



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Committee Room - Hartley Dodge Memorial Building
Date: March 18, 2021 Time: 7:15 pm – **Via Zoom**

MEETING MINUTES

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER:** This meeting was called to order by Chair Suzy Whitehorn at 7:15 pm.
- 2) **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3) **ROLL CALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: R. Conley, D. Coen, P. Teshima, S. Whitehorn, M. Tomaszewski, T. Honohan, P. Flemming, S. Tindall, J. Morris, D. Starker, E. Range, R. Stern, M. Fabyanski, Michael Pellessier

MEMBERS ABSENT: J. Hollenbach, R. Rocco

ALSO PRESENT: Lisa Ellis, Director of Business Development; Eric Hafen, Director of Arts and Events

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: None present
- 4) **OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT:** In compliance with the open public meetings act, adequate notice of this meeting of the Downtown Development Commission was provided by distributing the Annual Meeting schedule to the Madison Eagle and Morris County Daily Record, posting a copy on the bulletin board at the main entrance to the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building, posting a copy on the Borough website, and filing a copy with the Borough Clerk, all on or about the first week of January 2021. Copies of said notice were made available to members of the general public.
- 5) **APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 18, 2021 MINUTES**

Motion to approve February 18, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented
Moved by: E. Range and Seconded by: T. Honohan
Voice Vote: Unanimous
- 6) **CHAIRMAN/EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT**
- 7) **TREASURER'S REPORT:** Tom Honohan **reported on the ongoing banking and**
- 8) **MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Conley reported the 2021 Borough Budget will be introduced at the borough Council meeting on Monday, March 22. The budget will include a 2% property tax increase to best position the borough budget given the revenue shortfalls resulting from the pandemic and the uncertainty of the federal funding to be provided by the American Rescue Plan. As of now, there are no concrete details but it has been announced that the funding cannot be used to reduce taxes.
- 9) **COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT:** Council Member Deb Coen echoed Mayor Conley's report.
- 10) **PLANNING BOARD REPORT:** There was no report.
- 11) **FOUNDATION REPORT:** Eric Range reported on the Madison Main Street Foundation Re-Organization meeting held on March 8. The foundation has a new elected board: Laura Cole, Chair; Eric Range, Vice Chair; Tom Honohan, Treasurer and Steve Tombalakian was appointed as Secretary. The foundation has moved their bank accounts from Investors Bank to Provident Bank.
- 12) **MADISON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT:** John Morris reported on current Chamber activities. Spring/Easter programming will include the new hunt for Shelly the Easter Egg will be begin shortly and run through Easter Fun Fest to be held on April 3. The new Loyalty Rewards Card is in its

final stages and will be released shortly. The Nautilus Placement Program will return on April 1. The April Chamber board meeting will include a board leadership election. The Chamber Awards program will be held in June as it has in the past.

13) DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORT: Here are the websites for two organizations to which the Borough belongs. They offer a lot of different resources that I thought you may find of interest:

- a) **Downtown New Jersey:** <https://www.downtownnj.com/>
 - i) **2021 NJ Downtown Conference – Report:** Lisa Ellis asked if anyone had particular questions regarding the written report. She noted that one of the takeaways of the conference was that there are some consistent themes regarding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Small businesses in more urban areas have suffered greater impacts than in small towns largely driven by the corporate move to remote work. No one knows what the future will bring but economic forecasts are strong. The big unknown will be when the return to in person work will happen and what it will look like. Locally this will also affect the future of commuter parking.
- b) **Main Street America:** <https://www.mainstreet.org/home>
- c) **Downtown Redevelopment Pipeline:**
 - i) **For your information, all meeting information can be found through these links:**
 - (1) **Zoning Board of Adjustment:** <https://www.rosenet.org/505/Zoning-Board-of-Adjustment>
 - (2) **Planning Board:** <https://www.rosenet.org/457/Planning-Board>
- d) **New Business Report:** Lisa Ellis has developed this spreadsheet to keep track of new business activity and commercial/residential redevelopment.
 - i) [Commercial Property Worksheet](#)
 - ii) **Urbanomics Housing Trends and Future Demand:**
https://1drv.ms/b/s!AnwS_DqnT6nMjgQV8VjiXAfbOQWK?e=yfxREN

14) STANDING COMMITTEES:

