



**Mansfield Downtown Partnership
Board of Directors Meeting
October 1, 2020
By Teleconference
4:30 PM**

Minutes

Present: John Carrington, Mario Conjura, Frank Gifford, Prabhas KC, Kyle Muncy, Diana Pelletier, Sean Vasington, Emily Wicks, and Cara Workman

Board Emeritus: Steve Bacon, Betsy Paterson

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

1. Call to Order

President Diana Pelletier called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

2. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes of September 3, 2020

John Carrington made a motion to approve the September 3, 2020 minutes. Frank Gifford seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

4. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Cynthia van Zelm said she held meetings over the past month with members of the Partnership team, and Hart Realty Advisers and its new leasing and marketing team Blackline to continue to coordinate on the promotion of Downtown Storrs businesses. She asked the Blackline team to provide information on available sites to be listed on the Downtown Storrs website.

Ms. van Zelm said she and Board member Kyle Muncy also spoke with a representative of Charter Realty regarding leasing of the commercial property owned by ACF. The goal was again to outline what the Partnership is doing to promote Downtown Storrs and determine the status of leasing.

Ms. van Zelm said Senior Communications Manager Kathleen Paterson continues to promote mask wearing and social distancing on the Partnership's websites and social media.

Ms. van Zelm said the Town Guide, targeted toward new residents and new businesses, is almost complete. Sean Vasington asked that the national heritage corridor (The Last Green Valley) be referenced in the Town Guide and as part of the marketing of Mansfield. In response to a comment about promoting hiking by Ms. Pelletier, Ms. van Zelm confirmed hiking plays a prominent role in the Guide.



Ms. van Zelm also said she is working with the Town Planning staff and AdvanceCT on a parcel book to showcase available property in the Opportunity Zone.

5. Update and Discussion of Business Outreach

Emily Wicks reported on her calls with business owners. The two owners she spoke with are being affected by the pandemic but one of them is due to maintaining student workers who cannot work due to exposure to COVID-19.

Prabhas KC brought up the idea of helping restaurants with a QR code to access menus to allow them to go paperless, thus, creating an even safer environment. The vendor could also provide a way to track how often people go to a particular restaurant. Sean Vasington suggested verifying which restaurants actually use menus. Mr. KC will follow-up. Mr. KC will pursue this idea and work with Partnership Senior Communications Manager Kathleen Paterson.

Emily Wicks also suggested putting the QR code on the door or the windows of the businesses, which would again address the safety issue.

Cara Workman also suggested promoting who honors Husky Bucks. Mr. KC said he would look at a promotion with the One Card Office (Husky Bucks) over winter break, as he works there.

The Partnership will also re-promote the businesses that offer take-out and delivery especially as the winter months approach and people will not be able to eat outside.

Ms. Workman also suggested a Downtown Storrs gift card. Ms. van Zelm said she and Partnership staff have pursued this several times but it was cost prohibitive and a complicated process for the Partnership to serve as the conduit for the gift card. However, she will review again.

Mr. Vasington and Frank Gifford offered to assist Mr. KC.

Steve Bacon resurrected the idea of closing Dog Lane from Dog Lane Café to Mooyah to allow for more public space for tables, and to serve as effectively an extension of Betsy Paterson Square.

Ms. van Zelm said some of the restaurants have been resistant to shut down this part of Dog Lane during the pandemic since customers have used it for pick-up.

Ms. Workman inquired as to whether pick-up could be done behind these businesses, and Ms. Wicks also suggested designated spots there and on Storrs Road.

6. Report from Committees and Task Forces

Celebrate Mansfield Festival

Chair Emily Wicks said the Ballard puppetry building workshops on Facebook Live were very popular and they had participants from all over the world.

Ms. Wicks said the scavenger hunt and the second iteration of Spend and Win were not as popular. She said the Committee would discuss why the participation might have been low.



Ms. Wicks said the pop up concert on September 11 was great. It was socially distanced and added a wonderful vibe to Betsy Paterson Square. It was not advertised until the day of to prevent any crowds.

Ms. Wicks commended Partnership Event Coordinator Denise Kegler for her work on the pop up concert and the other Celebrate Mansfield events. Ms. Pelletier added her thanks to Ms. Wicks and the Committee.

After discussion about pop up events and their positive nature, there was general support from Board members to continue pop-ups that maintain all the rules for outdoor gatherings.

Governance Committee

Ms. Pelletier said the Committee discussed new Board members. Some gaps in terms of expertise are in the areas of investment and insurance, as well as generally Downtown Storrs' businesses. She asked Board members to think of other possible Board members.

Ms. Pelletier referred to additional changes recommended to the Bylaws (see attached). The changes proposed address President succession, and the appointment of Committee members. See Article VI, Section 2 and Section 4, and Article VII, Section 7.

Mr. Gifford made a motion to amend the Partnership Bylaws as described in the attached amendments. Mr. Carrington seconded the motion. The motion was approved. The Bylaws will need to be ratified by the membership as a next step.

Ms. Pelletier said the Committee discussed holding the annual meeting in December. Ms. Workman said she would see if UConn President Katsouleas would be available to speak at the virtual annual meeting as well as do a virtual meet and greet with the Partnership Board of Directors at its November meeting.

7. Adjourn

Ms. Workman made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Carrington seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cynthia van Zelm.