



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Approved DOWNTOWN COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Thursday, November 16, 2017

5:30 PM

210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Room 108 (City-County Building)

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Michael E. Verveer; Ledell Zellers; Davy Mayer; Gregory O. Frank; Ted Crabb; Thomas E. Hirsch and Sandra J. Torkildson

Excused: 3 - Adam J. Plotkin; David Ahrens and Lori J. Henn

APPROVAL OF October 19, 2017 MINUTES

A motion was made by Hirsch, seconded by Frank, to Approve the October 19, 2017 Minutes. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

PUBLIC COMMENT

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

1. [45683](#) Report of Mall Maintenance and Special Events 2017

Hirsch asked about Mall Maintenance charges from the last meeting. He was wondering about a procedure to revisit the issue and specifically study whether or not fees could be reduced if property owners were not being given full service.

Verveer said that he and Parks Superintendent Knepp received a letter from Ms. Bruskewitz about her complaints. Verveer added that the Mayor has included a provision in his 2018 budget that calls for a review of the Mall Maintenance charges, and that the DCC should be part of that discussion moving forward next year.

Mark Kiesow, Parks Division, said that he met with both property owners after the last DCC meeting to discuss their issues with service, including information on provided snow removal services. Kiesow added that Parks will add a new bike rack to the area once the construction is finished. He thought the meeting went well and hopes to have better communication with the property owners moving forward.

Crabb thanked staff for meeting with the property owners and noted that the properties in question had been part of the service area since the beginning, and the owners have had multiple opportunities to ask questions about the services. He added that the snow removal service alone far exceeds the cost to property owners.

Torkildson said that snow also comes during all times of day, and City staff might come through 3 times a day during a snow event, where a private company might only come once. She and other DCC members all mentioned their appreciation that staff met with the property owners.

Kiesow stated that Freakfest went well, holiday lighting and decorations are being installed and that staff is gearing up for winter. Kiesow also mentioned that he and others from Parks attended a Effective Winter Maintenance training workshop, and have since trained other staff on appropriate salt distribution, and have calibrated their salt equipment.

Kiesow mentioned an experiment to try some sod under the Forum of Origin art at the top of State Street as a preventative measure since the plants were being trampled. Zellers said that she is sad to see shrubs go, and wondered if there were some more interesting grasses that they could use, and was concerned that the sod would be too inviting to sleep on. She added that she does believe it is important to try things out to see if they work. Kiesow said he would look into potential grass types.

Rebecca Cnare, Planning Division, gave a brief update on the new BID visitor information booth. Crabb mentioned that perhaps there could be a transparent window with a television information when the booth is closed. Cnare said she would look into it, but that security is a major factor in the design of the new booth. She said she would forward the draft plans to the Committee members.

2. [32598](#)

State Street Report and Updates

Downtown Police Discussion:

Officer Ken Brown, Police Department, gave an update on policing issues downtown. He mentioned that the Beacon has been open for a month and there have been some issues with staff and activities near the day shelter, but that Police and Beacon staff are communicating and working out issues. Officer Brown also noted that there are still 20-25 people at the top of State Street, but it has been less busy now that the Beacon is open. He said that there is a 50-100-person line at the door when the Beacon opens in the morning, and the center is full every day.

Verveer asked about collection of abandoned property in the downtown. Brown said that the issues with abandoned property at Bethel have gone away. Kiesow added that only 6 people have reclaimed property in the last 18 months, and always within a week. He thinks that the 45 day holding period could be reduced.

Torkildson asked about the downtown safety listening session being organized by Alder Skidmore. Frank said that most of the comments were from residents and were nighttime related. Most of the conversation was about issues other than the Top of State Street. Zellers was surprised that more people didn't come.

Mayer asked about the communication problems at the Beacon. Brown said that staff wasn't wanting them to come in if there were people of interest in criminal behavior. But they deescalated and worked things out with staff.

Verveer noted the low attendance at Freakfest and suggested three reasons for it: one, it was cold, two, there wasn't a home football game, and three, Frank Productions doesn't think they booked the right acts for the expected crowd.

Verveer asked about a shots-fired incident on Bassett Street. Officer Brown said that he doesn't have any updates but the case is being investigated. He added that the 600 block of University has been quieter since police worked with bar owners on closing a side door to a "speak-easy" type establishment.

Discussion of Progress on Ensuring a Vibrant Downtown Retail Destination Report:

Cnare gave an overview of the report to the Downtown Coordinating Committee. Verveer asked that staff find out more details about the retail grants from the report. The updated amounts are listed below:

Retail Grant Recipient	\$ Approved
Triangle Market*	\$5,396.95
Community Pharmacy	\$356.00
Madison Modern Market	\$2,082.24
Soap Opera	\$177.56
Triangle Market	\$127.55
Red Square Flowers	\$31,000.00
Francesca's	\$50,000.00
University Book Store	\$46,102.00
August VII, LLC	\$39,090.00
Little Luxuries of Madison, LLC	\$50,000.00
107 King Street, LLC Totem	\$30,000.00
Total City Retail Grant Funds	\$251,332.30

Tiffany Kenney, Executive Director of Madison Central Business Improvement District also spoke about a few of the items that they have been working on as outlined in the report. Zellers asked if their ideas for a "Retail Ready" Program were similar to the Public Market "Market Ready" Program. Kenney said that they are looking into those kind of models, and have also been in touch with a retailing expert in the UW School of Human Ecology.

Torkildson suggested that the BID consider holding some workshops for existing and future retailers as peer to peer discussions have really been helpful to her at different conferences over the years. Workshops could be held on merchandising displays, social media strategies, etc. Hirsch added that peer support seems to work better than mentoring. He mentioned the SCORE program made up of retired executives that support existing business owners. Frank added that the BID often encourages retailers and helps through their marketing and programming. He also said that the BID might be spread too thin on some of these efforts and that help and guidance from the City's Office of Business Resources could really help with things like workshops. Torkildson added that Orange Schroeder from Orange Tree imports has written a book about retailing, and that seminars don't have to be free. The BID (or other group) could hire Schroeder and charge a nominal fee for attending a workshop.

Torkildson commented on some of the parking issues as discussed in the report. She is very concerned that the Special Event parking rate of \$8 on entry could really impact the holiday sales season, and would like the Parking Utility to change enforcement of meters until 10pm instead of 6pm. She said that she will look at her own sales very closely on event evenings and compare them to last year to see if they have an effect. Crabb asked her to report back on any findings at a future DCC meeting.

Zellers asked about abandonment of bicycles, especially as students leave for winter break and in May. Cnare said she would discuss with Mall Maintenance to work with the interim bike recovery specialist to do another sweep of abandoned bikes before students leave for winter break.

Zellers asked about the Langdon-Mansion Hill Character Study. Cnare gave an update on the progress of that as well as the Living History Project through the library. DCC members asked Cnare to follow up with more information about the Living History Project when it's available.

3. [33826](#) Committee Member & Staff Updates

None

ADJOURNMENT

**A motion was made by Verveer, seconded by Mayer, to Adjourn at 7:30 p.m.
The motion passed by voice vote/other.**

Note: December 21, 2017 DCC meeting will be cancelled unless there are pressing legislative items referred from Common Council. The next meeting is: January 18, 2018