- a) **Sign & Façade:** (2021 Membership: Eric Range, Tom Honohan, Suzy Whitehorn, Peter Flemming, Jim Hollenbach, Barry Kroll, Karen Giambra)
 - i) There were four applications reviewed and referred to the Borough Zoning Officer since the February DDC meeting.
 - (1) Krust Kitchen, 7 Cross Street
 - (2) Cambridge Street, 7 Waverly Place
 - (3) The Sunroom LLC, 21 Kings Road
 - (4) Axia Women’s Health, 340 Main Street
- b) **PIC (Public Improvement):** (2021 Membership: John Morris, Russell Stern, Suzy Whitehorn, Melanie Tomaszewski, Peter Flemming)
 - i) **2020 Potential Goals/Projects:**
 - METC Park Design
 - Adopt A Space Program
 - ii) **Action Items:** TBD
 - iii) **Next Meeting – Tuesday, March 23 at 5:00 pm via Zoom**
- c) **Marketing and Economic Development:** (2021 Membership: Eric Range, Deb Coen, John Morris, Russell Stern, Peter Teshima, Suzy Whitehorn, Jim Hollenbach, Bob Rocco, Melanie Tomaszewski, Deb Starker, Karen Giambra)
 - i) **2020 Potential Goals/Projects:**
 - Gateway & Wayfinding Signage
 - Creation of Marketing Materials
 - ii) **Action Items:**

- **Borough Of Madison Request For Proposals – Gateway And Wayfinding Signage System Evaluation Report:**

<https://www.rosenet.org/DocumentCenter/View/11249/Evaluation-Report---RFP-Gateway-and-Wayfinding-Signage>

- iii) **Next Meeting – TBD:** Currently awaiting final signatures on the contract with vendor, Merje.
- d) **Arts & Events:** (2021 Membership: Stephen Tindall, Deb Coen, John Morris, Peter Teshima Tom Honohan, Suzy Whitehorn, Bob Rocco, Melanie Tomaszewski, Deb Starker, John Pietrowski, Jerry Vezza, Karen Giambra, Eric Hafen)
 - i) **2020 Potential Goals/Projects:**
 - **Sidewalk Art Gallery analysis and reinvention**
 - **Support of Madison Community Arts Center programming and fundraising**
 - **Explore public art projects**
 - ii) **Updates from Eric Hafen:** The Arts & Events Committee met on Wednesday, March 3 at 5:00 pm via Zoom. In addition to updates on programming from Eric Hafen, the committee discussed making a Public Arts Plan a primary focus this year. Lisa Ellis provided resources and requested that the materials be reviewed and that a meeting is scheduled within a month to review and being work on the process. There was discussion about reviving the Downtown Art Banner Project as a piece of the Public Art Plan. Deb Starker shared that the METC will be holding an art show this year with the theme of “hope”. Eric Hafen also spoke about the upcoming “Spring Ahead Into The Arts” which will be held on Fridays beginning April 9 through May 28. This event will be held on Waverly Place from 6:30-8:30 pm. The Chamber will host business showcases during the event. Eric is seeking sponsors for the event. Eric is also working with John Pietrowski on stage readings to be held at the Arts Center. Interest in the center is picking up again now that the restrictions have been loosened. Private rentals include a piano recital, a beauty supply symposium, and Adams Dental’s monthly meetings. The lighting grid installation has been further delayed; the borough has given permission to hire a third party engineer to help get the project back on track. Eric is also planning to schedule coffee houses in the near future.
 - iv) **Next Meeting – TBD**

15) AD HOC COMMITTEE AND PROJECT UPDATES: There are no planned reports for these items at this meeting except for those highlighted.

a) Taste of Madison

- i) **Event Update:** DDC Taste Co-Chair, Michael Pellessier noted that the event is tentatively planned for May 14-23. It will be open to all dining establishments and more details will be available soon.

b) May Day (May 1, 2021)

- i) **Event Update:** Lisa Ellis notes that donations are coming in and we have one title sponsor committed so far. The mulch has been ordered.

c) Farmers Market (Thursdays, May 20– November 18, 2021)

d) Bottle Hill Day (Saturday, October 2, 2021)

e) Downtown Concert Series w/METC (2021 Dates: June 25, July 9 and 23, August 6 and 20, September 3)

16) OLD BUSINESS

Russell Stern shared concerns about the Public Improvement Committee’s METC Park Project. He requested that the design contractor be contacted prior to the next meeting and advised having any new concept plans ahead of the next meeting is imperative.

17) NEW BUSINESS

There was a brief discussion regarding the future of cannabis business in New Jersey. The new state commission has been established to create regulations.

Council Member Deb Coen reported that the planning for the hidden figures program is progressing and that there has been a great response from the schools.

Council Member Deb Coen also mentioned some of the programming going on in Westfield and suggested we look to emulate some of the programs.

18) INVITATION FOR DISCUSSION FROM THE PUBLIC: There were no members of the public present.

19) ADJOURNMENT

***Motion** to adjourn at 8:07 pm.*

Moved by: D. Starker and Seconded by: T. Honohan

Voice Vote: Unanimous

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 15 at 7:15pm, via Zoom