

**Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation/
Downtown Special Assessment District
Board Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2014**

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

Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation

Chris Spraragen (sitting in for Richard Antokol) opened the meeting at 8:33am.

1) Approvals

- a) **Meeting Minutes** – Chris Spraragen asked for a motion to approve the November 26, 2013 meeting minutes.

Heather Peterson made a motion to approve the November 26, 2013 meeting minutes. Sid Ramotar seconded the motion. All in favor.

2) Finance

- a) **December 2013 Financials** – Jim Salengo & Colleen Merays reviewed the financials and answered questions. Austin Fisher suggested a policy regarding use of reserve funds. **ACTION:** Include this as a topic of discussion when planning the 2015 budget.

3) Executive Director's Report

a) Outdoor Program

- i) **Staffing** – Andy Peltz from our outdoor program left for a full time position at Schenectady ARC in the IT Department. We have hired Jeff Greenberg, who was referred to us by current employee Pat Benequisto. He is starting today.
- ii) **Maintenance Planning Group** – A committee with members from Metroplex, the City, DSIC, the Ambassadors and Proctors are meeting to come up with a centralized system to track and assign responsibility for all downtown maintenance items.
- iii) **Outdoor Program Efficiency Review** – Several people have agreed to review program operations and make recommendations for improvements and/or changes. A first meeting will be scheduled soon.
- iv. **Flower RFP** – The RFP for summer flowers will be issued shortly; prior to that we need to meet with the city and discuss new needs for Erie Blvd. There will be no flowers on lower State Street this year due to construction. Joe O'Conner discussed phases of the Lower State Street work, noting it should be done by fall. He will help us get a count of new light poles planned for this area.

b) Marketing/Communications

- i) **Holiday Shopping Pass** - Colleen Merays passed out results from the 2013 Holiday Shopping Pass. There was a 19% increase over 2012 in cards turned in by customers. Colleen will be including the results in her next e-newsletter to downtown businesses.

- ii) **2014 Restaurant Week/Dining Guide** – We are partnering with the Chamber on these promotions again this year. Restaurant Week is Feb. 24 – March 2. Most of the initial groundwork has been done and we are now following up with the restaurants.
- iii) **Gazette Downtown Magazine** – We met with the Gazette’s new ad manager to discuss changes to the quarterly *Explore Downtown Schenectady* magazine. It will now be included in the newspaper and distributed directly to 40,000 people. It will be a tab-sized piece printed directly by the Gazette. Due to format changes, ad rates will be slightly cheaper. The first new magazine is scheduled for March 28.
- iv. **Visitor Guide and Map** – We are wrapping up the new guide, which should be out in March. A PDF of the current guide is not on our website due to document size limitations; we will be addressing this with a new web developer. Our current site does include an interactive map for visitors. A PDF of the guide is included in our weekly events email.
- c) **2014 Board Nominations** – It is time to look at the board nominations process for 2014. Three (3) seats are open: Rudy Grant, Austin Fisher and Heather Peterson. Jim suggested some changes to simplify the nominations process. Discussion followed about running the nominations process if all members want to stay, plus increasing the board size from 9 to 13. ACTION: Put on the February agenda for further discussion.

j) **New/Old Business**

- a. **DSAD Roll Procedures** – Jim handed out a bulleted list describing steps in the process.
- b. **Strategic Planning** – Heather Peterson discussed a seminar that she, Jim, Jack and Richard attended and reviewed steps for completing a DSIC Strategic Plan. Board and staff members were asked to complete and return a strategic planning questionnaire to her by February 14, 2014. She will compile the information onto a spreadsheet for the next board meeting.

Heather Peterson made a motion to close the DSIC meeting. Jack McDonald seconded the motion. All in favor. Meeting closed at 9:42am.

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Chris Spraragen opened the DSAD meeting at 9:42am.

No business.

Jack McDonald made a motion to close the DSAD meeting. Heather Peterson seconded the motion. All in favor. Meeting closed at 9:43am.