



CHURCH STREET MARKETPLACE

Church Street Marketplace District Commission Meeting Minutes Wednesday, May 17, 2023

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Mark Bouchett, Erik Monsen, Becky Holt (Zoom), Chris Haessly, Sarah Beal, Buddy Singh, Sam Tolstoi (Zoom), Cara Tobin (Zoom)

Absent: Linda Magoon

Staff: Kara Alnasrawi – Executive Director, Julia Chalmers – Marketing Manager, Jed Sass – Marketplace Coordinator, Samantha McGinnis – Projects and Events Manager, Andrew Bacher – Project & Events Specialist

Members of the public: Jacob Lavalley (Ben & Jerry's), Kelly Devine (Burlington Business Association)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Chris

Second: Buddy

Unanimous approval.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Chris

Second: Buddy

Unanimous approval.

COME TO ORDER

PUBLIC FORUM

None

REQUEST TO REMOVE ROCKS IN FRONT OF 92 CHURCH ST. (THORN & ROOTS)

a. PUBLIC FORUM FOR ITEM

None.

DISCUSSION

- Chris moves to authorize removal of rocks in front of 92 Church Street. Buddy seconds motion.
- Sarah speaks against the motion.
- Kara mentions there were two boulders removed previously on Marketplace about 20 years ago, but there is no historic record of it that the City could find.
- Discussion follows about the precedent, potential cost, historical intent around the rocks and logistics around removing rocks on the Marketplace.

b. VOTED NEEDED

- C. Haessly votes for the motion. All other Commissioners vote against the motion.
- Motion is opposed.

SLATE FOR APPROVAL OF 8 FOOT CAFÉ EXPANSION

a. PUBLIC FORUM FOR ITEM

None.

DISCUSSION

- Kara recommends the Commission approve the slate of restaurants requesting café expansion pending approval from their neighbor.
- Discussion follows.
- b. VOTE NEEDED**
- Buddy moves to approve the slate and provide pending approval for those who have not yet secured approval from their neighbor. Sarah seconds. Unanimous approval.

COMMON AREA FEES - 5% INCREASE FOR FY24

a. PUBLIC FORUM FOR ITEM

None.

DISCUSSION

- Kara informs Commission that any vote is a recommendation from the body before moving the item to the full City Council and pending a public hearing.
- Discussion follows regarding the process around approving the increase of Common Area Fees.
- b. VOTE NEEDED**
- Chris moves to approve the increase of Common Area Fess by 5% for FY '24. Sarah seconds. Unanimous approval.

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - MAINTAIN FEE LEVEL

a. PUBLIC FORUM FOR ITEM

- Kelly Devine supports potential decision not to raise the rate of DID fees. She met with DPW Director of Parking Jeff Padgett to get more information around parking rates and emphasizes importance of closely track the program. Mentions that 2 hour free parking program is currently underutilized in Downtown Garage and that the Employee Parking Program has been very successful.

DISCUSSION

- Kara informs Commission that staff is not suggesting an increase at this time until the business sector stabilizes and that Department of Public Works is in agreement.
- Discussion follows around the DID fees and the mechanics of the program.
- b. VOTE NEEDED**
- Chris moves to maintain the current level of fees of the DID fees for FY '24. Buddy seconds. Unanimous approval.

CSM BUDGET FOR FY24

a. PUBLIC FORUM FOR ITEM

None.

b. STAFF WILL PRESENT FULL BWD BUDGET FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES

- Kara reviews budget report presentation for FY '24 that she will present to the Board of Finance and City Council in the coming weeks.

c. VOTE NEEDED

- Chris moves to adopt proposed budget for FY '24. Buddy seconds. Unanimous approval.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- Buddy shares that we are 88% through the fiscal year. Without the Leahy Grant, we are close to realizing total revenues.
- Buddy shares we have only gone through 51% of fiscal year budget but accounting for payroll salary glitch, we are closer to 87% which is in line.
- Buddy projects department will end FY '23 with surplus.
- Marketing 70%, discretionary spending only around 50%, only maintenance expenses are higher than expected.
- Buddy is not concerned about where numbers are currently landing and everything is looking on track.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Kara shares that Julia Chalmers will be leaving the team beginning in June. Interviews for her successor and a new Marketing Manager have already begun.
- Kara informs Commission of recent successful street events hosted by the Marketplace team.
- Kara informs Commission of status on upcoming events, including the Vermont City Marathon, Music on the Bricks, Discover Jazz Festival, and Juneteenth.
- Halvorson's will expand their café space but will not be operating a separate bar area this year.
- Local marketing firm Okay!! Okay!! is organizing the Juneteenth celebration this year and will set up programming on City Hall Block.
- The Pomerleau Foundation reached out to the Marketplace office and will be donating funds to enhance Marketplace activation for the coming season.
- There are two dead trees on the street and is working to take care of them.
- RFPs have been posted for snowplowing and tree lighting work.
- There are now two BPD officers dedicated to the Marketplace for the summer and shifts have started.
- The Burlington Business Association (BBA) has partnered with regional planning commission to conduct study on traffic patterns down by Amtrak train.
- Street level programs are getting up and running.
- BWD will spearhead marketing campaign to attract visitors downtown throughout Main Street project.
- Dram shop laws were altered in most recent legislative session and approved by Governor Scott to lessen liability burden for bars.
- Alex Beers has finished his role as the City Hall Park maintenance worker. Interviews for his successor have been conducted and Kara hopes a replacement will be found soon.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- Mark informs Commission that he attended a recent Public Safety Commission meeting and spoke on behalf of businesses for the acute need to improve the state of safety and security in the downtown.
- Chris asks for the floor and to be recognized. He requests updates from DPW Parking Management Services and updates about trees on Church St. at the next meeting.

Meeting is adjourned.

Commission enters Executive Session.