

**BOARD OF COMMISSONERS MEETING
DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT**

**November 5, 2008
6:00 PM**

**OFFICE OF
THE DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
983 MAIN STREET SUITE 10
MANCHESTER, CT 06040**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ed Firestone, Chair
Glenda Sinnamon
Don Dubaldo
Rev. Mancini

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark Pellegrini, Dir., Planning & Neighborhood Services
Sue O'Connor, Pres., GMCC

STAFF PRESENT: Tana Parseliti, Downtown Manager
Sabina K. Wilson, Administrative Assistant

ALSO PRESENT: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Michael Esposito
Betsy Treiber
Hope Igdalsky
John Tunila

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Call to Order

Mr. Firestone called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

Minutes – October 1, 2008

Don Dubaldo moved to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Firestone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0)

Marketing & Promotions

Halloween Happenings Evaluation – Ms. Parseliti reported that the Halloween Happenings was a great success. Attendance was way up from last year. The majority of children that attended were pre school and elementary school age. The Mary Cheney Library Spook-tacular Magic Show was a fabulous addition and success. Chalk the Walk organizers gave away 400 bags of chalk. Peak participation in this activity was between 10:45 and 12:00 noon. Participation by businesses exceeded last year's level with many businesses getting into the spirit by dressing in costume. Businesses reported that children started trick or treating significantly before the official start time. Signage and advertising must be adjusted to emphasize that candy distribution will not begin until 12 noon. Ms. Parseliti reported on the expenses and the donation of 250 pumpkins by Ken

Burkamp for the pumpkin decorating. The Costume Parade needs something interesting to lead the parade..

Ms. Parseliti reported that participation among businesses continues to be strong. Restaurants reported increased sales as a result of the event. The DMSSD should continue to produce Halloween Happenings. It offers positive publicity and exposure to downtown businesses.

Holiday on Main – Ms. Parseliti reported that Holiday on Main is moving forward. A Preview of Holiday on Main activities was mailed to all Downtown businesses. Ms. Parseliti reviewed highlights of the events. She noted that we lost sponsorship for one of our popular activities – the Petting Zoo and Pony Rides. The cost of this activity is \$450. The Rec. Dept. informed us that they do not have money in the budget to sponsor this activity. We have submitted a request to the SBM Foundation to fund this event. The challenge for the Holiday on Main event will be funding. State Farm Insurance again will be a sponsor and Webster Bank has been approached regarding sponsorship. Many Downtown businesses responded to our request for Horsedrawn Wagonette sponsorship.

Holiday Commercial On Ch 61 - The District traditionally funds a special holiday advertising effort to promote shopping and dining Downtown for the holidays. Past efforts have focused on full-page ads in the JI and Manchester Life. The cost of this advertising was \$2,000. This year the Marketing & Promotions Committee would like to produce and run commercials on the CH 61 morning news. The commercial would feature Santa. The message being: Santa can relax before his big day because he did all of his holiday shopping in Downtown Manchester. Categories of gifts that can be purchased in Downtown Manchester would be featured. i.e. jewelry, antiques, gift certificates for hair, nails, massages, restaurants. The cost of commercial production and airtime (56, 30 sec. spots) would be \$2,000. The commission felt that it was a good idea a very good price for the advertising. They suggested that Ms. Parseliti solicit sponsorship from Downtown businesses to also offset the expense of the commercial. A price point of \$100 for logo presence in the last frame of the commercial was suggested.

SHARE Project – Ms. Parseliti reported that the SHARE Project is moving forward. They now have an Action Plan in place, a name and logo. Also in place is a draft of a joint brochure that highlights historic, arts, cultural, recreational and educational assets in South Manchester including the Downtown. Grant funding is being investigated. A kick-off is planned for Saturday, June 13, 2009 during Pride week. An old fashioned trolley that would act as a shuttle between all the SHARE sites would be a part of the day. A grant is being written for the expense of the trolley and producing the brochure. Commission members all felt positive about the progress and the idea of SHARE.

Economic Development

Sale of 822 Main Street - Ms. Parseliti reported the sale of 822 Main St. It has sold twice. She has met with the new owner Mr. Tarek Ambia he owns a local real estate, mortgage, insurance and property management company presently located on Middle Turnpike. Initial plans are for a mixed-use office and residential.

