



**Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes**

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

Connecticut Culinary Institute
85 Sigourney Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06105

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

Also in attendance: M. Zaleski, Executive Director
Robert Turin, former Exec. Dir., SBID
Roger O'Brien, Director of Planning, City of Hartford
Lydia Rosario, City of Hartford

I. Welcome

Chairperson Bert Kaplowitz welcomed everyone to the March meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Hartford Business Improvement District. She thanked Brooke Baran for hosting the meeting at the Connecticut Culinary Institute. As there were guests in attendance, introductions were done.

II. Review and approval of February 7, 2007 meeting minutes

Jerry Hayes moved and Beth Judd seconded a motion to approve the minutes of February 7, 2007 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Presentation by Robert Turin, former Executive Director, Springfield BID

Michael Zaleski introduced Robert Turin, retired Executive Director of the Springfield Business Improvement District. Per the board's request, Zaleski had invited Turin to attend the board meeting and provide his perspective on how the Hartford BID should proceed as it begins its existence. Turin spent seven years as director of the downtown Springfield BID, seven years as the director in Manchester and 17 years with the City of Hartford.

Turin provided an overview of the Springfield BID and spoke briefly about his experience. His focus was to keep things simple and followed the mantra 'clean it up, spruce it up, liven it up and sell it'. He warned against establishing too many committees and meeting too often. He encouraged the board to allow the BID to be flexible, creative and more efficient than the city. He stressed the importance of a clear mission. Do not overestimate or underestimate what the BID can do. Establish partnerships and concentrate on both short and long term results. Turin took several questions from the board.

There were questions about how long the Springfield BID took to show results and how success was measured. Turin reviewed some of the ways the BID was able to show progress despite the city's financial instability. Ken Kahn commented that the Western Massachusetts civic and cultural leaders were working hard and collaborating with Connecticut groups but the challenges that Springfield faces are much more severe than Hartford.

Turin stressed the importance of a website as the sales piece that most people turn to these days. He noted that the SBID uses their site to market vacant property. Jerry Hayes, who lives just outside Springfield,

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shared his views of how things have gone in downtown Springfield, He noted that a couple of high profile crime incidents can ruin a lot of the hard work that organizations like the BID work on. There was discussion about the role the BID plays in public relations. Holly DeYoung asked about the percentage of the Springfield budget allocated to marketing and public relations. Turin stated that he has a marketing director on staff as well as two other staff in the office. The board thanked Turin for attending the meeting and invited him to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

IV. Income / Expenses Statement

Beth Judd reviewed the income/expense statement that was provided in the agenda packet. Zaleski stated that additional information will be provided at future meetings when additional revenue is received including the receipt of the City assessment check, anticipated any day.

V. Setting the mill rate for FY 07/08

Mike O'Connell moved and Ken Kahn seconded a motion to set the mill rate for FY 07/08 at 1 mill. The motion passed unanimously. Zaleski will notify the City of Hartford Finance Department of the mill rate.

VI. Review and approval of mission statement

Zaleski reviewed the proposed mission statement for the organization which had been crafted by the Executive Committee. He also passed out a version revised by Hank Hoffman. There was significant board discussion about the draft, including the mention of other agencies. The consensus was that Hank Hoffman's version was most appropriate with a couple of revisions.

Jerry Hayes moved and Beth Judd seconded a motion to approve the following mission statement:

The mission of the Hartford Business Improvement District (HBID) is to bring about positive and lasting change by enhancing the economic vitality and quality of life within the District. Working collectively with the Mayor's Office, Police Department and Public Works Department, as well as the more than 100 property owners and other organizations within the District, HBID will accomplish its mission through initiatives that will create a safer, cleaner and more attractive environment for employees, visitors and residents that frequent the District.

The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Committee Reports

Public Safety – Mike Algieri provided an update on the activities of the Public Safety Committee, including the 8 proposals received for the RFP. He noted that a short list of the proposals will be developed when the committee meets on Friday and the finalists will be interviewed.

