

HARTFORD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2007, 8:30 a.m.

100 Pearl Street, 4th Floor
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Board Attendees: D. Cocola B. Kaplowitz B. Baran L. Erdmann T. Lavigne
 J. Lewis R. Morneault M. Algieri M. Marshall S. Manousos
 M. Kuziak M. Grunberg H. Hoffman J. Hayes H. DeYoung
 T. Luszcak M. O'Connell D. Jakubowski B. Judd K. Kahn

Also in attendance: M. Zaleski, Executive Director

I. Welcome

Chairperson Bert Kaplowitz welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Hartford Business Improvement District. She thanked Dave Cocola and New Boston Management Services for hosting the meeting and providing the conference room.

II. Review and approval of December 13, 2006 meeting minutes

Lee Erdmann moved and Mike Kuziak seconded a motion to approve the minutes of December 13, 2006 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of 2007 Meeting Schedule

Beth Judd moved and Dave Cocola seconded a motion to approve the 2007 meeting schedule as presented. The motion passed unanimously. Bert Kaplowitz asked for volunteers to host upcoming meetings. Jerry Hayes volunteered to host the 1/24 meeting at Phoenix. Bert Kaplowitz will host the February meeting at the Northland offices, Brooke Baran will host the March meeting at Connecticut Culinary Institute and Dave Cocola will host the April meeting once again at 100 Pearl Street. The May Annual meeting will be scheduled independently as it is an evening meeting and additional hosts for the remainder of the year will be determined within the next couple of months.

IV. Committee Reports

Public Safety – Mike Algieri provided an update on the activities of the Public Safety Committee. The committee has been focused on getting an RFP prepared and ready for distribution. Michael Zaleski stated that a copy of the draft RFP was included in commissioners agenda packet this morning. He asked each commissioner to review the draft and get comments back to him and Mike Algieri. Jerry Hayes and Mike O'Connell suggested that commissioners have comments back to the committee by close of business Friday.

Discussion continued about the draft RFP. Zaleski stated that he had spoken HPD Chief Daryl Roberts earlier in the week and he had requested the opportunity to review the public safety draft. Chief Roberts had concerns about the name of the on-street safety personnel. There was significant discussion about the 'District Ambassador' name that was currently included in the draft. There was general agreement that the name District Ambassador was not acceptable as it was not consistent with the security focus that the board wants the on-street personnel to have.

There was continued discussion about the responsibilities of the on-street personnel and to what degree they would get involved in stopping crime in progress. Mike Kuziak stated that the on-street personnel will be licensed security guards and in response to a question from Beth Judd stated that they will not be armed. In response to a question about the Hartford Guides, Zaleski stated that the Guides serve more as a hospitality presence with 'eyes and ears' on the street where the committee is more focused on security and providing an authoritative presence. An appropriate balance must be struck. Todd Lavigne noted that more of a security force is required on Farmington Avenue as opposed to friendly faces.

There was additional discussion about the relationship with HPD. A couple of board members remarked that the police should be happy to see additional assistance on the street. Other commissioners warned that there might be union issues to deal with if the responsibilities of the on-street personnel appear too close to HPD. Ron Morneau stated that it is important to work closely with HPD to ease union fears and develop the best relationship possible. Zaleski stated that the Chief had mentioned his desire to add additional foot patrols to the District.

Michael Grunberg offered that the BID needs to set a strong precedent early and demand that the City and HPD step up. There was discussion about the balance that is needed in that relationship. The board chose to use the current name as a placeholder until the Public Safety committee comes up with something better. Ken Kahn asked about uniform options. Zaleski stated that the committee has reviewed some basic options and he will provide the board with some visuals for their input.

Cleanliness & Beautification – Stathis Manousos reviewed the activities of the committee. The committee has met once and there was a significant amount of discussion about ideas for the committee. The committee chose to initially focus on litter cleanup, beautification/flowers, litter receptacles and bus shelters. He stressed that decisions need to be made immediately if the board wants to have a flower planter program on the street in June. The committee will review a map of the district at their next meeting and develop a beautification plan.

