



**Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes**

April 4, 2007, 8:30 a.m.

New Boston Management Services
100 Pearl Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Board Attendees: D. Cocola B. Kaplowitz R. Morneault L. Erdmann T. Lavigne
J. Lewis H. DeYoung M. Coursey M. Marshall S. Manousos
M. Wildfong H. Hoffman J. Hayes K. Kahn H. Russell
T. Luszczak M. O'Connell B. Judd O. Griebel

Also in attendance: M. Zaleski, Executive Director
Deputy Chief P. Hammick, HPD
M. Kuziak, LAZ Parking

I. Welcome

Chairperson Bert Kaplowitz welcomed everyone to the April meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Hartford Business Improvement District. She thanked Dave Cocola of New Boston for once again hosting the meeting.

Kaplowitz noted that she has recently switched jobs leaving Northland and going to work for LAZ Parking. She has discussed the transition with Mike Kuziak and he has agreed that she will assume Mike's LAZ Parking commissioner seat and Mike will leave the board. Kaplowitz introduced Mary Coursey who has been appointed to represent Northland Investment Corporation.

Kaplowitz offered to stay on as chair of the organization until the end of the fiscal year when a new slate of officers will be elected to govern the organization. Ken Kahn moved and Mike Marshall seconded a motion to have Bert Kaplowitz stay on as chair of the HBID until the end of the fiscal year. The motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Hayes suggested that the board set up a nominating committee to offer a slate of officers for the next fiscal year. There was board discussion about the need for a nominating committee. Kaplowitz asked Mike O'Connell to work on an amendment to the organization's bylaws to allow for the appointment of a nominating committee. The amendment will be brought to the board at a future meeting.

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

Lee Erdmann moved and Ken Kahn seconded a motion to approve the minutes of March 7, 2007 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Treasurer's Report

Income / Expense Statement - Beth Judd reviewed the income/expense statement that was provided in the agenda packet. Zaleski stated that the City's check for \$372,885 was received but was for taxes received as opposed to 50% of the taxes billed as promised by the city. A second check for approximately \$28,000 is expected.

Review of draft HBID budget for FY 07/08 – Zaleski reviewed the budget included in the agenda packet. The budget is based on the assessment of 1 mill set by the board at the last meeting. The assessment is expected to generate a little less than \$900,000. The draft budget will be sent to the property owners for their review and comment at the annual meeting to be held by May 31st.

There was significant board discussion about the budget. There was discussion about the inclusion of in-kind revenue. The board requested that any in-kind revenue be removed from the budget. There was discussion about the amount of revenue that could be generated from tax-exempt properties. Zaleski stated he believes the number included in the budget was conservative. There were questions about other grants and revenue. The board reinforced the importance of operating within a balanced budget.

Continued discussion revolved around the cash reserve proposed. Zaleski stated that there will be significant revenue remaining from 06/07 that should be carried over into 07/08. There was also a concern that cash flow might be tight in July of 2007 while the BID awaits the City assessment check. Lee Erdmann suggested the City could probably assist the HBID by cutting the city check as quickly as possible. There was also discussion about the possibility of negotiating the contracts with each of the vendors.

Zaleski will reissue the draft budget with the changes requested by the board. Mike O'Connell moved and Lee Erdmann seconded a motion to adopt the draft budget as a working budget subject to further modification and refinement as circumstances dictate. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Proposed plan for May annual meeting of the property owners

Zaleski reviewed a proposed plan to hold the annual meeting of the property owners, a meeting required by the bylaws and BID ordinance, in early May. The meeting would follow the regular board meeting of the board. The meeting is an opportunity for property owners to review the budget and comment. There is no formal vote required by the property owners. Holly DeYoung noted that this is a great opportunity for the organization to highlight the activities of the board. Mike O'Connell noted that this is an important meeting and an opportunity for the board to impress upon the property owners that the board has things in order. The budget will then be passed by the board at the June meeting.

V. Committee Reports

Public Safety – Zaleski provided the Public Safety Committee report as Mike Algieri was unable to attend. Zaleski reviewed the RFP process that took place over the past two months. Eight proposals were received for the security ambassador contract. Three were selected for interviews and those took place in mid-March. Zaleski stated that the committee had put a significant amount of time into reviewing the proposals and interviewing the candidates. The candidates included a local organization, the Hartford Guides, and two national companies that provide downtown management services (Block by Block and Service Group).

Zaleski stated that the committee had met last week to decide on a recommendation for the board. The six members of the committee that had participated in the entire process were split 3 in favor of the Hartford Guides and 3 in favor of Block by Block. The committee tried to come to a conclusion but the meeting ended with no recommendation for the board.

Zaleski stated that he had spoken with all of the committee members and not one was interested in changing their vote. He stated he was uncomfortable bringing no recommendation to the board and asking for them to decide. In order to get the contractors working quickly, a decision needs to be made.

