

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT**

**January 08, 2025
8 AM**

Meeting held at Work_Space, 903 Main Street

MEMBERS PRESENT: Daniel Mulligan, Chair
Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary
Tarek Ambia, Finance Co-Chair
Thomas Tomko, Finance Co-Chair
Sophia Dzialo
Ryan Fagan
Esther Jeffery

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT:
Gary Anderson, Director Planning and Development

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Sedensky
Nick Sanguinetti
Kathy Hatch
Caroline Socha

STAFF PRESENT: Bernie LeBel, Downtown Manager

MEMBERS ABSENT: Joseph Datta

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS
ABSENT: Millie Texidor - GMCC Representative

Call to Order:

- Mr. Mulligan calls the meeting to order at 8:04 AM.

Roll Call:

- Mr. Mulligan noted those present and absent.

Minutes:

- Deferred until February

Public Comment:

- O&G Industries - Mr. Sedensky introduces Mr. Sanguinetti who will be managing the day to day events at the construction site. He informs the Board that there is a site contractor ready and that the security and soil control fencing should be up toward the end of the week. Further, the environmental contractor should begin the following week with much of the abatement taking place indoors over the next 3-4 weeks. Mr. Sanguinetti reports that once the abatement is complete, more machines will show up and tear down the building. Mr. Sedensky states that the building will go down quickly and be removed, and that it's possible to see some well-fields

being drilled for the geothermal; the contract work like electrical, etc. are going to be out to bid perhaps at the end of this month. Once those bids are received and scope reviews have taken place, contracts will be issued. Mr. Tomko asks about the 150 parking stalls that Director Schain mentioned would be there. Mr. Anderson believes the Director misspoke and doesn't believe there will be 150 on-site. Mr. Sedensky would like the Board members to feel free to reach out to Mr. Sanguinetti with any questions about the project, and if for some reason you don't hear back from Mr. Sanguinetti, to please let Mr. Sedensky know.

(Mr. Sedensky and Mr. Sanguinetti exit)

- Ms. Hatch would like to know what considerations were taken regarding the traffic patterns and where the traffic will go when the streetscape updates happen to Main Street. Mr. Mulligan states that this Board can offer our own opinions but does not have any control over this design. Mr. Anderson states that the necessary departments have gone through the plan and the design shows that there won't be much change to the flow of Downtown. While it's difficult to predict the future, the experts who have worked on the design don't feel that there will be a significant change to the traffic patterns. He asks if that were to happen, what are your concerns? Ms. Hatch is concerned about the pedestrians and having fatalities on the street (particularly Spruce Street). Mr. Anderson says that there are speed tables projected near the former Nathan Hale property which should help mitigate speeding. Though speeding and how people drive is not necessarily under the Town's direct control; the idea isn't to keep people from Downtown but to direct people Downtown. Ms. Hatch asks if there will be support for businesses through the construction project. Mr. Tomko asks if there will be tax deductions or reductions. Mr. Anderson states that his department has conveyed ideas like that as part of the process and they know that a major concern is making sure people know that businesses will be open during the construction phases and to inform customers where they can park. He is aware that the interim will be challenging, but feels that when you get to the completed project, there will be a more vibrant Downtown. Ms. Hatch is concerned about people not dealing with change or being inconvenienced. Mr. Anderson states that the project will take roughly two years but it will be staged so the street remains open. Mr. Tomko inquires about the three or so electrical vaults on the street, and he doesn't know how those will play into the project as most of that electrical system is 1940s wiring. Ms. Hatch would like to know how businesses will receive deliveries. Mr. Anderson states that some of the ideas incorporated into the plan include dedicated delivery spaces on the street and on the side streets. He feels that now, deliveries aren't a great situation and he believes there are ways to improve upon them but it will all come with trade-offs. Mr. Tomko would like to see Saint James Church call the Vatican and get a pile of money to build a parking garage.

District Chair Report:

- Mr. Mulligan welcomes Caroline Socha as the new Downtown Manager. Mr. Mulligan recommended that the manager pass a key fob for the office to the Chair and requisite passwords to the Chair and Secretary.

GMCC Report:

- None present

Manager's Report:

- Ms. LeBel reports that over the past two weeks, she has been training Ms. Socha and she is working well on becoming independent in the position. We've canvassed several businesses to do introductions.
- Ms. Socha reports that she and Ms. LeBel are working with the Town IT and Finance to get direct access to MUNIS so the District can have better access to our financial reports. (Mr. Tomko would like to see the line item for the insurance payments because he doesn't see them showing up in the current reports. He would also like to see copies of the older budgets to find the specifics of the parking lot purchases. Mr. Anderson notes that those payments would have been for the good of the Downtown.) Ms. Socha said that there were several references to the parking lot purchases in the documentation that she has seen but she hasn't found the official agreement yet. Mr. Tomko notes that he had begun making a simplified, revised budget but further states that we are revenue deficient; he feels that adding a 55 million dollar building should be "paid in" to the District in some way; non-profits do utilize a lot of services that they do not pay in for. Ms. Socha notes that for parking, there was a broken citation printer which has been fixed but we need to further adjust the print size.