There was general board discussion about banners and litter receptacles. Todd Lavigne warned that increasing the number of litter receptacles is useless if they are not emptied. Zaleski stated that the City has committed to emptying the receptacles and currently empties every receptacle each night on third shift. He stressed that the BID has a great opportunity since it has a commitment from the City to increase the number of receptacles and the on-street sweepers who will be there on a daily basis to monitor them.

Todd Lavigne inquired if the BID would get into issues like the prostitution problem that currently occurs on the avenue. Brooke Baran stated that HPD is down three officers in Asylum Hill and there are real issues, She stated that the new HPD substation will help. Zaleski responded that the BID security personnel will not directly address the prostitution problem but its advocacy efforts can have an impact.

Tom Luszczak stated that the condition of the city bus shelters remain a major issue for Travelers. They had approached the City in the past about replacing the shelters and had even offered to purchase new ones for Main Street. He would like to see the BID get involved in this issue and advocate for a standard attractive bus shelter to replace the ugly and ill maintained shelters currently in place. Zaleski stated that the BID maintenance staff will have to deal with the shelters regardless of whether they are responsible so the BID should advocate for their replacement. Ken Kahn called the shelters disgraceful and stated that DPW has been somewhat aggressive under Bhupen Patel in removing them.

Ron Morneau requested that the street sweepers uniforms be consistent with the BID public safety personnel to provide a uniform look. There was discussion about the clean streets RFP. It will go out at the same time as the public safety RFP.

Advocacy – Holly DeYoung reviewed the activities of the Advocacy committee. The committee has met several times since December and is focused on the development of an image and logo for the

organization. She reviewed the discussion that was held about the target audiences for the BID. The first is the property owners, the second is daily visitors and employees and the third being occasional visitors/conventioners, etc. She explained the committee is working on a logo and had discussed the benefits of a name change. The logo will go on uniforms, streetscape fixtures like planters, letterhead, business cards, a website and a newsletter. A quarterly newsletter was discussed as the most appropriate way to communicate with owners and the general public. The goal is to launch the newsletter in April along with the on-street roll-out. A draft press release was distributed and will be sent out in January bringing the public up to date on what is happening with the BID. Commissioners were asked to review the release and pass along any comments to Michael Zaleski.

Zaleski stated that the committee was evaluating where the BID should be in terms of a web presence. Ken Kahn noted that Zaleski should talk with Mike Kintner who worked on the Hartford Image Project for the past 5 years. Mike O'Connell referred to St. Petersburg as an excellent example of a downtown that has done a great job of promoting itself and has revitalized its community through marketing its events and assets.

Holly DeYoung talked about finding the BID's squeegee factor referring to New York City's crack down on squeegee men. She stated that BID could assist in the parking issues that the district faces. She stated that the BID's web site could provide information on parking and rates. There was significant about the BID playing a role in parking. Stathis Manousos stated that there is a decent amount of information out on the web about Hartford parking but most people make a decision when they are in the city for an event and will will park where they feel safe despite the price. Mike Kuziak stressed that parking in downtown is a perception versus reality thing. Bert Kaplowitz echoed those comments stating there is no shortage of parking just a lack of information. Brooke Baran suggested some communications vehicle to reach the suburbs and work on the myth that there is no parking.

There was discussion about whether Marketing should have its own committee and not be lumped in with the Advocacy committee. There was significant discussion but no decisions were made.

Finally, Zaleski stated that he aware that the billboard on the train trestle at Union Station is about to come up for renewal. He advocated doing additional research to see if the BID could secure that space and get it out of the hands of John Haymond and his inappropriate personal injury billboards. The board seemed interested in working with others to pursue the space. Ken Kahn offered to get more information and suggested the Rising Star campaign might want to share the space.

V. New Business

Todd Lavigne volunteered to serve on the Cleanliness & Beautification Committee. Ken Kahn informed the board that the Arts Council is working with the City on a pilot project to install bike racks in downtown.

VI. Other Business

Zaleski referred the board to the three attachments included in the agenda packet.

VII. Adjournment

A motion was passed to declare the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael O'Connell
Secretary