



**Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes**

February 7, 2007, 8:30 a.m.

Goodwin Hotel, Haynes Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Board Attendees:

D. Cocola	B. Kaplowitz	B. Baran	L. Erdmann	T. Lavigne
J. Lewis	R. Morneau	M. Algieri	M. Marshall	S. Manousos
M. Kuziak	M. Grunberg	H. Hoffman	J. Hayes	H. Russell
T. Luszczak	M. O'Connell	B. Judd	O. Griebel	

Also in attendance: M. Zaleski, Executive Director
D. Waterhouse, 960 Main
Chief Daryl Roberts, HPD
Deputy Chief Paul Hammick, HPD

I. Welcome

Chairperson Bert Kaplowitz welcomed everyone to the Goodwin Hotel and the February meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Hartford Business Improvement District. She welcomed Chief Daryl Roberts and Deputy Chief Paul Hammick of the Hartford Police Department to the meeting. The commissioners all introduced themselves.

II. Discussion with Chief Daryl Roberts, HPD

Michael Zaleski talked about the importance of the HBID establishing and maintaining a strong relationship with HPD as it moves forward. He thanked Chief Roberts and Deputy Chief Hammick for attending the board meeting and asked that the Chief take a couple of minutes to discuss his perspective on public safety in the Downtown and Asylum Hill neighborhoods.

Chief Roberts thanked the board for inviting him to the meeting and stated he looked forward to working with the organization. He stated that the community helps keep the police department accountable and he needs positive interaction between the property owners and HPD. Chief Roberts noted that HPD is about service, relationships and safety. Most people will end up having an interaction with the police department. He is hopeful that these interactions are positive ones but he recognizes that many are not. His expectation is that regardless of how community members come to interact with his officers, they will always be treated fairly and respectfully.

The Chief noted that crime is down 5.3% in the last 7 months since he has been in command. The statistics show that there is less crime in the district and throughout the city. He recognizes, however, that there continues to be a perception that the city is unsafe. He emphasized the perception of safety needs to accompany the reality that the city is increasingly safer.

Chief Roberts spoke of a survey that he intends to create that will gauge the level of service of the HPD. The survey will monitor how the public was treated in their interaction with HPD recognizing that many who receive the survey have received a ticket and had an unwanted interaction with a HPD officer. The Chief stated that he was pleased to be able to add a foot patrol to the Downtown starting January 1st. He had hoped for additional foot patrols but the staffing levels are not quite high enough to allow additional officers. He has a commitment from the Mayor for two new classes of recruits. The challenge remains the

attrition rate of senior officers retiring. Four retired just last month according to Chief Roberts. He hopes to get up to an acceptable level to allow for increased patrols.

Deputy Chief Paul Hammick talked about the accountability that has been restored to HPD in the last several years. He noted the neighborhood policing plan has made significant improvements by placing responsibility for certain areas in the hands of the same officers and command staff.

Chief Hammick stressed that car breaks continue to be an issue in the district. He stated that the conditions team and the beat officer have recently made a significant dent in the number of car breaks but the problem still remains. The presence of the beat officer will help rectify these types of crimes. They are evaluating where these car breaks are happening and assigning resources to those areas.

Chief Roberts stated he had reviewed the RFP for HBID security ambassadors and will share some of his minor concerns with Zaleski. He stated that these ambassadors need to be appropriately trained and offered to assist.

Chief Roberts stressed the importance of a partnership between the community and HPD. There needs to be communication back and forth. Mike O'Connell thanked the Chief for attending the meeting and wanted to make sure the Chief knew the intent of the BID. He stressed that public safety is a top priority with cleanliness and marketing. He believes a strong partnership between HPD and the HBID is critical. Unfortunately, O'Connell remarked, clients, employees and suburbanites are not as comfortable as they should be in the downtown. The perception is the city is not as safe as it should be.

Jerry Hayes stated that Phoenix has 1,000 employees in downtown and they have to fight the misperception of crime on a daily basis. He sees the BID as a way for HPD to help work against the misperception and hopes that the Chief will partner with the BID to work on that issue. The on-street security presence that the BID will provide should be seen as a resource for HPD. He noted the success of SCAN and sees the BID as a next step in that partnership. Chief Roberts stated that Captain Buyak attends the SCAN meetings and he sees the value of that communication.

Oz Griebel suggested that the Chief share the latest crime statistics with Zaleski and he can distribute them to the board. Debbie Waterhouse stated that continually looking to statistics will not change attitudes. People are reluctant to believe statistics. Chief Hammick recognized that statistics are not going to fly with the public when they hear about crime in the media. The consensus was that the image that the media puts out could be better.

Chief Roberts stated that he believes addressing quality of life crimes will help with the perception of crime. He recognizes that long response times for lesser crimes is frustrating and do not help the image. He is committed to decreasing HPD response times.

Mike Algieri asked the Chief what he thinks the HBID on-street security presence should look like. Chief Roberts stated that he supports what the BID is trying to do. Any additional eyes and ears on the street will help. An additional presence will make criminals uncomfortable and the ambassadors can assist with descriptions and information.

Chief Hammick stressed that HPD's primary concern is the security ambassador's uniform. The safety of the ambassador is paramount and they do not want the ambassadors to be mistaken for police and challenged. The board stressed how important it is that there be a strong relationship between the BID and HPD. Chief Roberts reiterated that he appreciates what the HBID is trying to do.