Executive Session:

- A motion to add an executive session to discuss personnel is made by Ms. Jeffery, seconded by Mr. Ambia. All approve.
- A motion to enter executive session is made by Mr. Fagan, seconded by Mr. Ambia. All approve.
- Executive session ends at 8:41 with no actions taken.

Finance:

- 24/25 Budget - Ms. LeBel updated the 24/25 fiscal year budget. The District has received the deferred revenues which should put us toward the 50% parking revenue total. This fiscal year has a projected shortfall of \$29-ish thousand; some due to parking and tax revenue. Mr. DuBaldo feels that with many revenue streams showing at only half-received, there should be a mark much closer to the yearly projection.

- 25/26 Proposed Budget – Ms. LeBel reports that with the proposed budget, the District is not planning on asking for event sponsorships for this coming year which will reduce the income. Mr. DuBaldo notes that our mill rate is based on our total budget numbers and is not a static number/percentage. Ms. LeBel reminds everyone that the District’s Annual Meeting is next week and we will present a proposed budget. Mr. Mulligan believes that we may need to better communicate our budget needs to the Town to increase accuracy of fund balance usage. Mr. Tomko would like to see a running fund balance on the monthly budgets and a line item for the insurance. Ms. LeBel reports that net banner revenue shows roughly a \$15.8k revenue in 23/24. Ms. Jeffery questions the line items on the banner revenues and it looks like there is an error in the lines. Ms. LeBel will correct that error. Ms. LeBel says that there are still payments outstanding on the next round of banners and some of those people need some "nudging". Ms. Socha will review the language on the banner contract to better clarify payment processes. Ms. LeBel feels that the process itself could be streamlined as well. Ms. Dzialo would like to press the Town for access to Stripe so we can offer digital payment options that are less cumbersome than checks.

Parking:

- Ms. LeBel reports that the citation printer was a \$600 expense.

Marketing:

- Ms. Dzialo reports that the winter is quiet and the Marketing Committee is planning the upcoming year. Ms. Jeffery said she visited with Mr. Farr about his comments and concerns and recommended that he come to some meetings or share his concerns with her to bring up with the Board. Ms. Jeffery would like to have a meet and greet on Jan. 23 to have a send-off for Bernie and have people meet Ms. Socha. Ms. Dzialo will supply some pastries and tea/coffee.

Maintenance & Beautification:

- Ms. LeBel reports that the contract expires in February and the District would like to make changes before the new bid is placed. Our current contractor failed to pick up plants in a timely manner and we would like to have those dates included in the contract. Ms. Socha mentions that Mountain View's manager is willing to make a designated team for Downtown and be more timely and oversight on any future. Ms. Socha would like to include performance conditions and plant survival as additional items in the contract so that if plants were to die as a result of their actions or inactions, that they would be responsible to replace the plants. Mr. Anderson suggests that having the ability to escalate to the new individual, it could be worthwhile to extend the contract.

- Ms. Socha attempted to contact property/business owners about snow removal because there isn't much continuity from building to building and there was a gap in shoveling on several blocks. She attempted to contact the owners of those properties. She also notes that there is a building that drains water of sorts directly on the sidewalk which has then been freezing. She notes that there is some graffiti popping up on the street and some overhanging limbs. Mr. Ambia asks about the lack of trash cans installed on the street.

Downtown Development Specialist Report:

- Mr. Anderson reports that there is no specialist yet, but the PZC meeting will be Jan. 22 5:30 PM. The meeting will go over the processes that are in place and possibly what things could change and how. Mr. Mulligan would like to know about the leftover heavy equipment in the Forest Street Lot, Mr. Tomko states that he heard it will be moved out by the end of the week. Mr. Tomko is also concerned about the retaining wall needing fall protection due to its visibility and height.

Old Business:

- None at this time

New Business:

- None at this time

Public Comment:

- None at this time

Other Business:

- Mr. Tomko states that he will resign after this meeting due to health concerns. Mr. Anderson invites him to public comment any time.

Adjourn

- There being no further business, a motion to adjourn is made by Mr. Tomko seconded by Mr. Ambia at 9:36 AM. All approve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary DMSSD

Recorder