thazhampallath

The new kiosk implementation is underway. The single biggest obstacle is the one hour parking and the second is the kiosks not being able to give back change. Instead of one hour free parking the parking department would move to a thirty minute grace period, before receiving a ticket in the Arcade/Melilli parking lots. Sixty percent of people are using their credit/debit card and lower amount by using coin/cash to pay for parking. The general public likes the convenience of using their cell phones for this purpose. The parking enforcement stops everywhere at 6:00pm.

On the Council agenda for Monday, March 2nd – Proposing \$1.00 on parking meters on Main Street and to “buy time” by downloading a pay by phone application. This would make things more convenient for the customer when parking in the Arcade/Melilli parking lots or along Main Street. The business owner would be able to set up and buy time through their place of business. This would be a tremendous opportunity, for the local business owners to be able to buy time for their customers and by pass paying at the kiosks or on Main St.

North End Report - Anne Marie Cannata/Buttonwood Tree

None

DBD Guide – Shane Grant

Shane Grant is stepping down as our downtown guide, for he has accepted a full time position with Russell Library. Shane would like to see the success of the program continue.

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to the DBD in the last six years of service.

We wish him all the best on his new endeavor.

Chamber of Commerce – Cathy Duncan

The business owners of Rialto Café, on Rapallo Ave. had a complaint regarding a drug deal that happened outside their place of business when they were closed. When the article was in the newspaper, the police department made it sound like it happened inside their establishment during business hours. This has caused a big upset with the business owners.

Sandra Russo Driska, owner of Sandra James Boutique is working with Joey Lagano's Manager and the Chamber of Commerce in setting a date to honor NASCAR driver Joey Lagano for winning the Daytona 500. Update to follow.

The Chamber of Commerce is looking to schedule a Women's Leadership conference in June of this year.

- John McCain breakfast at Crown Plaza on Monday, March 9th

Chair Update – Diane Gervais

Gift Card: Gift Card sales are continuing to run smoothly. I have received contract renewal information from Store Financial. There will be no upfront fees, just a continuation of the \$1.75 per activation fee. Renewal is this fall we have some time before we commit. I am beginning the process of looking into lowering our credit card processing fees even further by looking at other vendors for this. More to come.

Guides: Shane has tendered his two weeks' notice as he will be working full time for the Russell Library.

Budget: Mike, Jen and I met and created the proposed budget.

No increase in revenue, we adjusted lines to reflect our new emphasis on Marketing.

Annual Meeting: All current board members except Mike Stone have agreed to run for another 2 year term. Lisa has been researching current information for our building owners so that we can send out our annual notice. Marie generously spent a couple of hours in the office trying to help Lisa and I with this process.

Lease: Our lease has been renewed.

Marketing: We have a creative meeting today from 4-6 here at the DBD.

- Motion to adjourn by Diane Gervais
- 2nd by Jen Alexander
- Adjourn accepted