Mr. Pellegrini reported that he also has met with the new owner and he possibly would like to put two store front offices in the front of the building one for himself and one to

rent and possibly some apartments upstairs. Mr. Ambia is working with an architect at this time.

Parking & Maintenance

Request for Periodic Parking Restrictions at St. James Church Lot - The pastor of St. James Church will be submitting a request to limit parking to church members on certain church holiday and non-holiday church events. The District currently has a lease in place with the church until 2010 that permits use of the lot for public parking in exchange for which the District plows, sweeps, lights and stripes the lot. The commission asked Ms. Parseliti about usage. At this time use is very light between 7-10 cars per day that have parking permits displayed. Ms. Parseliti is having the parking constable track the usage.

Status of Alleyway Repair – Ms. Parseliti reported that Manchester Art Association members are at work creating a mural to beautify the plywood covering to the alleyway opening between Heritage Place and the Cheney Block Building.

Parking Lot Work – Ms. Parseliti reported that curbing replacement is underway. Marking of Purnell Place will take place this fall.

Beautification Citation – Ms. Wilson shared the finished citation design with the commission. It will be signed by Mr. Firestone and presented to the recipient in a presentation folder. The first recipients will be Anne and Walt Miller for façade work at 971-985 Main St. and Joe & Glenda Sinnamon for new awnings at 21 & 25 Oak St.

Other recommendations: Katherine's Hair Design and State Farm Insurance for sharing in having beautiful large pots filled with fall flowers put in front of their stores. They made quite a beautiful statement. The Watkins building has had all the trim painted.

Administration

Outside Events Requests - From time to time the District receives requests for use of the Forest St. Parking Lot for special events. Because these requests have been infrequent, the District does not have a protocol in place for working with the Town to assess and process these requests. An event was requested and held on Nov. 1 that provided an opportunity to review Town requirements and assess impact on surrounding businesses. The commission discussed if it was possible to charge for the use. The commissioners deferred further discussion until after the holidays.

FY 2009-2010 Budget Planning – Ms. Parseliti asked the Commission for some input on how they felt she should approach the Budget Planning Process during this difficult financial time. The commissioners felt that all efforts should be made to ensure that there is not increase in the property owner tax contribution. A meeting to review a proposed budget is scheduled for November 19, 2008.

Dr. Gena Glickman, President, Manchester Community College

Dr. Glickman, the new president of Manchester Community College, joined the Commission meeting at 7:00 pm. Dr. Glickman talked about new initiatives including initiation of a new strategic planning process for the college in January; development of any entrepreneurial business program; growing service opportunities for students and future program growth. The commission discussed the potential for synergy between the

college and the Downtown. Some ideas included: a Downtown storefront coffee shop leased by the college that could offer art displays, music and smaller scale cultural events; a community business center in the Downtown; a business development committee.

Public Comment – None.

Other Business

Building Reuse Committee Recommendations – The committee submitted its second interim report to the Board of Directors regarding potential for reuse of the boiler plant, fires station and Cheney building. Consideration is being given to the vacant School Street fire station as a replacement for the Spruce St. station, which is being converted into a community youth center. There is no anticipated alternate use for the boiler plant. A portion of the building is presently housing a cooling tower for the Bennet Academy HVAC system.

The cost of renovating the Cheney building is very high. Daytime use may be problematic, as parking has been committed to Bennet Academy. Parking alternatives are being explored. Public or quasi-public uses that would operate during low parking demand times (i.e. evening) seem most likely. At some time in the future the BOE might have a use for the building.

Tipping Waiver Fee - The town board of directors recently amended the Downtown Development Incentives Program to include a Tipping Waiver Fee Program. The Town of Manchester will rebate tipping fees at its landfills for demolition or other building waste associated with substantial rehabilitation or renovation to buildings located within the Downtown Manchester Special Services District subject to several caveats. A copy of the revised Downtown Development Incentive Program incorporating the new tipping fee reimbursement will be emailed to all commissioners and posted on the website.

Adjourn - There being no further business Mr. Dubaldo moved to adjourn the November 5, 2008 Board of Commissioners Meeting at 7:50 p.m., Ms. Sinnamon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Sabina K. Wilson, Administrative Assistant
Downtown Manchester Special Services District
Recorder