As the only other person that has seen and read all of the proposals and presentations, Zaleski stated he was comfortable making a recommendation to the board. He was not asking the committee members to change their votes, he was merely asking for them, lacking a better alternative, to turn to his recommendation as the next best option. Zaleski stated that he recommends that the organization contract

with the Hartford Guides for the security ambassador contract. He stated that he believes both entities could implement the contract but the Guides provide the best option for immediate success.

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Cleanliness & Beautification – In order to provide the board with additional information, Stathis Manousos reviewed the process that the committee undertook to select a contractor. The committee was recommending that the board contract with Block by Block for the clean streets contract. He noted that Block by Block is very interested in providing both clean and security and has offered a savings of about \$100,000. Zaleski thanked Manousos for providing the cleanliness committee's perspective and noted that Block by Block is very capable of providing both services.

There was significant board discussion about the two contractors under consideration for the security ambassador contract. The board asked Zaleski to provide his reasoning for recommending the Hartford Guides. Zaleski stated that the board will be hiring the Hartford Guides to implement its security ambassador contract. The board will not be hiring the Guides to provide the service they have provided to the downtown to date. The RFP called for more of an authoritative security presence on the street that is different from the hospitality service that the Guides currently provide. Zaleski stated that the recommendation has nothing to do with the role that the Guides or Austin Jordan played in creation of the BID. He believes the Guides have the best chance of immediate success on the street partnering with the Hartford Police Department and that since he will ultimately be evaluated on the success or failure of the on-street program, he is asking the board to endorse his recommendation.

There was continued discussion about the benefits of going with the national provider who has experience in other cities and can bring that knowledge to Hartford. There was discussion about making a break from the existing on-street product and going with something new. Zaleski reviewed conversations he has had with Austin Jordan and Block by Block about a cooperative effort but the negotiations did not seem to go anywhere productive.

Several commissioners who are public safety committee members expressed their opinions. After significant discussion, the board asked Chief Hammick to provide his opinion. Hammick stated that he believes the Hartford Guides are qualified to step up their operation and provide the services requested. He stated that HPD will support either company selected but he believes selecting the Hartford Guides will provide for a smoother transition with HPD. The outside company will have to build the relationship with the front line officer.

There was additional discussion about the inclusion of a 30 day out in each of the contracts. Zaleski stated that a 30 day provision is included in each of the RFPs and will be included in the contracts.

Additional discussion ensued about the Hartford Guides and Block by Block. Ken Kahn moved and Lee Erdmann seconded a motion to proceed forward with the Executive Director's recommendation that the HBID contract with the Hartford Guides, noting the Public Safety Committee remains deadlocked on a recommendation, with the inclusion of a 30 day out provision and recognizing that the product the Guides will put on the street will be much different from the existing product. The motion passed 12-6 with Kaplowitz, Morneault, Erdmann, Lewis, DeYoung, Coursey, Wildfongb (Grunberg), Hayes, Kahn, Russell, Luszczak and O'Connell voting in favor and Judd, Cocola, Lavigne, Marshall, Manousos and Hoffman voting against.

Lee Erdmann moved and Mike O'Connell seconded a motion to accept the Cleanliness and Beautification Committee's recommendation to contract with Block by Block for the clean streets contract. The motion passed unanimously.

Zaleski asked the board to approve the allocation of \$24,000 in reserve dollars in 2006/2007 for the capital purchase of 114 additional flower planters. The total purchase would be 200. Ken Kahn moved and Mike O'Connell seconded a motion to allocate the dollars for the planter purchase. The motion passed unanimously.

Advocacy – Holly DeYoung provided the Advocacy and Marketing report. The committee sent out an RFP for a communications vendor. The committee is recommending contracting with Global Strategy Group of Hartford for a three month period for a total contract of \$15,000 - \$18,000 to assist with the public relations aspects of the roll out and newsletter design and production.

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VI. Old Business

Billboards – Mike O’Connell notified the board that he believes the Mayor has just about abandoned his new billboard proposal.

VII. New Business

Aetna Viaduct Alternative Study Group – Zaleski reviewed a document included in the agenda packet that concerned options for the redesign of I-84 through the Asylum Hill and Downtown. An ad-hoc committee has asked for the HBID to join the group and sign a letter being sent to state officials to reconsider their position on the highway reconstruction. Zaleski asked the board to review the document and whether the board was interested in joining the group. Mike Marshall spoke briefly about Aetna’s involvement. He believes it’s important that the state look at all options but is not optimistic that they will. Mike O’Connell moved and Ken Kahn seconded a motion to have HBID sign the draft letter asking for the state to reconsider their position on the highway reconstruction. The motion passed with all in favor except for Dave Cocola. Cocola believes that the board should stay focused on clean and safe and not get distracted by other issues.

VIII. 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.

IX. Adjournment

A motion was passed to declare the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael O’Connell
Secretary