



**CSMC Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 16, 2022**

9:13 Chairman Nick calls the meeting to order.

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Becky Holt, Linda Magoon, Jeff Nick, Lorre Tucker (Zoom), Erik Monsen, Sarah Beal (Zoom), Mark Bouchette, Cara Tobin (Zoom), Buddy Singh

Staff: Kara Alnasrawi – Executive Director, Julia Chalmers – Marketing Coordinator, Samantha McGinnis – Project and Event Manager (Zoom), Stephanie Shohet – Administrative Assistant (Zoom), Jed Sass - CSM coordinator

Members of the public: Kelly Devine, Colin Hilliard, Jeff Padgett, Melo Grant, Marc Sherman

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- Motion to approve: Becky Holt, Second: Lorre. Unanimous approval.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Motion to approve: Buddy, Second: Linda. Unanimous approval.

PUBLIC FORUM:

- Melo Grant, Police Commissioner from Ward 3, expresses her concern about people downtown who have mental illness and/or are drug abusers
- She explains that although extra people like CSLs are great, the officers are not prepared to handle these people, and people with mental illness do not need to be in jail
- She urges a broader community view and compassion
- Marc Sherman, owner of Outdoor Gear Exchange, expresses concern about the new policies for retail tents on Church Street because tent sales are a big piece of their revenue.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

- Buddy explains that we are still on track as far as expenses, but that we are not seeing the revenue that we expected by this point in the year.
- Kara is also concerned about revenue due to larger businesses cutting back on sponsorship
- Discussion follows about the importance of events (and sponsors) to bringing shoppers to the Marketplace
- Although we could not find a sponsor for Earth Day, Ben & Jerry's will be sponsoring our summer concert series

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Kara discusses ice sculpting event on March 12, which was successful despite inclement weather.

- The Marathon will be on May 29. They will be running on Church Street twice
- The retail theft bill s180 has not moved out of committee
- Discussion ensues about how business owners can impress the importance of this need upon legislators
- Kara explains that we have communicated new rules to merchants about the tents and the cart vending program.
- The new cart vendor licensing committee has met, and the applications are still being accepted
- The Marketplace team has plans to overhaul and improve the Church Street Marketplace website, and we will be working with Eternity (local firm)
- The Church Street Marketplace will receive \$1 million from Senator Leahy's Congressionally Directed Spending for pedestrian improvements
- Kara discusses the meeting with the Mayor and business owners about the pod village that is being created on Elmwood Ave. to address homelessness

Downtown Improvement District (DID) Fee

- Jeff Padgett, Director of Parking and Traffic, talks about the now gateless College/Lakeview Garage and last year's 1 hour free holiday parking program
- \$150,000 in DID fees pays for 2 hours free parking
- Discussion follows about whether free parking is the best use of the money and what the city charter dictates around these funds.
- Further discussion ensues on rate itself
- Motion to recommend to the Mayor and City Council that the DID tax be left unchanged: Linda, Second: Sarah. Unanimous approval.

SAFETY AND SECURITY:

- Summer Downtown
 - Kara is concerned about downtown security this summer and has a meeting planned with Jeff, Mark, the Chief of Police and the City Attorney
 - Jeff Nick articulates that merchants are not happy, and want law enforcement, regulations to be enforced
 - Kara says downtown security will be CSOs, parks patrol, and uniformed officers
- Proposed Shelter Pod Village
 - Kara explains the proposed shelter pod village, funded by ARPA and managed by CEDO, which will be in the DPW parking lot on Elmwood Ave, 1 block north of the post office
 - This will be temporary, 1-3 years, 30 pods, up to 35 guests, with a community resource center and a bathroom structure
 - Discussion follows about what the rules will be for the guests living there
 - Kara explains that it will be fully managed, with staff there 24/7 and wraparound services
 - Sarah suggests that the bathrooms should be accessible to all
 - Discussion follows about an alternate location at DPW, camping in the parks, management for the pod village, consequences for bad behavior, and help for those with mental illness
 - Motion to communicate that the use of a shelter pod community is a positive proposal but that the commission is against the chosen located: Mark, Second: Buddy. Unanimous approval.

BUDGET

- Kara announces that the next Church Street Marketplace budget will be approx. \$1 million.
- Increased revenue would be related to new fee structures including banner fees and street use fees
- Next year, Kara will suggest raising Marketplace fees
- She explains how we are saving money by paying staff instead of outsourcing (e.g. graphic design and marketing) and shows staff cost breakdown
- Kara will present further budget details next meeting

CHAIR'S REPORT:

- Chairman Jeff points out that there is no signage with rules of dos and don'ts in City Hall Park or on the Church Street Marketplace, and that rules can't be enforced if they are not posted
- Erik agrees that signage is a citywide problem, and gives examples such as dogs off leash, and electric bikes on the bike path
- Chairman Nick looks forward to discussing safety and security issues with the City Attorney and Chief of Police

APRIL MEETING:

- Staff suggests moving the next meeting to April 13th due to school holiday. Everyone agrees

MEETING ADJOURNED