

**Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation/  
Downtown Special Assessment District  
Board Meeting Minutes  
February 24, 2015**

**Attending:** Richard Antokol, Heather Peterson, Austin Fisher, Scott Johnson, Chris Spraragen, Rudy Grant, Sid Ramotar  
**Absent:** Jack McDonald, Joe O'Connor  
**Staff:** Jim Salengo, Colleen Merays

**Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation**

Richard Antokol opened the meeting at 8:19am.

**1) Approvals - All**

- a) Meeting Minutes - Richard Antokol asked for a motion to approve the January 30, 2015, board meeting minutes.

*Heather Peterson made a motion to approve the January 30, 2015, board minutes; Scott Johnson seconded the motion. All in favor.*

**2) Finance – All**

- a) **January 2015 Financials** – Jim Salengo asked the board to review the January 2015 financials that were emailed and let him or Colleen know if there are any questions.  
b) **2015 Metroplex Grant** – Jim Salengo reported that Metroplex will present the DSIC's annual operating grant for board approval at their March 11 meeting. The grant amount is \$160,650, the same as 2014.

**3) Executive Director's Report – Jim Salengo/All**

**a) Outdoor Program**

- i. **Hometown Heroes Banner Program** – Colleen Merays reported that we have a final draft of the letter and application for the new Hometown Heroes Banner Program, which we are partnering on with the City. Banners will recognize local servicepersons, both active and veterans. Initial sponsor letters will be mailed out in the next week.  
ii. **Staffing** – Our current employee David Serra will be leaving the DSIC in two weeks to begin working for the City of Schenectady's General Services Department.

**b) Marketing /Communications**

- i. **Restaurant Week** – It is currently Schenectady Restaurant Week; we are once again partnering with the Chamber of Schenectady County on this promotion and the 2015 Dining Guide. We have been using social media, print, and online advertising to promote Restaurant Week. The Chamber reported there have been 27,632 Restaurant Week page views so far in February and that 71.53% of the visitors were new to the site.  
ii. **Schenectady Dining Guide** – Colleen Merays reported that the 2015 Schenectady Dining Guide is in the works. The 26 restaurants that are participating in Schenectady Restaurant Week are also required to participate in the Dining Guide.  
iii. **New Social Media Coordinator** – We brought on Aray Montalvan-Till as our new part-time Communications Specialist. Her initial focus has been Restaurant Week promotion; in the two weeks since she began, the DSIC has already received 125 new Facebook page Likes. She will provide regular statistical updates for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.  
iv. **New Website** – We will be contracting with downtown company D2 Media Consultants, Inc., to revamp our website. The new website will be mobile friendly and SEO optimized.

- c) **Other**
- i. **Project Time Tracking** – DSIC employees have begun tracking time on projects. Colleen Merays spent a considerable amount of time creating the spreadsheets to mesh with our accounting system. Colleen noted that there will be staff time spent tracking time and that yearly updates to the DSIC work plan may result in additional time to modify the existing spreadsheets.
  - ii. **Expanded Schenectady Ambassador Program Role** – With the casino coming to the City, it may be time to update the Schenectady Ambassador Program with a greater focus on tourism. Jim Salengo has a meeting scheduled next week with the City Mission to discuss what the program could become and what the DSIC's expanded role might be.
  - iii. **Downtown Survey** – Jim Salengo and Colleen Merays will be spending time in March crafting a downtown survey based on information generated by the DSIC board late last year.
  - iv. **Board Terms 2015** – The three (3) board members whose three-year terms expire at the end of May 2015 are Sid Ramotar, Jack McDonald, and Joe O'Connor. Jim will reach out to see if they are interested in continuing. Sid Ramotar stated that he would not be able to continue as a DSIC board member effective immediately because of a new job he accepted with the Small Business Administration. Colleen Merays noted that the board would need to elect a new Treasurer to take over for Sid. Rudy Grant volunteered to become Treasurer.

*Chris Spraragen made a motion to elect Rudy Grant as the new DSIC Board Treasurer; Austin Fisher seconded the motion. All in favor.*

#### 4) **Discussions**

- a) **Personnel Discussion** – Heather Peterson reported that an Executive Director Compensation Committee was formed. The committee consisted of Jack McDonald, Joe O'Connor, and Heather Peterson. The committee has met and is ready to present their recommendations to the Board of Directors.

*Heather Peterson made the motion to enter into executive session; Rudy Grant seconded the motion. All in favor.*

*Heather Peterson made a motion to close the executive session; Scott Johnson seconded the motion. All in favor. Executive session closed at 9:15am.*

- b) **Casino Discussion** - Jim Salengo suggested it might be better to have a separate brown bag lunch discussion regarding the casino project, since it is difficult to fit this into a regular board meeting. Discussion continued. Jim will email a Doodle poll to the board with several proposed dates for a casino lunch discussion prior to the March 31 board meeting.

*Chris Spraragen made a motion to adjourn the DSIC meeting; Rudy Grant seconded the motion. All in favor. Board meeting closed at 9:27am.*

*Richard Antokol opened the DSAD meeting at 9:27am.*

*No new business.*

*Heather Peterson made a motion to close the DSAD meeting; Sid Ramotar seconded the motion. Meeting closed at 9:28am.*