

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION COMMITTEE**

Meeting

Wednesday, September 25, 2013

860.429.2740

4:00 pm

Minutes

Present: Toni Moran, Janet Jones, Connie Neal, Betsy Paterson, Barry Schreier, and Cara Workman

Staff: Kathleen Paterson

1. Call to order

Chair Toni Moran called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm.

2. Public comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes from August 21, 2013

Janet Jones moved to approve the minutes.

Barry Schreier seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Update on Storrs Center Project including communications

Kathleen Paterson provided a brief update on the construction progress of TS-3, Price Chopper, and the Town Square. Ms. K. Paterson recapped the discussion at the September Storrs Center tenant meeting regarding possible future events and promotions.

Mr. Schreier said he thought the businesses were doing a good job of promoting themselves and commented on the feeling of a community amongst the businesses owners and operators.

Betsy Paterson said the Town Square should help enliven the area once it is completed.

Cara Workman agreed and added that the UConn Co-op at Storrs Center will also be a big draw for residents and visitors.

5. Outreach opportunities

Ms. Workman reported that the upcoming weekend will be Family Weekend and Cornucopia at UConn. She noted a need for signage on Storrs Road near the North Eagleville Road intersection to let visitors know where the downtown is.

Ms. Jones agreed and said the signs should read "Business District."

Ms. Moran would like to have the topic of signage added to a future agenda.

Mr. Schreier asked if there was a way in the meantime to have a “virtual billboard” on UConn’s website.

Ms. Workman noted there is a link to Storrs Center on the homepage of the Lodewick Visitors’ Center.

6. Review of *Festival on the Green*

Ms. Paterson reported that the *Festival on the Green* was well-organized and a big success. She said she received lots of positive feedback and noted that the Celebrate Mansfield Parade was excellent. Ms. Paterson said she thought there was a good variety of food and music.

Mr. Schreier said he and Parade Co-Chair Tom Birkenholz received good feedback from Parade participants.

7. Review of Storrs Center Grand Opening

Ms. K. Paterson reported that the Grand Opening was well-attended, especially for the ceremony portion of the day. She noted there was a drop-off in audience levels for the initial part of the music during the day, which could be attributed to The Oaks event occurring at the same time, the unusually warm weather, and the time of day. She added that the audience filled back up as the day went on, and both she and Cynthia van Zelm received requests from residents to have music in the street more often.

8. Update on Town Square

Ms. K. Paterson reported that the Partnership Board of Directors held its public hearing on the Zoning application for the Town Square, and the Town Planner has authorized the Zoning Agent to issue the permit. She said the goal is to have the design completed by the end of October and most of the construction completed by the end of December. She noted that weather may be a determining factor in construction progress and that all work should be completed by the spring.

9. Update on Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center

Ms. K. Paterson reported that construction of the Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center is well-underway and expected to be completed in October. She informed the Committee that the Partnership office will move into the Center in November.

Ms. Moran noted that the Partnership will not be running the Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center for at least the first year, but that will be subject to review after the first year.

Ms. Workman asked if there would be public restrooms and if there would be meeting rooms for community groups to use.

Ms. K. Paterson said she would need to confirm, but her understanding is that there will be public restrooms but no meeting rooms. She added that the Mansfield Community Center has meeting space available for community groups to use.

10. Discuss upcoming events

Ms. K. Paterson said that Live Music Wednesdays, a collaboration between the Partnership and Storrs Center, will continue through the end of October. She reported that the idea of Trick-or-Treating in Storrs Center was briefly discussed at the September tenant meeting and those tenants in attendance were enthusiastic about the idea.

Ms. K. Paterson said that the idea of a winter holiday event was introduced at the tenant meeting but discussion was tabled until after the Festival. She asked the Committee for feedback and suggestions and reminded the group that Winter Fun Week is planned for the first week of February 2014.

Ms. Paterson suggested that the businesses offer coupons and specials for the holidays.

Ms. Workman suggested installing a temporary, fake ice rink (people can skate on it as if it were ice, but there is no water involved). **Ms. Workman will look into the cost and space requirements [Done].**

Ms. K. Paterson noted that the Mansfield Community Center sets up an ice rink in front of their building during the winter months.

Ms. Moran suggested having a celebration for the opening of the book store.

Ms. Workman suggested having ice sculptures around the Town Square.

Mr. Schreier suggested hosting an all-day event with a winter bazaar, carolers, and music. He also suggested looking to Willimantic's Chocolate Festival as a model for engaging the businesses.

Ms. Moran said she would prefer a winter or solstice celebration rather than a Christmas celebration.

Ms. Paterson suggested seeing if the Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry could be involved with puppets.

Mr. Schreier said that StoDoArts would be interested in assisting with planning such an event.

Ms. Moran asked Ms. K. Paterson to work on the event and report on the plans at the next meeting.

11. Future agenda items

Ms. Moran said she would like to discuss the signage issue raised earlier in the meeting, the balance between promoting the downtown Storrs district versus Storrs Center, and the Partnership's logo at the next meeting.

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Minutes prepared by Kathleen M. Paterson