Cleanliness & Beautification – Stathis Manousos reviewed the activities of the committee, including the two proposals received in response to the RFP for a clean streets contractor. Both firms will be interviewed. There was general discussion about how the firms, both of which are national firms, would use the local labor pool.

There was additional discussion about the beautification program and the lone proposal received from the Knox Parks Foundation. The board discussed the value of leaving the planters out throughout the winter. Zaleski will get additional information about the impact that a year round program will have on the proposal.

Todd Lavigne spoke briefly about the planter that had been selected by the committee. He had a sample planter at the meeting. The planter is used in Chicago and Cincinnati. Lavigne was able to negotiate a very good price for the planters. 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. The goal is to purchase 200 high quality planters.

Ken Kahn moved and Mike Kuziak seconded a motion to approve the execution of a contract with the Knox Parks Foundation for HBID's beautification program. The motion passed unanimously.

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Advocacy – Holly DeYoung provided the Advocacy and Marketing report. A newsletter was sent out to the property owners. The committee is attempting gather as many email addresses as possible. The committee also has an RFP out on the street for public relations, marketing and design. A communications plan will be developed with the assistance of the selected firm. Proposals are due back mid-month. The committee will be requesting that the 07/08 budget include more than 5% of the total budget for marketing and promotion.

Ken Kahn talked briefly the need for the BID interact positively and consistently with the new Rising Star campaign which is the new version of the Hartford Image Project.

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

IX. Old Business

City of Hartford perspective of signs and outdoor advertising – Lee Erdmann thanked the board for the opportunity to present the Mayor's proposal for generating revenue through the installation of between 4 – 6 additional billboards on City land in the city. Revenue from the billboards will be used to fund the city budget and also fund new bus shelters and information kiosks. Erdmann noted that the Mayor was looking for public and community input and would decide whether to pursue the deal once those comments were received. Roger O'Brien talked about the planning and zoning aspects of the proposal. He referred to a map in the back of the room and noted that there are currently 52 billboards on I-91 and 32 billboards on I-84 in the city. He addressed the issue of controlling the content of the billboards. The City would reserve the right to approve content on the new billboards. Lydia Rosario spoke about the financial terms of the proposed deal with All Vision. The City anticipates an upfront payment of \$2.5 million with yearly payments of \$100,000 per year for 20 years.

There was significant discussion by the board. Michael Grunberg expressed a concern about the zoning changes that could open up the city to additional billboards. Erdmann stated the City would consider the issue. Jerry Hayes asked about the cost/benefit of the additional billboards. There was discussion about the installation of electronic billboards. Ken Kahn spoke briefly about how many city's are starting to take down billboards and pass ordinances to stop the proliferation of more signs. He was concerned the city was headed in the wrong direction with this deal. Other board members expressed support for the city trying to find additional revenue sources. There are already a significant number and a couple more would not have a significant impact. Other board members, including Mike O'Connell, spoke against adding more signs.

The board thanked Erdmann, O'Brien and Rosario for the presentation. The board did not take any formal action to amend its earlier position regarding adding billboards.

Proposal for Union Station billboard – Ken Kahn passed around a version of a billboard that he would like the BID board to consider funding for the east side of the Union Station train trestle. He has a deal with John Haymond and CBS Media to take over the west and east side of the trestle with a Welcome to Hartford message for the Arts Council, Rising Star campaign and HBID. Kahn stressed that the trestle is an existing structure and appropriate for this type of welcoming message. Mike O'Connell moved and Lee Erdmann seconded a motion to approve \$6,000 in BID funding for the east side of the trestle.

X. New Business

There was no new business to come before the board.

XI. Other Business

Zaleski referred the board to the Executive Director's report included in the agenda packet. There was no other business to come before the board.

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XII. Adjournment

A motion was passed to declare the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael O'Connell
Secretary

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