Dave Cocola asked the Chief about staffing levels. He agreed that street presence is important. He asked how far away HPD is from a full force and how many officers the District could expect when they are at full force. Chief Roberts shared that his idea of a full force is different from what City Hall thinks. He envisions roughly 600 though they are currently still shy of 400. Chief Hammick stressed that the attrition rate is

tough to keep up with and more and more senior officers are starting to retire. There was a general discussion

HBID Board Minutes
February 7, 2007
page 3

about HPD's ability to recruit officers. Chief Roberts acknowledged it is difficult because the standards are very high. Many applicants fail the background check.

Mike Marshall stressed that the property owners have agreed through the BID to pay additional dollars to increase the security presence on the street. He asked the Chief to take advantage of that new resource.

He also stated that Chief Roberts should look to the BID board and ask for assistance in lobbying the Mayor's Office for additional police officers. The BID should be considered a resource in a variety of different ways. There are issues that need to be addressed in the district and the BID can be helpful. He noted that the BID model has been successful in New York City. Chief Roberts stated that ours is a visual society so the additional presence of BID staff could help. He stressed the importance of training and offered to bring the ambassadors to the HPD training academy to get them properly trained. Zaleski thanked the Chief for the offer and stated he would take him up on the offer.

Ron Morneault thanked the Chief for the additional beat officer and stated that coordination with the beat officer has made a difference. Panhandling is down since the officer started in January. Chief Roberts and Chief Hammick talked about the value of the beat officer and the conditions team of one Sergeant and 6 officers dealing with quality of life crimes. The challenge that remains with community policing is getting more than one officer familiar with the community that they serve.

Oz Griebel reminded the board and the Chief that the Mayor had promised to have a senior HPD staff member in attendance at BID board meetings. The board thanked Chief Roberts and Deputy Chief Hammick for attending the meeting and stressed the importance of developing and maintaining a strong relationship.

III. Review and approval of January 24, 2007 meeting minutes

Mike Kuziak moved and Beth Judd seconded a motion to approve the minutes of January 24, 2007 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Committee Reports

Public Safety – Mike Algieri provided an update on the activities of the Public Safety Committee, including the release of the RFP. Bert Kaplowitz assured the commissioners that the RFP process that has been followed to date has been objective and it will continue to be a fair process that will yield the most qualified contractor in each area.

Cleanliness & Beautification – Stathis Manousos reviewed the activities of the committee including the RFP that is on the street for a clean streets contractor and beautification. There was additional discussion about the beautification program. Zaleski stated that the committee may be coming back to the board looking for permission to use additional funds for the capital purchase of additional flower planters. Every week that the on-street program is not on the street, the organization has excess dollars to fund these types of purchases. The goal is to purchase 200 high quality planters. Beth Judd asked about the feasibility of leasing the flower planters.

Advocacy – Jim Lewis gave the Advocacy and Marketing report. The committee intends to send out a newsletter within the next two weeks updating the property owners on the progress that the District has made to date. The newsletter will include a request for contact information and owner email addresses. Lewis also presented the proposed HBID logo for board consideration. There was discussion about the logo and how the committee came up with this version. Mike O'Connell moved and Mike Kuziak seconded a motion to adopt the logo and its family of colors for the organization. The motion passed unanimously. The committee is looking an RFP to secure a vendor for design and marketing assistance. Bert Kaplowitz asked board members to send any suggested firms to Zaleski.

There was discussion about the Union Station train trestle billboard. Mike O'Connell informed the board he had reached out to John Haymond. Zaleski stated that Ken Kahn has made progress with the advertising

HBID Board Minutes
February 7, 2007
page 4

sales representative for Amtrak and with John Haymond. A proposal will be provided to the board in March. Tom Luszczak reiterated his opposition to using BID funds on a billboard that will have to be updated as opposed to a more permanent installation. Michael Grunberg stated that an arrangement could be put in place where the deal would not cost the BID anything if Haymond donates the space and takes a deduction. Zaleski will bring additional information back to the board.

Zaleski stated that the board will be asked to adopt a mill rate at the March meeting. There was board discussion about keeping the mill rate at 1 mill. There was consensus that 1 mill as stated in the ordinance would be the mill rate regardless of the increase that revaluation has had on property values.

V. New Business

Bert Kaplowitz suggested that the board send a letter to MetLife asking them to stay in downtown Hartford. MetLife is currently considering purchasing CityPlace or a location in the suburbs. There was discussion about whether MetLife has already made that decision. The consensus was that a letter from the HBID would not hurt. There was general discussion about MetLife's desire for free parking which is not likely in downtown. There was a desire to have Jim Kopencey of the Hartford Parking Authority attend an upcoming board meeting.

Michael Zaleski and Lee Erdmann reviewed a request by the City to allocate \$4,000 from the dollars sent to the BID by the City that were formally used by Hartford Proud & Beautiful in the citywide spring cleanup. This is a transition year and the dollars sent to the BID have been used in the past for the cleanup. The City would be matching the \$4,000 contribution. Dave Cocola moved and Mike O'Connell seconded a motion to allocate \$4,000 to the Knox Parks Foundation for the spring cleanup.

VI. Other Business

Zaleski referred the board to the Executive Director's report included in the agenda packet.

VII. Adjournment

A motion was passed to declare the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael O'Connell
Secretary