

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

June 11, 2025

8 AM

Meeting held at Work_Space, 903 Main Street

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

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

ALSO PRESENT: Adam DeLaura
Nick Sanguinetti

STAFF PRESENT: Caroline Socha, 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 8:01 AM.

Roll Call:

- Mr. Mulligan noted those present and absent.

Minutes:

- A motion to approve the May 14, 2025 meeting is made by Ms. Jeffery, seconded by Ms. Dzialo. All approve.

Public Comment:

- None at this time

O&G Update:

- Mr. Sanguinetti says that structural steel installation will begin around the 23rd of June. The foundation has been poured. Ms. Dzialo asks about the duration of the loud construction. Mr. Sanguinetti says it will be a 10 week process, but the volume will be mostly when the steel is delivered and then through the bolting process. Ms. Socha says that the District has received complaints about the yellow lot being full of construction vehicles and inhibiting customer traffic. Mr. Sanguinetti says that the yellow lot was part

of the assigned parking lots for the construction vehicles. Mr. Anderson says that there are additional free lots available. Mr. Mulligan inquires about construction parkers on Main Street. Mr. Sanguinetti says that there was a brief issue with that but it was quickly addressed and none of their employees will be parking on the street. Mr. Anderson says that Public Works is in charge of the project, but there's not much additional assistance that they can provide for parking. Mr. Mulligan would have liked to have seen a little more flexibility for the customer parking. Mr. Sanguinetti says that they will be working on Saturday but it won't be a loud or dusty activity so it shouldn't have much if any impact on the Second Saturday event.

District Chair Report:

- None at this time

GMCC Report:

- None present

Manager's Report:

- Nothing additional

Finance:

- Ms. Socha reports that there have been adjustments to the totals which are noted. Ms. Socha would like some clarification about the requirements for POs. Mr. Anderson recommends speaking with Cora in Purchasing to have her share the documentation. Ms. Socha states that the Town has also asked the Downtown about providing a Town Year-End Report, she will clarify with the Town Finance. Mr. Anderson doesn't feel that it's a relevant item for the District if the District hasn't compiled this report in the past.

Parking:

- Mr. Mulligan reports that there's nothing on this section of the agenda that can be specifically addressed at this time until after our meeting with the Town.
- Ms. Socha asks about the specifics about "Permanent Parker Passes". Mr. DeLaura says that those passes are transferrable from owner to new owner and will provide the documentation to her.

Marketing:

- Ms. Dzialo reports that the Marketing Committee is preparing their "Around the World" event this coming Saturday. Outside of this event, most of the digital marketing is performing significantly more than last year (1500-5000%); the social media reach has reached 55,000 per month. Ms. Socha reports that The Pearl had a successful ribbon-cutting.

Maintenance & Beautification:

- None at this time

Old Business:

- Follow-up on Save Downtown funding request.
 - Ms. Dzialo feels that the survey should be less pointed and that it doesn't necessarily represent the way we budget. Mr. Mulligan is unsure about making decisions that correlate with the funding request. Ms. Dzialo believes that if people believe in that issue, they can independently provide that on a person-to-person basis or contribute however else they can. She feels that while we have contributed to great Downtown causes in the past, that's probably not the best use of our funds. Mr. Ambia disagrees with Mr. Anderson's stance that there has been good communication with the Town and the Downtown about the program. As far as using funds for the Save Downtown, he feels it would be beneficial for the Downtown as a whole. Ms. Dzialo feels that the data shows shows otherwise and there has been opportunities for businesses to get involved. While people do get upset after the fact, Mr. Anderson says that the plan is not finished yet and engineering is still being adjusted and tweaked; he says that a major change to parking was made on the angled parking on sections of the east side. Mr. Ambia asks if the District Board doesn't approve of the plan, what happens? Mr. Anderson says he would be very disappointed; the design plans are only about 10% complete at this point. He is disheartened that there is such negativity about the plan and the perceived lack of communication. He says that this whole project was created to support the Downtown to help make it a better and thriving place. One of the sections of that priority is to develop the 942 Main property which can only be done by impacting the Forest Street parking lot. Ms. Jeffery says that there is still an empathy issue; where it's easy for a Town employee to receive a guaranteed check to tell someone who is pouring their heart and soul into a business with no guaranteed money coming in to bridge the gap between the now, construction and completion. Ms. Jeffery says that she gets zero direct benefit from sitting on this board, but her heart goes out to those who will be negatively affected by this disruption. While people can't be promised concessions, they deserve humanity and assurance that they can survive through this process. Mr. Anderson asks if it's the construction period that most of these concerns come up. Ms. Jeffery believes that from what she has heard, yes, the majority are apprehensive about the construction itself. Ms. Jeffery says that there needs to be a clear message sent to businesses that the Town will help and how they will help. Mr. Anderson would advocate for those procedures but feels that it's a separate issue than the project itself; any major construction would be disruptive. Mr. Anderson says that there

were compromises made to develop parking including for the Army & Navy Club. Ms. Dzialo feels that we should have a conversation with the Town to better have our needs met. If we were to spend that kind of donation money directly on the advertising of the District to help people through the process, it would likely be of better use. Mr. Anderson would like to have a conversation about having assistance funds available to help businesses through the redevelopment process. Mr. Ambia believes that we need to have the direct input from the constituents prior to making a decision to spend or not to spend. Mr. Mulligan would like to have the direct input prior to the next meeting. Mr. Fagan believes that it wouldn't be a good use of our funds for it. Mr. Ambia would like to still show that we as a Board do need to support our constituents and get involved with the businesses and the Town. Ms. Socha feels that an example of a missed opportunity for better communication would be that the Yellow Lot was going to be used for construction vehicles though the initial plan was for paid parking in the paid lots. Ms. Dzialo notes that she receives bi-weekly construction reports at her other location between the town and the businesses so people have a general idea of what's going on; it should be something easy to communicate. She would like to see communication on our end to see what our constituents are looking for to help through a construction phase if need-be. Mr. DuBaldo notes that the side-street closures for paving over the past few weeks were not noticed to the District prior to the work, so many businesses and customers were abruptly inconvenienced.

New Business:

- None at this time

Downtown Development Specialist Report:

- Mr. Anderson reports that the sub-committee is going through the vetting process for the 942 Main RFP; he notes that there will be a balance between parking and business use.

Public Comment:

- Mr. DuBaldo says that Ms. Sottile had inquired about the second constable position not appearing on the upcoming budget. Ms. Socha agrees and would like to see that adjusted. Mr. DuBaldo says that the business section of the Websit seems to have moved or is missing. Ms. Dzialo says that it was moved to the bottom. Mr. DuBaldo asked for an update on the residential/commercial vacancies. Ms. Socha says that the only residential listing is currently up, but says that Mr. DeLaura said the initial plan for getting GIS layers for the District set was not successful and they are trying other mechanisms to have those listings display. Mr. Anderson says that the Town has a Town-wide listing but it wouldn't be District-specific at this point.

Mr. Anderson feels that the agenda should just have the items listed, not be annotated with any additional items.

Other Business:

- None at this time

Executive Session:

- A motion to enter executive session is made by Mr. Ambia to discuss employment, seconded by Mr. Fagan at 9:08 AM. A motion to exit executive session is made by Mr. Fagan, seconded by Mr. Ambia at 9:16 AM with no actions taken.

Adjourn

- There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Ms. Jeffery at 9:16 AM, seconded by Mr. Ambia. All approve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary DMSSD

Recorder