

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION COMMITTEE  
January 12, 2017  
5:00 PM  
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

Present: Curt Hirsch, Paul McCarthy, and Rene Schein

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

**1. Call to Order**

Cynthia van Zelm called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

**2. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of Minutes from October 13, 2016 and May 12, 2016**

There was no quorum to approve the minutes.

**4. Review and prioritize Economic Development objectives from Strategic Plan; discussion of structure to accomplish goals**

Ms. van Zelm went over a list of potential actions to assist downtown businesses, many of which came out of the Partnership's Strategic Plan. The Committee added suggestions and prioritized the most important actions (as noted with an asterisk).

- \*Business Visits – Visit each business twice a year
- \*Provide information to businesses on available business loans/grants
- \*Coordinate with the Town Economic Development Commission to attract businesses
- Semi-monthly merchant meeting
- Evening business networking event
- Development of occupancy data/reporting tools
- List of tenant vacancies on Partnership website
- Determine what the Partnership has the ability to help businesses with and what is the responsibility of the property owners or business
- Hold events

- Social media – Links by Partnership to business websites including their specials, events, or coupons
- Annual focus group to ascertain resident preferences for new businesses
- Promote Partnership as ombudsman to help with businesses' questions and issues.
- Implementation of Partnership Marketing/Branding Plan; Promote downtown as dining, entertainment, arts and recreation district
- Prepare annual report card/State of the Downtown
- Acknowledge what we DO have rather than focusing on what we DON'T have i.e., proximity to UConn
- Support future development of hotel in the downtown area
- Movie theater
- Shuttle from downtown to UConn events
- Gift card for downtown merchants
- Specials or incentives such as percentage off a meal if attend an event

Paul McCarthy suggested devoting a Board meeting on a quarterly basis to discuss these and other economic development initiatives including business retention and recruitment.

With respect to the best structure to hear from businesses, Rene Schein said the merchant meeting is probably the best venue. This could also be a topic of discussion for the Board. Ms. van Zelm said it has been difficult to get a high turnout for the Business Committee meetings.

Curt Hirsch said he would help with business visits.

## **5. Review 2017 Meeting Dates**

Ms. van Zelm passed out the meeting dates for the year, noting that some of the meetings may be cancelled as the Committee is proposed to sunset with new Partnership structure, and potential Bylaws changes.

## **6. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 pm.

*Minutes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.*