



CSMC Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 19, 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Becky Holt, Linda Magoon, Jeff Nick, Jed Davis, Lorre Tucker, Lara Allen, Mark Bouchette

Members of the Public: Melissa Desautels, Alex Bunten, Patrick Mulligan, Alex Bunten

Staff: Kara Alnasrawi, Executive Director. Julia Chalmers, Marketing Specialist.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 15, 2020 Motion- Lorre Tucker, Second- Linda Magoon. Unanimously approved.

PUBLIC FORUM:

- Melissa questions double taxation of Church Street merchants and CSM budget struggles for brick repair and need for new lift
 - Jeff Nick explains historic struggle and the efforts taken to better this – suggests a need for charter change
 - Kara explains intentions to increase fundraising to help as well
 - Commission agrees Mayor Weinberger has made more effort than most and appreciate his efforts
- Jeff Nick shares Urban Outfitters has renewed their lease but that two other businesses on the top block will most likely be leaving.
 - Kara shares she is happy to be an advocate for bringing new businesses in and recruitment
- Alex reminds the room of BBA parking validation efforts and program to offer parking to both employees and customers

FINANCIAL REVIEW:

- Kara shares the capital reserve will be put into this year's budget. On the desk of the mayor for final approval and will soon become available

INTRODUCTION TO JULIA CHALMERS

- Kara introduces Julia to the commission
- Julia shares marketing plan
- Jeff suggests partnership with City Arts to fill vacant windows with art
 - Melissa suggest South Beach Miami efforts to do the same
 - Kara suggests SEABA could advertise artists

VENDOR LICENSING

- Kara shares Whitney Smith (top of the Block Deli) and Sandi Pas will join the committee, and is still in search for another member
- Kara proposes to add Whitney and Sandi to the committee Motion – Mark, Second – Lori, unanimously approved.

- Kara suggests attendance requirements to be added to the vendor program – one weekday (mon-Thursday) and one weekend day (Friday-Sunday), and to report number of transactions to be shared
 - This effort will allow for a consistent calendar
- Jed asks if there is an effort to place carts strategically as to not put competitors too close together
 - Kara confirms

FEE CHANGES

- Kara notifies an obstruction permit will be \$20 a week and \$20 every week after
- Kara notifies that sandwich boards will require a \$50 annual fee and proof of insurance must be presented
- Fees for street vendors under review but most likely to remain the same
- Discussion of sandwich board signs on the street of stores not on the street
 - Committee agrees clearer boundaries need to be made around this
- Sidewalk vending discussion begins – there are two opinions, anything is better than nothing on the street to show vibrancy, and too many merchants vending on the street appears like a flea market
- Kara asks where we stand historically on vending on the street
 - Jeff shares the opinion has ebbed and flowed
 - Lorre shares it is an organic process and should be a case by case basis
 - Commission agrees outside vending can take place with a café fee or cart fee
 - Kara voices concerns of lack of regulation
 - Jeff refers to suggestion of branded tents that help with problem behavior
 - Melissa speaks that she is in favor of outdoor vending
 - Kara shares she will draw up an outside vending protocol
 - Kara voices concern over mixed signals from the commission over fees
 - Jed shares restaurants pays cafes fees, café's pay a tiered fee, and retailers do not pay fees for outside vending

CHAIR'S REPORT

- Food truck discussion – Jeff reports the food truck program will not expand, but the city will continue to allow two food trucks to remain on College St.
- So. Winooski Project – Jeff shares concerns have been presented to the mayor and further conversation by the committee has been postponed.
 - Discussion of the concerns over So. Winooski Ave project continues including traffic congestion, restricting access to the Marketplace Garage and possible difficulty for turning trucks
 - Lara suggests inviting Chapin to our next meeting

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

- **Creation of new position**
 - Event Manager/Fundraising Assistant position has been created to handle events and fundraising
 - Kara will be going in front of the Board of Finance for approval in March
- **Review of all contracts with city attorney**
 - All contracts and permits for vendor carts, street performers, and artist in the alley are under review
- **RFPs**
 - Two RFPs are up on the site: a 3-year snow removal contract and a 3-year lighting contract
 - Jim and Kara will review them
- **Outreach – review of relationship building efforts**

- Kara and Julia met with head of marketing at Hotel Vermont to create more synergy
- Kara has met with UVM and will be meeting with UVM athletics department to discuss opportunities to collaborate
- Kara has met with the marathon team to plan efforts to program the street after the marathon
- Kara has met with Senator Leahy and is pursuing a grant request – will take a year or so to hear back
- **Magic Hat**
 - Guarantee that they will be providing their own added security
 - This is their final Mardi Gras event
- **Downtown Merchant’s Gathering (held 1/22/20)**
 - Merchant meet and greet was low attended but will be attempted again
- **Review of Merchant Meeting (held 2/17/20)**
 - Brought the merchants up to speed on what is happening
 - Introduced Julia and the marketing plan

OPEN CONVERSATION

- **Top of the Block**
 - Jeff Nick brings up need for marketing efforts towards the top block specifically
 - Directory is suggested – commission agrees
- **Public Restrooms**
 - Linda asks if public restrooms in mall will remain open
 - Kara shares they will remain open, and city hall bathrooms are now open on the weekends
 - The need for public restrooms is a serious issue and on everyone’s radar
 - Kara shares committee of private citizens working towards a solution is currently working on a pilot project and city departments are becoming involved
- **Brick Maintenance**
 - Lorre refers to history of brick struggle and suggests there will never be a final solution
 - Lorre proposes to be mindful of areas that are recurring problems
 - Suggests they could be solved with a different surface material rather than regularly spending money on repairing bricks
 - Kara discusses how aesthetics of the street are a top concern and hopes of utilizing the Church Street Marketplace Foundation to tackle the project at large in future years
 - Jeff reminds everyone that the city has saved \$700,000 over the years by not repaving the 4 blocks of the Marketplace
 - The initial grant requested of Leahy will tackle specific spots in the meantime
- **South Winooski Project**
 - Jed asks if we can request the city to do a trial run with cones for South Winooski if the project moves forward
 - Commission agrees – Alex suggests it is doable

Jeff confirms next meeting will take place on March 18th

ADJOURN